

INTRODUCTION

This book is not a memoir. This book is a testosterone-based, voluntary intoxication protocol, which concerns the body and affects of BP. A body-essay. Fiction, actually. If things must be pushed to the extreme, this is a somatopolitical fiction, a theory of the self, or self-theory. During the time period covered by this essay, two external transformations follow on each other in the context of the experimental body, the impact of which couldn't be calculated beforehand and cannot be taken into account as a function of the study; but it created the limits around which writing was incorporated. First of all, there is the death of GD, the human distillation of a vanishing epoch, an icon, and the ultimate French representative of a form of written sexual insurrection; almost simultaneously, there is the tropism of BP's body in the direction of VD's body, an opportunity for perfection—and for ruin. This is a record of physiological and political micromutations provoked in BP's body by testosterone, as well as the theoretical and physical changes incited in that body by loss, desire, elation, failure, or renouncement. I'm not interested in my emotions inso-much as their being mine, belonging only, uniquely, to me. I'm not interested in their individual aspects, only in how they are traversed by what isn't mine. In what emanates

from our planet's history, the evolution of living species, the flux of economics, remnants of technological innovations, preparation for wars, the trafficking of organic slaves and commodities, the creation of hierarchies, institutions of punishment and repression, networks of communication and surveillance, the random overlapping of market research groups, techniques and blocs of opinion, the biochemical transformation of feeling, the production and distribution of pornographic images. Some will read this text as a manual for a kind of gender bioterrorism on a molecular scale. Others will see in it a single point in a cartography of extinction. In this text, the reader won't come to any definitive conclusion about the truth of my sex, or predictions about the world to come. I present these pages as an account of theoretical junctions, molecules, affects, in order to leave a trace of a political experiment that lasted 236 days and nights and that continues today under other forms. If the reader sees this text as an uninterrupted series of philosophical reflections, accounts of hormone administration, and detailed records of sexual practices without the solutions provided by continuity, it is simply because this is the mode on which subjectivity is constructed and deconstructed.

*Question: If you could see
a documentary on a philosopher,
on Heidegger, Kant, or Hegel,
what would you like to see in it?*


*Jacques Derrida's answer:
For them to talk about their sex life.
. . . You want a quick answer?
Their sex life.[†]*

[†] Jacques Derrida. *Derrida*, directed by Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering Koffman. (New York: Zeitgeist Video, 2003), DVD.

1. YOUR DEATH

October 5: Tim tells me you've died. He's crying. He loves you. However, in your last books, you didn't treat him with generosity. He says, "It's William." He's crying, repeats, "It's William, it's William. We found him dead in his new apartment in Paris. We don't know. It happened two days ago, on the third. We just don't know."

Until now, no one was aware of your death. You rotted for two days in the same position in which you had fallen. It's better like that. No one came to bother you. They left you alone with your body, the time necessary for abandoning in peace all that misery. I cry with Tim. It can't be.

I hang up, and the first thing I do is call VD—I don't know why. We've seen each other twice. Once, alone. You're the one who pushes me to dial her number. You listen to our conversation. Your mind unfurls and forms an electromagnetic layer from which our words flow. Your ghost is a wire transmitting our voices. As we talk about your death, her voice  awakens the life in me. *The strongest is his voice, I think,*¹ you were saying. I don't dare cry when talking with her. I hang up, and then I cry, alone. Because you didn't want to keep living and because, as your godfather would say, "a dead poet writes no more."²

1. Guillaume Dustan, *Nicolas Pages* (Paris: Editions Balland, 1999), 17.

2. Michel Houellebecq, *Rester vivant et autres textes* (Paris: Libro, 1997), 19.

That same day, a few hours later, I put a fifty-milligram dose of Testogel on my skin, so that I can begin to write this book. It isn't the first time. This is my usual dose. The carbon chains, O-H3, C-H3, C-OH, gradually penetrate my epidermis and travel through the deep layers of my skin until they reach the blood vessels, nerve endings, glands. I'm not taking testosterone to change myself into a man or as a physical strategy of transsexualism; I take it to foil what society wanted to make of me, so that I can write, fuck, feel a form of pleasure that is postpornographic, add a molecular prostheses to my *low-tech* transgender identity composed of dildos, texts, and moving images; I do it to avenge your death.

VIDEOPENETRATION

I'd rather go blind than to see you walk away.

—ETTA JAMES

8:35 p.m. Your spirit comes through the window and darkens the room. I turn on all the lights. Put a blank cassette in the video camera and screw the camera to the tripod. I check the framing. The image is smooth and symmetrical; the black leather couch forms a horizontal line at the bottom of the frame. The white wall easily follows that line, but without creating any feeling of volume or relief. Play. I move to the sofa. Off camera, on the coffee table, I've left electric clippers, a small mirror, a sheet of white paper, a

plastic bag, a bottle of hypoallergenic glue for use on the face, a dose of fifty milligrams of testosterone in gel form, a tube of lubricant, anal-dilator gel, a harness with a realistic rubber dildo (9½ x 1½ in.), a realistic black silicone dildo (9¾ x 2½ in.), a black ergonomic one (5½ x ¾ in.), a razor and shaving cream, a plastic basin filled with water, a white towel, and one of your books, the first, the sublime one, the beginning and end of everything. I walk into the frame. Get undressed, but not completely. Keep my black tank top on. As if for surgery, I expose only those organs on which the instruments will be working. I stand the mirror up on the table. I plug in the electric clippers. A sharp, high-pitched sound, the voice of a cyberchild trying to get out of the motor, spitting in the face of the past. I adjust the blades of the comb to a width of one centimeter. Your spirit sends me a discrete sound of approval. I sit on the couch, and one half of my face—looking expressionless, centerless—appears in the mirror: my short black hair; contact lenses, whose edges create a thin halo around the iris; patchy skin; very white in places and flecked with bright pink in others. I was labeled a woman, but that's imperceptible in the partial image reflected in the mirror. I begin shaving my head, starting at the front and moving backward, then from the middle toward the left, then toward the right. I bend forward so that the locks drop onto the table. I open the plastic bag and slide the hair into it. Turn off the machine and adjust the comb to zero. I place a sheet of white paper on the table, then turn the clippers back on and move them again over my entire head. Short, very thin hairs rain onto

the white paper. When my head is completely smooth, I unplug the machine. I fold the sheet of paper in two, so that the hairs collect at the center, forming a uniform line. A line of black cocaine. I'm doing up a line of hair. It's almost the same high. I open the jar of glue and add a streak of it above my upper lip with the moistened brush, then take a strand of hair between my fingers and set it along the streak of glue until it sticks perfectly to the skin of my face. A fag's mustache. I check myself out in the mirror. My eyes have the same halo around the iris. Same face, skin. Identical yet unrecognizable. I look into the camera, curl back my lip to show my teeth, the way you do it. It's your gesture.

The silver package containing a fifty-milligram dose of testosterone in gel form is the same size as a small packet of sugar. I rip into the aluminum-coated paper; out comes a thin, cold, transparent gel that disappears immediately into the skin of my left shoulder. A cool vapor remains, like a memory of icy breath, the kiss of a snowwoman.

I shake the can of shaving cream, deposit a ball of expanding white lather on my palm, then cover the hairs of my pubes, the lips of my vulva and the skin surrounding my anus with it. I dip the blade in water and begin to shave. Hairs and cream float to the surface. A few splashes fall onto the couch or the floor. This time I don't cut myself. When all the skin on my crotch has been shaved, I rinse off and dry. Slip on the harness and buckle the straps at the side of each hip. In front of me, the dildo is super erect, forming a right angle with the line of my vertebral column. The dildo belt is high enough to allow me to see two very distinct orifices when I bend down.

I coat my hands with transparent gel and pick up the two dildos. I rub, lubricate, warm them, one in each hand, then one against the other, like two giant cocks twisting against each other in a gay porn film. I know the camera is filming because I can see the red light blinking. I dangle my silicone cock over the paragraphs tattooed across the pages of *Dans ma chambre*.³ It's your gesture. The dildo conceals part of the page, creating a barrier that allows certain words to be read and hides others: "We laughed. He went with me in the car. I looked at him. His hand signaled me before / night fell. I know that I would have had to / I'll never be in love with him. But how wonderful it was that he loved me. It was good."⁴

Next I slide the dildos into the openings at the lower part of my body. First, the realistic-looking one, then the ergonomic one, which goes into my anus. It's always easier for me to put something into my anus, which is a multidimensional space without any bony edges. This time, it's the same. On my knees, I turn my back to the camera, the tips of my feet and my head pressing against the floor, and hold my arms behind me so that they can manage the two dildos in my orifices.

You're the only one who could read this book. In front of this camera, "for the first time I'm tempted to make a self-portrait for you."⁵ Design an image of myself as if I were you. *Do you in drag*. Cross-dress into you. Bring you back to life with this image.

3. *In My Room*, the first novel of French gay writer Guillaume Dustan.—Trans.

4. Dustan, *Nicolas Pages*, 155.

5. Hervé Guibert, *L'Image fantôme* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1981), 5.

From this moment on, all of you are dead. Amelia, Hervé, Michel, Karen, Jackie, Teo, and You. Do I belong more to your world than I do to the world of the living? Isn't my politics yours; my house, my body, yours? Reincarnate yourselves in me, take over my body like extraterrestrials took over Americans and changed them into living sheaths. Reincarnate yourself in me; possess my tongue, arms, sex organs, dildos, blood, molecules; possess my girlfriend, dog; inhabit me, live in me. Come. *Ven*. Please don't leave. *Vuelve a la vida*. Come back to life. Hold on to my sex. Low, down, dirty. Stay with me.

This book has no other reason for being outside the margin of uncertainty existing between me and my sex organs, all imaginary, between three languages that don't belong to me, between the alive you and the dead you, between my desire to carry on your line and the impossibility of restoring your sperm, between your eternal and silent books and the flood of words that are in a hurry to come out of my fingers, between testosterone and my body, between V and my love for V. Looking into the camera again: "This testosterone is for you, this pleasure is for you."

I don't watch the mini-DV I just filmed. I don't even number it. I put it into its transparent red case and write on the label:

October 3, 2005. DAY OF YOUR DEATH.

The preceding and following days are marked by my ritual of testosterone administration. It's a home protocol; it would

even be a secret and private one if each of these administrations weren't being filmed and sent anonymously to an Internet page on which hundreds of transgender, mutating bodies all over the planet are exchanging techniques and know-how. On this audiovisual network, my face is immaterial, my name of no significance. Only the strict relationship between my body and the substance is a cult object, an object of surveillance. I spread the gel over my shoulders. First instant: the feeling of a light slap on the skin. The feeling changes into one of coldness before it disappears. Then, nothing for a day or two. Nothing. Waiting. Then, an extraordinary lucidity settles in, gradually, accompanied by an explosion of the desire to fuck, walk, go out everywhere in the city. This is the climax in which the spiritual force of the testosterone mixing with my blood takes to the fore. Absolutely all the unpleasant sensations disappear. Unlike speed, the movement going on inside has nothing to do with agitation, noise. It's simply the feeling of being in perfect harmony with the rhythm of the city. Unlike with coke, there is no distortion in the perception of self, no logorrhea or any feeling of superiority. Nothing but the feeling of strength reflecting the increased capacity of my muscles, my brain. My body is present to itself. Unlike with speed and coke, there is no immediate comedown. A few days go by, and the movement inside calms, but the feeling of strength, like a pyramid revealed by a sandstorm, remains.

How can I explain what is happening to me? What can I do about my desire for transformation? What can I do about all the years I defined myself as a feminist? What kind of

feminist am I today: a feminist hooked on testosterone, or a transgender body hooked on feminism? I have no other alternative but to revise my classics, to subject those theories to the shock that was provoked in me by the practice of taking testosterone. To accept the fact that the change happening in me is the metamorphosis of an era.

2. THE PHARMACOPORNOGRAPHIC ERA

I was born in 1970. The automobile industry, which had reached its peak, was beginning to decline. My father had the first and most prominent garage in Burgos, a Gothic city full of parish priests and members of the military, where Franco had set up the new symbolic capital of fascist Spain. If Hitler had won the war, the new Europe would have been established around two obviously unequal poles, Burgos and Berlin. At least, that was the little Galician general's dream.

Garage Central was located on rue du General Mola, named after the soldier who in 1936 led the uprising against the Republican regime. The most expensive cars in the city, belonging to the rich and to dignitaries of the Franco regime, were kept there. In my house there were no books, just cars. Some Chrysler Motor Slant Sixes; several Renault Gordinis, Dauphines, and Ondines (nicknamed "widows' cars," because they had the reputation of skidding on curves and killing husbands at the wheel); some Citroën DSs (which the Spanish called "sharks"); and several Standards brought back from England and reserved for doctors. I should add the collection of antique cars that my father had put together little by little: a black "Lola Flores" Mer-

cedes, a gray, pre-1930s Citroën with a traction engine, a seventeen-horsepower Ford, a Dodge Dart Swinger, a 1928 Citroën with its “frog’s ass,” and a Cadillac with eight cylinders. At the time, my father was investing in brickyard industries, which (like the dictatorship, coincidentally) would begin to decline in 1975 with the gas crisis. In the end, he had to sell his car collection to make up for the collapse of the factory. I cried about it. Meanwhile, I was growing up like a tomboy. My father cried about it.

During that bygone yet not-so-long-ago era that we today call Fordism, the automobile and mass-produced suburban housing industries synthesized and perfected a specific mode of production and consumption, a Taylorist temporal organization of life characterized by a sleek polychrome aesthetic of the inanimate object, a way of conceiving of inner space and urban living, a conflictual arrangement of the body and the machine, a discontinuous flow of desire and resistance. In the years following the energy crisis and the decline of the assembly line, people sought to identify new growth sectors in a transformed global economy. That is when “experts” began talking about biochemical, electronic, computing, or communications industries as new industrial props of capitalism . . . But these discourses won’t be enough to explain the production of added value and the metamorphosis of life in contemporary society.

It is, however, possible to sketch out a new cartography of the transformations in industrial production during the previous century, using as an axis the political and technical management of the body, sex, and identity. In other words,

it is philosophically relevant today to undertake a *somato-political*¹ analysis of “world-economy.”²

From an economic perspective, the transition toward a third form of capitalism, after the slave-dependent and industrial systems, is generally situated somewhere in the 1970s; but the establishment of a new type of “government of the living”³ had already emerged from the urban, physical, psychological, and ecological ruins of World War II—or, in the case of Spain, from the Civil War.

How did sex and sexuality become the main objects of political and economic activity?

Follow me: The changes in capitalism that we are witnessing are characterized not only by the transformation of “gender,” “sex,” “sexuality,” “sexual identity,” and “pleasure” into objects of the political management of living (just as Foucault had suspected in his biopolitical description of new systems of social control), but also by the fact that this management itself is carried out through the new dynamics of advanced technocapitalism, global media, and biotechnologies. During the Cold War, the United States put more money into scientific research about sex and sexuality than any other country in history. The application of surveillance and biotechnologies for governing civil society

1. I refer here to Foucault's notion “*somato-pouvoir*” and “*technologie politique du corps*.” See Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 33–36; see also Michel Foucault, “*Les rapports de pouvoir passent à l'intérieur du corps*,” in *La Quinzaine Littéraire*, 247 (1er–15 janvier 1977): 4–6.

2. Here I draw on the well-known expression used by Immanuel Wallerstein in *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

3. Michel Foucault, “*Du gouvernement des vivants (1979–1980)*,” *Leçons du Collège de France, 1979–1980*, in *Dits et Ecrits*. (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), 4: 641–42.

started during the late 1930s: the war was the best laboratory for molding the body, sex, and sexuality. The necropolitical techniques of the war will progressively become biopolitical industries for producing and controlling sexual subjectivities. Let us remember that the period between the beginning of World War II and the first years of the Cold War constitutes a moment without precedent for women's visibility in public space as well as the emergence of visible and politicized forms of homosexuality in such unexpected places as, for example, the American army.⁴ Alongside this social development, American McCarthyism—rampant throughout the 1950s—added to the patriotic fight against communism the persecution of homosexuality as a form of antinationalism while at the same time exalting the family values of masculine labor and domestic maternity.⁵ Meanwhile, architects Ray and Charles Eames collaborated with the American army to manufacture small boards of molded plywood to use as splints for mutilated appendages. A few years later, the same material was used to build furniture that came to exemplify the light design of modern American disposable architecture.⁶ During the twentieth century, the “invention” of the biochemical notion of the hormone and the pharmaceutical development of synthetic molecules for commercial uses radically modified traditional definitions of normal and pathological sexual identities. In 1941, the first natural molecules of progesterone and estrogens were

4. Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (New York: The Free Press, 1990).

5. John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940–1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

6. See Beatriz Colomina, *Domesticity at War* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 29.

obtained from the urine of pregnant mares (Premarin) and soon after synthetic hormones (Norethindrone) were commercialized. The same year, George Henry carried out the first demographic study of “sexual deviation,” a quantitative study of masses known as *Sex Variants*.⁷ The Kinsey Reports on human sexual behavior (1948 and 1953) and Robert Stoller’s protocols for “femininity” and “masculinity” (1968) followed in sexological suit. In 1957, the North American pedo-psychiatrist John Money coined the term “gender,” differentiating it from the traditional term “sex,” to define an individual’s inclusion in a culturally recognized group of “masculine” or “feminine” behavior and physical expression. Money famously affirms that it is possible (using surgical, endocrinological, and cultural techniques) to “change the gender of any baby up to 18 months.”⁸ Between 1946 and 1949 Harold Gillies was performing the first phalloplastic surgeries in the UK, including work on Michael Dillon, the first female-to-male transsexual to have taken testosterone as part of the masculinization protocol.⁹ In 1952, US soldier George W. Jorgensen was transformed into Christine, the first transsexual person discussed widely in the popular press. During the early 50s and into the 60s, physician Harry Benjamin systematized the clinical use of hormonal molecules in the treatment of “sex change” and

7. Jennifer Terry, *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 178–218.

8. John Money, Joan Hampson, and John Hampson, “Imprinting and the Establishment of Gender Role,” *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry* 77 (1957): 333–36.

9. Harold Gillies and Ralph Millard J., *The Principles and Art of Plastic Surgery* (Boston: Little Brown, 1957), 385–88; Michael Dillon, *Self. A Study in Ethics and Endocrinology* (London: Heinemann, 1946); for a larger historical survey see also: Berenice L. Hausman, *Changing Sex, Transsexualism, Technology, and the Idea of Gender* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1995), 67.

defined “transsexualism,” a term first introduced in 1954, as a curable condition.¹⁰

The invention of the contraceptive pill, the first biochemical technique enabling the separation between heterosexual practice and reproduction, was a direct result of the expansion of endocrinological experimentation, and triggered a process of development of what could be called, twisting the Eisenhower term, “the sex-gender industrial complex.”¹¹ In 1957, Searle & Co. commercialized Enovid, the first contraceptive pill (“the Pill”) made of a combination of mestranol and norethynodrel. First promoted for the treatment of menstrual disorders, the Pill was approved for contraceptive use four years later. The chemical components of the Pill would soon become the most used pharmaceutical molecules in the whole of human history.¹²

The Cold War was also a period of transformation of the governmental and economic regulations concerning pornography and prostitution. In 1946, elderly sex worker and spy Martha Richard convinced the French government to declare the “*maison closes*” illegal, which ended the nineteenth-century governmental system of brothels in France. In 1953, Hugh Hefner founded *Playboy*, the first North American “porn” magazine to be sold at newspaper stands, with a photograph of Marilyn Monroe naked as the

10. Whereas homosexuality was withdrawn from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) in 1973, in 1983, gender identity disorder (clinical form of transsexualism) was included in the DSM with diagnostic criteria for this new pathology.

11. President Eisenhower used the term “military-industrial complex” in his Farewell to the Nation speech of 1961.

12. Andrea Tone, *Devices and Desires. A History of Contraceptives in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 203–31; Lara V. Marks, *Sexual Chemistry: A History of the Contraceptive Pill* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

centerfold of the first publication. In 1959, Hefner transformed an old Chicago house into the Playboy Mansion, which was promoted within the magazine and on television as a “love palace” with thirty-two rooms, becoming soon the most popular American erotic utopia. In 1972, Gerard Damiano produced *Deep Throat*. The film, starring Linda Lovelace, was widely commercialized in the US and became one of the most watched movies of all times, grossing more than \$600 million. From this time on, porn film production boomed, from thirty clandestine film producers in 1950 to over 2,500 films in 1970.

If for years pornography was the dominant visual technology addressed to the male body for controlling his sexual reaction, during the 1950s the pharmaceutical industry looked for ways of triggering erection and sexual response using surgical and chemical prostheses. In 1974, Soviet Victor Konstantinovich Kalnberz patented the first penis implant using polyethylene plastic rods as a treatment for impotency, resulting in a permanently erect penis. These implants were abandoned for chemical variants because they were found to be “physically uncomfortable and emotionally disconcerting.” In 1984 Tom F. Lue, Emil A. Tanaghoy, and Richard A. Schmidt implanted a “sexual pacemaker” in the penis of a patient. The contraption was a system of electrodes inserted close to the prostate that permitted an erection by remote control. The molecule of sildenafil (commercialized as Viagra® by Pfizer laboratories in 1988) will later become the chemical treatment for “erectile dysfunction.”

During the Cold War years psychotropic techniques first developed within the military were extended to medical and recreational uses for the civil population. In the 1950s, the United States Central Intelligence Agency performed a series of experiments involving electroshock techniques as well as psychedelic and hallucinogen drugs as part of a program of “brainwashing,” military interrogation, and psychological torture. The aim of the experimental program of the CIA was to identify the chemical techniques able to directly modify the prisoner’s subjectivity, inflecting levels of anxiety, dizziness, agitation, irritability, sexual excitement, or fear.¹³ At the same time, the laboratories Eli Lilly (Indiana) commercialized the molecule called Methadone (the most simple opiate) as an analgesic and Secobarbital, a barbiturate with anaesthetic, sedative, and hypnotic properties conceived for the treatment of epilepsy, insomnia, and as an anaesthetic for short surgery. Secobarbital, better known as “the red pill” or “doll,” became one of the drugs of the rock underground culture of the 1960s.¹⁴ In 1977, the state of Oklahoma introduced the first lethal injection composed of barbiturates similar to “the red pill” to be used for the death penalty.¹⁵

The Cold War military space race was also the site of production of a new form of technological embodiment.

13. On the use of chemicals for military purposes during the Cold War years see: Naomi Klein, “The Torture Lab,” in *The Shock Doctrine* (New York: Penguin, 2007), 25–48.

14. Methadone became in the 70s the basic substitution treatment for heroine addiction. See: Tom Carnwath and Ian Smith, *Heroin Century* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 40–42.

15. The same method had already been applied in a Nazi German program called “Action T4” for “racial hygiene” that euthanatized between 75,000 and 100,000 people with physical or psychic disabilities. It was abandoned because of the high pharmacological cost; instead it was substituted by gas chambers or simply death caused by inanition.

At the start of the 60s, Manfred E. Clynes and Nathan S. Kline used the term “cyborg” for the first time to refer to an organism technologically supplemented to live in an extraterrestrial environment where it could operate as an “integrated homeostatic system.”¹⁶ They experimented with a laboratory rat, which received an osmotic prosthesis implant that it dragged along—a cyber tail. Beyond the rat, the cyborg named a new techno-organic condition, a sort of “soft machine”¹⁷ (to use a Burroughs term) or a body with “electric skin” (to put it in Haus-Rucker & Co. terms) subjected to new forms of political control but also able to develop new forms of resistance. During the 1960s, as part of a military investigation program, *Arpanet* was created; it was the predecessor of the global Internet, the first “net of nets” of interconnected computers capable of transmitting information.

On the other hand, the surgical techniques developed for the treatment of “*les geules cassées*” of the First World War and the skin reconstruction techniques specially invented for the handling of the victims of the nuclear bomb will be transformed during the 1950s and 1960s into cosmetic and sexual surgeries.¹⁸ In response to the threat inferred by Nazism and racist rhetoric, which claims that racial or religious differences can be detected in anatomical signs, “de-circumcision,” the artificial reconstruction of foreskin, was one of the most practiced cosmetic surgery operations

16. M. E. Clynes and N. S. Kline, “Cyborgs and Space,” in *Astronautics* (September, 1960).

17. William S. Burroughs, *The Soft Machine* (New York: Olympia Press, 1961).

18. Martin Monestier, *Les geules cassées, Les médecins de l'impossible 1914-18* (Paris: Cherche Midi, 2009).

in the United States.¹⁹ At the same time, facelifts, as well as various other cosmetic surgery operations, became mass-market techniques for a new middle-class body consumer. Andy Warhol had himself photographed during a facelift, transforming his own body into a bio-pop object.

Meanwhile, the use of a viscous, semi-rigid material that is waterproof, thermally and electrically resistant, produced by artificial propagation of carbon atoms in long chains of molecules of organic compounds derived from petroleum, and whose burning is highly polluting, became generalized in manufacturing the objects of daily life. DuPont, who pioneered the development of plastics from the 1930s on, was also implicated in nuclear research for the Manhattan project.²⁰ Together with plastics, we saw the exponential multiplication of the production of transuranic elements (the chemical elements with atomic numbers greater than 92—the atomic number of Uranium), which became the material to be used in the civil sector, including plutonium, that had, before, been used as nuclear fuel in military operations.²¹ The level of toxicity of transuranic elements exceeds that of any other element on earth, creating a new form of vulnerability for life. Cellulosic, poly-nosic, polyamide, polyester, acrylic, polypylene, spandex, etc., became materials used equally for body consumption and architecture. The mass consumption of plastic defined

19. Sander L. Gilman, "Decircumcision: The First Aesthetic Surgery," *Modern Judaism* 17, 3 (1997): 201–10. Maxell Matz, *Evolution of Plastic Surgery* (New York: Froben Press, 1946), 287–89.

20. Pap A. Ndiaye, *Nylon and Bombs: DuPont and the March of Modern America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 2006).

21. See: Donna J. Haraway, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium. FemaleMan@Meets_OncoMouse™: Feminism and Technoscience*, (New York: Routledge, 1997), 54.

the material conditions of a large-scale ecological transformation that resulted in destruction of other (mostly lower) energy resources, rapid consumption, and high pollution. The *Trash Vortex*, a floating mass the size of Texas in the North Pacific made of plastic garbage, was to become the largest water architecture of the twenty-first century.²²

We are being confronted with a new kind of hot, psychotropic, punk capitalism. Such recent transformations are imposing an ensemble of new microprosthetic mechanisms of control of subjectivity by means of biomolecular and multimedia technical protocols. Our world economy is dependent on the production and circulation of hundreds of tons of synthetic steroids and technically transformed organs, fluids, cells (techno-blood, techno-sperm, techno-ovum, etc.), on the global diffusion of a flood of pornographic images, on the elaboration and distribution of new varieties of legal and illegal synthetic psychotropic drugs (e.g., bromazepam, Special K, Viagra, speed, crystal, Prozac, ecstasy, poppers, heroin), on the flood of signs and circuits of the digital transmission of information, on the extension of a form of diffuse urban architecture to the entire planet in which megacities of misery are knotted into high concentrations of sex-capital.²³

These are just some snapshots of a postindustrial, global, and mediatic regime that, from here on, I will call *pharmacopornographic*. The term refers to the processes of a biomolecular (pharmaco) and semiotic-technical (porno-

22. Susan Freinkel, *Plastic: A Toxic Love Story* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011).

23. See Mike Davis, "Planet of Slums," *New Left Review* 26 (April–March 2004).

graphic) government of sexual subjectivity—of which “the Pill” and *Playboy* are two paradigmatic offspring. Although their lines of force may be rooted in the scientific and colonial society of the nineteenth century, their economic vectors become visible only at the end of World War II. Hidden at first under the guise of a Fordist economy, they reveal themselves in the 1970s with the gradual collapse of this phenomenon.

During the second half of the twentieth century, the mechanisms of the pharmacopornographic regime are materialized in the fields of psychology, sexology, and endocrinology. If science has reached the hegemonic place that it occupies as a discourse and as a practice in our culture, it is because, as Ian Hacking, Steve Woolgar, and Bruno Latour have noticed, it works as a material-discursive apparatus of bodily production.²⁴ Technoscience has established its material authority by transforming the concepts of the psyche, libido, consciousness, femininity and masculinity, heterosexuality and homosexuality, intersexuality and transsexuality into tangible realities. They are manifest in commercial chemical substances and molecules, biotype bodies, and fungible technological goods managed by multinationals. The success of contemporary technoscientific industry consists in transforming our depression into Prozac, our masculinity into testosterone, our erection into Viagra, our fertility/sterility into the Pill, our AIDS into tritherapy, without knowing which comes first: our

24. Ian Hacking, *Representing and Intervening: Introductory Topics in the Philosophy of Natural Science* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983); and Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *La vie de laboratoire: La production des faits scientifiques* (Paris: La Découverte, 1979).

depression or Prozac, Viagra or an erection, testosterone or masculinity, the Pill or maternity, tritherapy or AIDS. This performative feedback is one of the mechanisms of the pharmacopornographic regime.

Contemporary society is inhabited by toxic-pornographic subjectivities: subjectivities defined by the substance (or substances) that supply their metabolism, by the cybernetic prostheses and various types of pharmacopornographic desires that feed the subject's actions and through which they turn into agents. So we will speak of Prozac subjects, cannabis subjects, cocaine subjects, alcohol subjects, Ritalin subjects, cortisone subjects, silicone subjects, heterovaginal subjects, double-penetration subjects, Viagra subjects, \$ subjects . . .

There is nothing to discover in nature; there is no hidden secret. We live in a punk hypermodernity: it is no longer about discovering the hidden truth in nature; it is about the necessity to specify the cultural, political, and technological processes through which the body as artifact acquires natural status. The oncomouse,²⁵ the laboratory mouse biotechnologically designed to carry a carcinogenic gene, eats Heidegger. Buffy kills the vampire of Simone de Beauvoir. The dildo, a synthetic extension of sex to produce pleasure and identity, eats Rocco Siffredi's cock. There is nothing to discover in sex or in sexual identity; there is no *inside*. The truth about sex is not a disclosure; it is *sexdesign*. Pharmacopornographic biocapitalism does not produce *things*.

25. See Donna J. Haraway, "When Man™ is on the Menu," in *Incorporations*(Zone 6), eds. Jonathan Crary and Sanford K. Winter (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 38–43.

It produces mobile ideas, living organs, symbols, desires, chemical reactions, and conditions of the soul. In biotechnology and in pornocommunication there is no object to be produced. The pharmacopornographic business is the *invention of a subject* and then its global reproduction.

MASTURBATORY COOPERATION

The theoreticians of post-Fordism (Virno, Hardt, Negri, Corsani, Marazzi, Moulrier-Boutang, etc.) have made it clear that the productive process of contemporary capitalism takes its raw material from knowledge, information, communication, and social relationships.²⁶ According to the most recent economic theory, the mainspring of production is no longer situated in companies but is “in society as a whole, the quality of the population, cooperation, conventions, training, forms of organization that hybridize the market, the firm and society.”²⁷ Negri and Hardt refer to “biopolitical production,” using Foucault’s cult notion, or to “cognitive capitalism” to enumerate today’s complex forms of capitalist production that mask the “production of symbols, language, information,” as well as the “production of

26. Some of the most influential analyses of the current transformations of industrial society and capitalism relevant to my own work are the following: Maurizio Lazzarato, “*Le concept de travail immatériel: la grande entreprise*,” *Futur Antérieur* 10 (1992); Antonella Corsani, “*Vers un renouveau de l’économie politique: anciens concepts et innovation théorique*,” *Multitudes* 2 (printemps 2000); Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Multitude: guerre et démocratie à l’âge de l’empire* (Paris: La Découverte, 2006); Yann Moulrier-Boutang, *Le capitalisme cognitif: La nouvelle grande transformation* (Paris: Editions Amsterdam, 2007).

27. Yann Moulrier-Boutang, “*Eclats d’économie et bruits de lutte*,” *Multitudes* 2 (Mai 200): 7. See also Antonella Corsani, “*Vers un renouveau de l’économie politique*.”

affects.”²⁸ They call “biopolitical work” the forms of production that are linked to aids provided to the body, to care, to the protection of the other and to the creation of human relations, to the “feminine” work of reproduction,²⁹ to relationships of communication and exchange of knowledge and affects. But most often, analysis and description of this new form of production stops biopolitically at the belt.³⁰

What if, in reality, the insatiable bodies of the multitude—their cocks, clitorises, anuses, hormones, and neurosexual synapses—what if desire, excitement, sexuality, seduction, and the pleasure of the multitude were all the mainsprings of the creation of value added to the contemporary economy? And what if cooperation were a *masturbatory cooperation* and not the simple cooperation of brains?

The pornographic industry is currently the great mainspring of our cybereconomy; there are more than a million and a half sites available to adults at any point on the planet. Sixteen billion dollars is generated annually by the sex industry, a large part of it belonging to the porn portals of the Internet. Each day, 350 new portals allow virtual access to an exponentially increasing number of users. If

28. Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Multitude: guerre et démocratie à l'âge de l'empire* (Paris: Editions 10–18, DL, 2006), 135.

29. Ibid., 137. Cristian Marazzi, *The Violence of Financial Capitalism*, trans. Kristina Lebedeva and Jason Francis McGimsey (New York: Semiotext(e), 2011), op. cit.

30. Several trajectories in this direction come from the reflections in *Precarias a la Deriva*, by Anne Querrien and Antonella Corsani. See *Precarias a la Deriva, A la deriva por los circuitos de la precariedad femenina* (Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños, 2004); Antonella Corsani, “*Quelles sont les conditions nécessaires pour l'émergence de multiples récits du monde? Penser le revenu garanti à travers l'histoire des luttes des femmes et de la théorie féministe*,” *Multitudes* 27 (hiver 2007); Antonella Corsani, “Beyond the Myth of Woman: The Becoming-Transfeminist of (Post-)Marxism,” trans. Timothy S. Murphy, *SubStance* #112: *Italian Post-Workerist Thought* 36, no. 1, (2007): 106–38; and Linda McDowell, “Life without Father and Ford: The New Gender Order of Post-Fordism,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 16, no. 4 (1991): 400–19.

it's true that the majority of these sites belong to the multinationals (Playboy, Hotvideo, Dorcel, Hustler . . .), the amateur portals are what constitute the truly emerging market for Internet porn. When Jennifer Kaye Ringley had the initiative in 1996 to install several webcams throughout her home that broadcast real-time videos of her daily life through her Internet portal, the model of the single transmitter was supplanted. In documentary style, JenniCams produce an audiovisual chronicle of sex lives and are paid for by subscription, similar to the way some TV stations operate. Today, any user of the Internet who has a body, a computer, a video camera, or a webcam, as well as an Internet connection and a bank account, can create a porn site and have access to the cybermarket of the sex industry. The autopharmacopornographic body has suddenly emerged as a new force in the world economy. The recent access of relatively impoverished populations all over the planet to the technical means of producing cyberpornography has, for the first time, sabotaged a monopoly that was until now controlled by the big multinationals of porn. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the first people able to make use of this market were sex workers from the former Soviet bloc, then those in China, Africa, and India. Confronted with such autonomous strategies on the part of sex workers, the multinationals of porn have gradually united with advertising companies, hoping to attract cybervisitors by offering free access to their pages.

The sex industry is not only the most profitable market on the Internet; it's also the model of maximum profitability for the global cybernetic market (comparable only

to financial speculation): minimum investment, direct sales of the product in real time in a unique fashion, the production of instant satisfaction for the consumer. Every Internet portal is modeled on and organized according to this masturbatory logic of pornographic consumption. If the financial analysts who direct Google, eBay, or Facebook are attentively following the fluctuations of the cyberporn market, it's because the sex industry furnishes an economic model of the cybernetic market as a whole.

If we consider that the pharmaceutical industry (which includes the legal extension of the scientific, medical, and cosmetic industries, as well as the trafficking of drugs declared illegal), the pornography industry, and the industry of war are the load-bearing sectors of post-Fordist capitalism, we ought to be able to give a cruder name to *immaterial labor*. Let us dare, then, to make the following hypothesis: the raw materials of today's production process are excitation, erection, ejaculation, and pleasure and feelings of self-satisfaction, omnipotent control, and total destruction. The real stake of capitalism today is the pharmacopornographic control of subjectivity, whose products are serotonin, techno-blood and blood products, testosterone, antacids, cortisone, techno-sperm, antibiotics, estradiol, techno-milk, alcohol and tobacco, morphine, insulin, cocaine, living human eggs, citrate of sildenafil (Viagra), and the entire material and virtual complex participating in the production of mental and psychosomatic states of excitation, relaxation, and discharge, as well as those of omnipotence and total control. In these conditions, money itself becomes an abstract, signifying psychotropic substance.

Sex is the corollary of capitalism and war, the mirror of production. The dependent and sexual body and sex and all its semiothechnical derivations are henceforth the principal resource of post-Fordist capitalism.

Although the era dominated by the economy of the automobile has been named “Fordism,” let us call this new economy *pharmacopornism*, dominated as it is by the industry of the pill, the masturbatory logic of pornography, and the chain of excitation-frustration on which it is based. The pharmacopornographic industry is white and viscous gold, the crystalline powder of biopolitical capitalism.

Negri and Hardt, in rereading Marx, have shown that “in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the global economy is characterized by the hegemony of industrial labor, even if, in quantitative terms, the latter remains minor in comparison to other forms of production such as agriculture.”³¹ Industrial labor was hegemonic by virtue of the powers of transformation it exerted over any other form of production.

Pharmacopornographic production is characteristic today of a new age of political world economy, not by its quantitative supremacy, but because the control, production, and intensification of narcosexual affects have become the model of all other forms of production. In this way, pharmacopornographic control infiltrates and dominates the entire flow of capital, from agrarian biotechnology to high-tech industries of communication.

In this period of the body’s technomanagement, the

31. Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Multitude* (Paris: Editions 10–18, DL, 2006), 133–34.

pharmacopornographic industry synthesizes and defines a specific mode of production and consumption, a masturbatory temporization of life, a virtual and hallucinogenic aesthetic of the living object, an architecture that transforms inner space into exteriority and the city into interiority and “junkspace”³² by means of mechanisms of immediate auto-surveillance and ultrarapid diffusion of information, a continuous mode of desiring and resisting, of consuming and destroying, of evolution and self-destruction.

POTENTIA GAUDENDI

To understand how and why sexuality and the body, the excitable body, at the end of the nineteenth century raided the heart of political action and became the objects of a minute governmental and industrial management, we must first elaborate a new philosophical concept in the pharmacopornographic domain that is equivalent to the force of work in the domain of classical economics. I call *potentia gaudendi*, or “orgasmic force,” the (real or virtual) strength of a body’s (total) excitation.³³ This strength is of indeterminate capacity; it has no gender; it is neither male nor female, neither human nor animal, neither animated nor inanimate. Its orientation emphasizes neither the fem-

32. For an elaboration of this idea, see Rem Koolhaas, “Junkspace,” *October* 100 (Spring, 2002): 175–90.

33. My work here begins with the notion of “power of action or force of existing” elaborated by Spinoza and derived from the Greek idea of *dynamis* and its correlations in scholastic metaphysics; cf. Baruch Spinoza, *Éthique*, trans. Bernard Pautrat (Paris: Le Seuil, 1988); Gilles Deleuze, “Spinoza” (lecture, Université de Vincennes à Saint Denis, Université Paris 8, Paris, February 2, 1980).

inine nor the masculine and creates no boundary between heterosexuality and homosexuality or between object and subject; neither does it know the difference between being excited, being exciting, or being-excited-with. It favors no organ over any other, so that the penis possesses no more orgasmic force than the vagina, the eye, or the toe. Orgasmic force is the sum of the potential for excitation inherent in every material molecule. Orgasmic force is not seeking any immediate resolution, and it aspires only to its own extension in space and time, toward everything and everyone, in every place and at every moment. It is a force of transformation for the world in pleasure—"in pleasure with." *Potentia gaudendi* unites all material, somatic, and psychic forces and seeks all biochemical resources and all the structures of the mind.

In pharmacopornographic capitalism, the force of work reveals its actual substratum: orgasmic force, or *potentia gaudendi*. Current capitalism tries to put to work the *potentia gaudendi* in whatever form in which it exists, whether this be in its pharmacological form (a consumable molecule and material agency that will operate within the body of the person who is digesting it), as a pornographic representation (a semiotethical sign that can be converted into numeric data or transferred into digital, televisual, or telephonic media), or as a sexual service (a live pharmacopornographic entity whose orgasmic force and emotional volume are put in service to a consumer during a specified time, according to a more or less formal contract of sale of sexual services).

Potentia gaudendi is characterized not only by its impermanence and great malleability, but also and above all by the impossibility of possessing and retaining it. *Potentia gaudendi*, as the fundamental energetics of pharmacopornism, does not allow itself to be reified or transformed into private property. I can neither possess nor retain another's *potentia gaudendi*, but neither can one possess or retain what seems to be one's own. *Potentia gaudendi* exists exclusively as an event, a relation, a practice, or an evolutionary process.

Orgasmic force is both the most abstract and the most material of all workforces. It is inextricably carnal and digital, viscous yet representational by numerical values, a phantasmatic or molecular wonder that can be transformed into capital.

The living pansexual body is the *bioport* of the orgasmic force. Thus, it cannot be reduced to a prediscursive organism; its limits do not coincide with the skin capsule that surrounds it. This life cannot be understood as a biological given; it does not exist outside the interlacing of production and culture that belongs to technoscience. This body is a technoliving, multiconnected entity incorporating technology.³⁴ Neither an organism nor a machine, but “the fluid, dispersed, networking techno-organic-textual-mythic system.”³⁵ This new condition of the body blurs the traditional modern distinction between art, performance,

34. Haraway, *Modest_Witness*.

35. Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 219.

media, design, and architecture. The new pharmacological and surgical techniques set in motion tectonic construction processes that combine figurative representations derived from cinema and from architecture (editing, 3-D modeling, 3-D printing, etc.), according to which the organs, the vessels, the fluids (techno-blood, techno-sperm, etc.), and the molecules are converted into the prime material from which our pharmacopornographic corporality is manufactured. Technobodies are either not-yet-alive or already-dead: we are half fetuses, half zombies. Thus, every politics of resistance is a monster politics. Marshall McLuhan, Buckminster Fuller, and Norbert Wiener had an intuition about it in the 1950s: the technologies of communication function like an extension of the body. Today, the situation seems a lot more complex—the individual body functions like an extension of global technologies of communication. “Embodiment is significant prosthesis.”³⁶ To borrow the terms of the American feminist Donna J. Haraway, the twenty-first-century body is a technoliving system, the result of an irreversible implosion of modern binaries (female/male, animal/human, nature/culture). Even the term *life* has become archaic for identifying the actors in this new technology. For Foucault’s notion of “biopower,” Donna J. Haraway has substituted “techno-biopower.” It’s no longer a question of power over life, of the power to manage and maximize life, as Foucault wanted, but of power and control exerted over a technoliving and connected whole.³⁷

36. Ibid., 195.

37. Ibid., 204–30.

In the circuit in which excitation is technoproduced, there are neither living bodies nor dead bodies, but present or missing, actual or virtual connectors. Images, viruses, computer programs, techno-organic fluids, Net surfers, electronic voices that answer phone sex lines, drugs and living dead animals in the laboratory on which they are tested, frozen embryos, mother cells, active alkaloid molecules . . . display no value in the current global economy as being “alive” or “dead,” but only to the extent that they can or can’t be integrated into a bioelectronics of global excitation. Haraway reminds us that “cyborg figures—such as the end-of-the-millennium seed, chip gene, database, bomb, fetus, race, brain, and ecosystem—are the offspring of implosions of subjects and objects and of the natural and artificial.”³⁸ Every technobody, including a dead technobody, can unleash orgasmic force, thus becoming a carrier of the power of production of sexual capital. The force that lets itself be converted into capital lies neither in *bios* nor in *soma*, in the way that they have been conceived from Aristotle to Darwin, but in *techno-eros*, the technoliving enchanted body and its *potentia gaudendi*. And from this it follows that biopolitics (the politics of the control and production of life) as well as necropolitics (the politics of the control and production of death) function as pharmacoporno politics, as planetary managements of *potentia gaudendi*.

Sex, the so-called sexual organs, pleasure and impotence, joy and horror are moved to the center of technopolitical management as soon as the possibility of drawing

38. Haraway, *Modest_Witness*, 12.

profit from orgasmic force comes into play. If the theorists of post-Fordism were interested in immaterial work, in cognitive work, in “non-objectifiable work,”³⁹ in “affective work,”⁴⁰ we theorists of pharmacopornographic capitalism are interested in sexual work as a process of subjectivization, in the possibility of making the subject an inexhaustible supply of planetary ejaculation that can be transformed into abstraction and digital data—into capital.

This theory of “orgasmic force” should not be read through a Hegelian paranoid or Rousseauist utopian/dystopian prism; the market isn’t an outside power coming to expropriate, repress, or control the sexual instincts of the individual. On the other hand, we are being confronted by the most depraved of political situations: the body isn’t aware of its *potentia gaudendi* as long as it does not put it to work.

Orgasmic force in its role as the workforce finds itself progressively regulated by a strict technobiopolitical control. The sexual body is the product of a sexual division of flesh according to which each organ is defined by its function. A sexuality always implies a precise governing of the mouth, hand, anus, vagina. Until recently, the relationship between buying/selling and dependence that united the capitalist to the worker also governed the relationship between the genders, which was conceived as a relationship between the ejaculator and the facilitator of ejaculation. Femininity, far from being nature, is the quality of the

39. Paolo Virno, “La multitude comme subjectivité,” in *Grammaire de la multitude: pour une analyse des formes de vie contemporaines* (Paris: Éditions de l’éclat, 2002), 78–121.

40. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitudes*, 134.

orgasmic force when it can be converted into merchandise, into an object of economic exchange, into work. Obviously, a male body can occupy (and in fact already does occupy) a position of female gender in the market of sex work and, as a result, see its orgasmic power reduced to a capacity for work.

The control of orgasmic power (*puissance*) not only defines the difference between genders, the female/male dichotomy, it also governs, in a more general way, the technobiopolitical difference between heterosexuality and homosexuality. The technical restriction of masturbation and the invention of homosexuality as a pathology are of a pair with the composition of a disciplinary regime at the heart of which the collective orgasmic force is put to work as a function of the heterosexual reproduction of the species. Heterosexuality must be understood as a politically assisted procreation technology. But after the 1940s, the molecularized sexual body was introduced into the machinery of capital and forced to mutate its forms of production. Biopolitical conditions change drastically when it becomes possible to derive benefits from masturbation through the mechanism of pornography and the employment of techniques for the control of sexual reproduction by means of contraceptives and artificial insemination.

If we agree with Marx that “workforce is not actual work carried out but the simple potential or ability for work,” then it must be said that every human or animal, real or virtual, female or male body possesses this masturbatory potentiality, a *potentia gaudendi*, the power to produce molecular joy, and therefore also possesses productive

power without being consumed and depleted in the process. Until now, we've been aware of the direct relationship between the pornification of the body and the level of oppression. Throughout history, the most pornified bodies have been those of non-human animals, women and children, the racialized bodies of the slave, the bodies of young workers and the homosexual body. But there is no ontological relationship between anatomy and *potentia gaudendi*. The credit goes to the French writer Michel Houellebecq for having understood how to build a dystopian fable about this new capacity of global capitalism, which has manufactured the megaslut and the megaletch. The new hegemonic subject is a body (often codified as male, white, and heterosexual) supplemented pharmacopornographically (by Viagra, coke, pornography) and a consumer of pauperized sexual services (often in bodies codified as female, childlike, or racialized):

"When he can, a westerner *works*; he often finds his work frustrating or boring, but he pretends to find it interesting: this much is obvious. At the age of fifty, weary of teaching, of math, of everything, I decided to see the world. I had just been divorced for the third time; as far as sex was concerned, I wasn't expecting much. My first trip was to Thailand, and immediately after that I left for Madagascar. I haven't fucked a white woman since. I've never even felt the desire to do so. Believe me," he added, placing a firm hand on Lionel's forearm, "you won't find a white woman with a soft, submissive, supple, muscular pussy anymore. That's all gone now."⁴¹

41. Michel Houellebecq, *Platform*, trans. Frank Wynne (New York: Random House, 2002), 80.

Power is located not only in the (“female,” “childlike,” or “nonwhite”) body as a space traditionally imagined as pre-discursive and natural, but also in the collection of representations that render it sexual and desirable. In every case it remains a body that is always pharmacopornographic, a technoliving system that is the effect of a widespread cultural mechanism of representation and production.

The goal of contemporary critical theory would be to unravel our condition as pharmacopornographic workers/consumers. If the current theory of the *feminization of labor* omits the *cum shot*, conceals videographic ejaculation behind the screen of cooperative communication, it’s because, unlike Houellebecq, the philosophers of biopolitics prefer not to reveal their position as customers of the global pharmacopornomarket.

In the first volume of *Homo Sacer*, Giorgio Agamben reclaims Walter Benjamin’s concept of the “naked life” in order to define the biopolitical status of the subject after Auschwitz, a subject whose paradigm would be the concentration camp prisoner or the illegal immigrant held in a temporary detention center, reduced to existing only physically and stripped of all legal status or citizenship. To such a notion of the “naked life,” we could add that of the pharmacopornographic life, or *naked technolife*; the distinctive feature of a body stripped of all legal or political status is that its use is intended as a source of production of *potentia gaudendi*. The distinctive feature of a body reduced to naked technolife, in both democratic societies and fascist regimes, is precisely the power to be the object of maximum pharmacopornographic exploitation. Identical codes

of pornographic representation function in the images of the prisoners of Abu Ghraib,⁴² the eroticized images of Thai adolescents, advertisements for L'Oréal and McDonald's, and the pages of *Hot magazine*. All these bodies are already functioning, in an inexhaustible manner, as carnal and digital sources of ejaculatory capital. For the Aristotelian distinction between *zōē* and *bios*, between animal life deprived of any intentionality and "exalted" life, that is, life gifted with meaning and self-determination that is a substrate of biopolitical government, we must today substitute the distinction between *raw* and *biotech* (biotechnoculturally produced); and the latter term refers to the condition of life in the pharmacopornographic era. Biotechnological reality deprived of all civic context (the body of the migrant, the deported, the colonized, the porn actress/actor, the sex worker, the laboratory animal, etc.) becomes that of the *corpus* (and no longer that of *homo*) *pornographicus* whose life (a technical condition rather than a purely biological one), lacking any right to citizenship, authorship, and right to work, is composed by and subject to self-surveillance and global mediatization. No need to resort to the dystopian model of the concentration or extermination camp—which are easy to denounce as mechanisms of control—in order to discover naked technolife, because it's at the center of postindustrial democracies, forming part of a global, integrated multimedia laboratory-brothel, where the control of the flow of affect begins under the pop form of excitation-frustration.

42. See Judith Butler, "Torture and Ethics fo Photography," in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. 25, no. 6 (April 19, 2007): 951–66.

EXCITE AND CONTROL

The gradual transformation of sexual cooperation into a principal productive force cannot be accomplished without the technical control of reproduction. There's no porn without the Pill or without Viagra. Inversely, there is no Viagra or Pill without porn. The new kind of sexual production implies a detailed and strict control of the forces of reproduction of the species. There is no pornography without a parallel surveillance and control of the body's affects and fluids. Acting on this pharmacoporno body are the forces of the reproduction industry, entailing control of the production of eggs, techniques of programming relationships, straw collections of sperm, in vitro fertilization, artificial insemination, the monitoring of pregnancy, the technical planning of childbirth, and so on. Consequently, the sexual division of traditional work gradually disintegrates. Pharmacopornographic capitalism is ushering in a new era in which the most interesting kind of commerce is the production of the species as species, the production of its mind and its body, its desires and its affects. Contemporary biocapitalism at the same time produces and destroys the species. Although we're accustomed to speaking of a society of consumption, the objects of consumption are only the scintilla of a psychotoxic virtual production. We are consumers of air, dreams, identity, relation, things of the mind. This pharmacopornographic capitalism functions in reality thanks to the biomediatric management of subjectivity, through molecular control and the production of virtual audiovisual connections.

The pharmaceutical and audiovisual digital industry are the two pillars on which contemporary biocapitalism relies; they are the two tentacles of a gigantic, viscous built-in circuit. The pharmacoporno program of the second half of the twentieth century is this: control the sexuality of those bodies codified as woman and cause the ejaculation of those bodies codified as men. The Pill, Prozac, and Viagra are to the pharmaceutical industry what pornography, with its grammar of blowjobs, penetrations, and cum shots, is to the industry of culture: the jackpot of postindustrial biocapitalism.

Within the context of biocapitalism, an illness is the conclusion of a medical and pharmaceutical model, the result of a technical and institutional medium that is capable of explaining it discursively, of realizing it and of treating it in a manner that is more or less operational. From a pharmacopornopolitical point of view, a third of the African population infected with HIV *isn't really sick*. The thousands of seropositive people who die each day on the continent of Africa are precarious bodies whose survival has *not yet* been capitalized as bioconsumers/producers by the Western pharmaceutical industry. For the pharmacopornographic system, these bodies are *neither dead nor living*. They are in a prepharmacopornographic state or their life isn't likely to produce an ejaculatory benefit, which amounts to the same thing. They are bodies excluded from the technobiopolitical regime. The emerging pharmaceutical industries of India, Brazil, or Thailand are fiercely fighting for the right to distribute their antiretrovirus therapies. Similarly, if we are still waiting for the commercialization of a vaccine for

malaria (a disease that was causing five million deaths a year on the continent of Africa), it is partly because the countries that need it can't pay for it. The same Western multinational companies that are launching costly programs for the production of Viagra or new treatments for prostate cancer would never invest in malaria. If we do not take into account calculations about pharmacopornographic profitability, it becomes obvious that erectile dysfunction and prostate cancer are not at all priorities in countries where life expectancies for human bodies stricken by tuberculosis, malaria, and AIDS don't exceed the age of fifty-five.⁴³

In the context of pharmacopornographic capitalism, sexual desire and illness are produced and cultivated on the same basis: without the technical, pharmaceutical, and mediatic supports capable of materializing them, they don't exist.

We are living in a toxopornographic era. The postmodern body is becoming collectively desirable through its pharmacological management and audiovisual advancement: two sectors in which the United States holds—for the moment but, perhaps not for long—worldwide hegemony. These two forces for the creation of capital are dependent not on an economy of production, but on an *economy of invention*. As Philippe Pignare has pointed out, “The pharmaceutical industry is one of the economic sectors where the cost of research and development is very high, whereas the manufacturing costs are extremely low. Unlike in the automobile industry, nothing is easier than reproducing a drug and

43. Michael Kremer and Christopher M. Snyder, “Why Is There No AIDS Vaccine?” (Research Paper, Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, June 2006).

guaranteeing its chemical synthesis on a massive scale, but nothing is more difficult or more costly than inventing it.”⁴⁴ In the same way, nothing costs less, materially speaking, than filming a blowjob or vaginal or anal penetration with a video camera. Drugs, like orgasms and books, are relatively easy and inexpensive to fabricate. The difficulty resides in their conception and political dissemination.⁴⁵ Pharmacopornographic biocapitalism does not produce things. It produces movable ideas, living organs, symbols, desires, chemical reactions, and affects. In the fields of biotechnology and pornocommunication, there are no objects to produce; it’s a matter of *inventing* a subject and producing it on a global scale.

44. Philippe Pignarre, *Le grand secret de l'industrie pharmaceutique* (Paris: La Découverte, 2004), 18.

45. Maurizio Lazzarato, *Puissance de l'invention: La Psychologie économique de Gabriel Tarde contre l'économie politique* (Paris: Les Empêcheurs de Penser en Rond, 2002).

3. TESTOGEL

As always I'm inside writing, simultaneously the scientist and the rat he's ripping open to study.

—HERVÉ GUIBERT

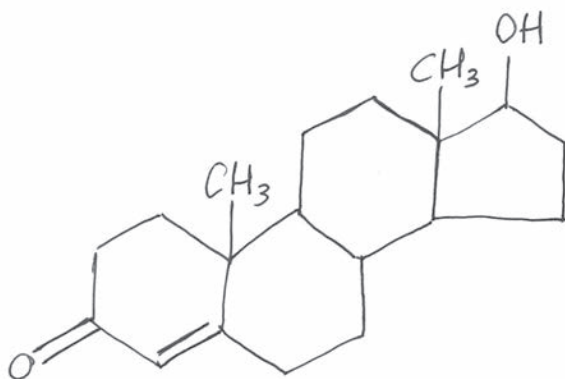
A few months before your death, Del, my master gender hacker, gives me a box of thirty packets of fifty-milligram testosterone in gel form. I keep them in a glass box for a long time, as if they were dissected scarabs, poison bullets extracted from a corpse, fetuses of an unknown species, vampire teeth capable of flying at your throat just for your having looked at them. During this period, I spend my time with my trans friends. Some are taking hormones as part of a protocol to change sex, and others are fooling with it, self-medicating without trying to change their gender legally or going through any psychiatric follow-up. They don't identify with the term *gender dysphorics* and declare themselves "gender pirates," or "gender hackers." I belong to this latter group of testosterone users. We're *copyleft*¹ users who consider sex hormones free and open biocodes, whose use shouldn't be regulated by the state or commanded by pharmaceutical companies. When I decide to

1. A play on the word "copyright."—Trans.

take my first dose of testosterone, I don't talk about it to anyone. As if it were a hard drug, I wait until I'm alone in my home to try it. I wait for nightfall. I take a packet out of the glass box, which I close immediately, to be sure that today, for my first time, I'll take one, and only one, dose. I've barely started, yet I'm already behaving as if I were an addict of an illegal substance. I hide, keep an eye on myself, censure myself, exercise restraint. The following evening, almost at the same time, I take a second fifty-milligram dose. On the third day, the third dose. During these days and nights, I'm writing the text that will go with Del's last book of photos. I don't speak to anyone, just write. As if writing were the only accurate witness of this process. All the others are going to betray me. I know they're going to judge me for having taken testosterone. Some, because I'm going to become a man among men, because I was doing well as a girl. Others, because I took testosterone outside the aegis of a medical protocol, without wanting to become a man, because I used testosterone like a hard drug, like any other, and gave bad press to testosterone at the very moment when the law is beginning to integrate transsexuals into society, to guarantee reimbursement from the state health service for the drugs and operations.

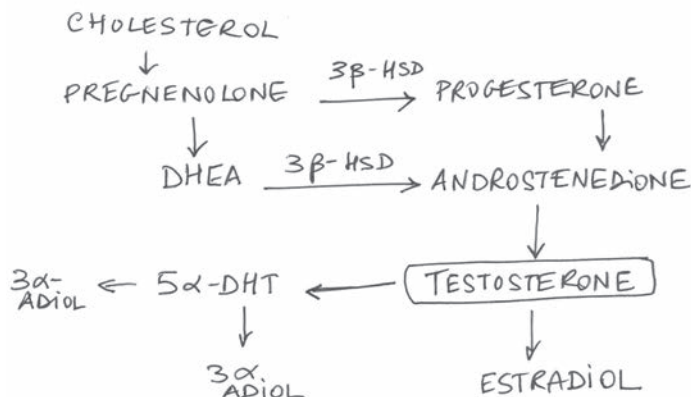
Writing is the place where my secret addiction resides, at the same time as the stage on which my addiction seals a pact with the multitude. On the fourth night, no sleep. I'm lucid, energetic, wide awake, like I was the first night I had sex with a girl, when I was a kid. At four in the morning, I'm still writing, without the slightest sign of fatigue. Sitting in front of the computer, I feel the muscles of my back

innervated by a cybernetic cable that starts at the surface of the city and grows in length, passing through my skull to connect with the planets most distant from Earth. At six in the morning, after ten hours of not moving from my chair, of drinking only water, I get up and go out with my dog, Justine, for a walk in the city. It's the first time I leave my home at six in the morning without a precise destination, on an autumn day. The bulldog is puzzled; she doesn't like to go out so early, but she follows. I need to breathe the air of the city, to leave the space of domesticity, to walk outside where I feel at home. I walk down rue de Belleville to the Chinese market; the African garbage collectors are building dikes with old rugs to change the course of the sewage. I wait for the Les Folies bar to open, have a coffee, wolf down two croissants, and return up the street. When I get home, I'm sweating. I notice my sweat has changed. I collapse onto the couch and watch i-Télé, the news only, and for the first time in three days I fall into a deep sleep drenched in that testosterone sweat, next to Justine.



CHEMICAL STRUCTURE
OF TESTOSTERONE

TESTOSTERONE METABOLISM



SHOOT

The testosterone I'm taking has the brand name Testogel. It was produced by Besins Laboratories in Montrouge, France. Here is the description of this drug from the package insert:

TESTOGEL 50 mg is a transparent or slightly opalescent and colorless gel packaged in 5-gram sachets. It contains testosterone, a naturally secreted male hormone. This drug is recommended for illnesses related to a deficiency of testosterone. Before beginning a treatment with TESTOGEL, a deficiency in testosterone must be established by a series of clinical signs (decline of secondary sexual characteristics, changes in physical constitution, asthenia, a decrease in libido, erectile dysfunction, etc.). This drug has been prescribed to you for your own use and must not be given to others.

Attention: TESTOGEL should not be used by women.

Safety Instructions for Users of TESTOGEL 50 mg, gel in sachets:

Possible transference of testosterone.

Failing to follow recommended safety instructions may cause the transfer of testosterone onto another individual during intimate and prolonged cutaneous contact with the area to which the gel has been applied. This transfer can be avoided by covering the area of application with clothing or by showering before all contact.

The following safety instructions are advised:

Wash hands with water and soap after applying the gel.

Cover the area of application with clothing once the gel has dried.

Shower before all intimate contact.

For those individuals not being treated with TESTOGEL 50:

In case of contact with an unwashed or uncovered area of application, immediately wash with soap and water skin that may have been subjected to a transfer of testosterone.

Consult a physician if the following symptoms appear: acne, changes in pilosity.

It is preferable to wait approximately six hours between application of the gel and showering or bathing. However, washing occasionally one to six hours after application of the gel should not significantly change the course of treatment.

To guarantee the safety of one's female partner, the patient is advised to observe a prolonged interval of time between application of the gel and the period of contact, to wear a T-shirt over the site of application during the period of contact, or to shower before any sexual activity.

I am reading the Testogel package insert, realizing that I'm holding a manual for microfascism, at the same time as I'm worrying about the possible immediate or side effects of the molecule on my body. The laboratory assumes that the testosterone user is a "man" who isn't producing enough androgen naturally and who, obviously, is heterosexual (the safety instructions concerning the cutaneous transfer of testosterone allude to a female partner). Does this notion of a man refer to the chromosomal (XY), genital (possessing a penis and well-differentiated testicles), or legal (the specification "Sex: M" appearing on one's ID card) definition? If the administration of synthetic testosterone is prescribed for cases of testosterone deficiency, when and according to what criteria is it possible to affirm that a body is deficient? Does an examination of my clinical symptoms indicate a lack of testosterone? Isn't it the case that my beard has never grown and that my clitoris does not exceed a centimeter and a half? What would the ideal size and degree of erectility of a clitoris be? And what about the political signs? How can we measure them? Be that as it may, in order to legally obtain a dose of synthetic testosterone, it is necessary to stop defining yourself as a woman. Even before the effects of the testosterone are apparent in my body, the condition for the possibility of administering the molecule to me is having renounced my female identity. An excellent political tautology. Like depressions or schizophrenia, masculinity and femininity are pharmacopornographic fictions retroactively defined in relationship to the molecule with which they are treated. The category *depression* does not exist without the synthetic molecule of

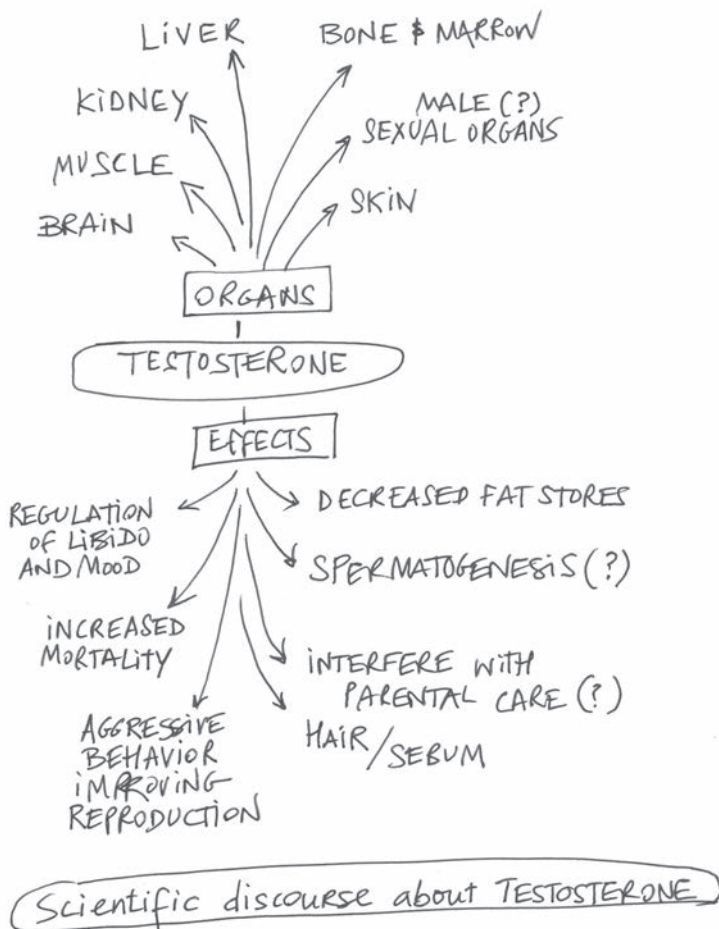
serotonin, the same way that clinical masculinity does not exist without synthetic testosterone.

I decide to keep my legal identity as a woman and to take testosterone without subscribing to a sex change protocol. It's a bit like biting the dick that's raping you, the pharmacopornographic system's dick. Obviously, such a position is one of political arrogance. If I'm able to take such a liberty at this time, it's because I don't need to go out and look for work, because I'm white, because I have no intention of having a bureaucratic relationship to the state. My decision does not enter into conflict with the position of all the transsexuals who've decided to sign a contract with the state for changing sex in order to have access both to the molecule and to legal identity as a male.² Actually, my gesture would lack strength were it not for the legions of silent transsexuals for whom the molecule, the protocol, and the change of legal identity are essential. All of us are united by the same carbon chains, by the same invisible gel; without them, none of this would have any meaning.

This drug is reserved for the use of the adult male.

Suggested dosage is 5 g of gel (equivalent to 50 mg of testosterone) once a day, to be applied at the same time, preferably in the morning. The physician will adapt the doses according to the needs of the patient, without exceeding

2. On March 1, 2007, the Spanish government acknowledged the request of the transsexual lobbies to have access to a legal change of sex (a change of name on identification cards) without being obliged to undergo surgery. However, this law requires the hormonal and social transformation of the individual during a period of at least two years as a condition for legally changing sex (in reality, the terms changing name or changing gender would be more precise). The measure is currently being criticized by various transsexual and transgender movements in Spain.



10 g of gel per day. Use the product on clean, dry and healthy skin and apply a thin coating on the shoulders, arms or abdomen without rubbing. Once a sachet has been opened, all its contents should be applied immediately to the skin. Allow to dry 3 to 5 minutes before dressing. Wash hands with soap and water after application. Do not apply in the area of the genitals (penis and testicles); due to its high alcohol content, the gel can cause irritations at the site of application.

Respect the directions for use indicated by your physician.

If you have accidentally exceeded the proper dose of TESTOGEL mg, consult your physician.

The leaflet doesn't supply instructions for hormonal therapy for the changing of sex. Undoubtedly, in such a case, the doses must be different. The only mention of potential addiction to testosterone is this discreet reference: "Consult your physician if you've exceeded the prescribed dose of Testogel." I take a mental inventory of all my friends who are taking more than fifty milligrams a day: HJ, PP, RZ, FU, KB, BS . . . I won't be able to claim that I didn't know.

If you've forgotten to take your TESTOGEL 50 mg, gel in sachets:

Do not take a double dose to compensate for this oversight.

Possible side effects of TESTOGEL 50 mg, gel in sachets:

Like all active substances, TESTOGEL 50 mg, gel in sachets, can produce side effects. Cutaneous reactions at the site of application, such as irritation, acne, dry skin, have been

observed. TESTOGEL can cause headaches, alopecia (hair loss), a feeling of pressure in mammary areas accompanied or not by pain, changes in the prostate, alteration of blood composition (increase of red blood cells and lipids in the blood), cutaneous hypersensitivity, and itching. Other side effects that have been observed during oral or injectable testosterone treatment include hypertrophy of the prostate (a benign increase in size of prostate), progression of undetected cancer of the prostate, pruritus (itching) anywhere on the body, reddening of the face or neck, nausea, icterus (yellow coloration of the skin and mucous membranes), increase of libido (sexual desire), depression, nervousness, muscle pains, changes in electrolyte balance (content of salt in the blood), oligospermia (decrease in number of spermatozoa), frequent or prolonged erections.

Certain clinical signs, such as irritability, nervousness, weight gain, or too frequent or persistent erections, may indicate that the effects of this substance are too powerful. Speak about this with your physician, who will adjust your daily dose of TESTOGEL.

Use by athletes and women:

Athletes and women should be warned that this product contains an active ingredient that is likely to produce a positive result in antidoping screenings.

Athletes *and* women? Must one detect a hidden syllogism here according to which all athletes are men, or must one understand that women, even if they are athletic, always remain women more than athletes? This is one way of tracing a political boundary when it comes to testosterone use. Actually, it's a warning to athletes *and* to women

that testosterone can be considered to be an illegal stimulant. Outside the law. For women, whether they're athletic or not, taking testosterone is a form of doping.

Keep this leaflet. You may need to reread it.

The list of undesirable side effect may be long, but I'm placing a limit on cultural paranoia, and I put the leaflet in a file intended for the following: "T. Research." I certainly will need to reread it.

Testogel, says the medical leaflet, is not in any case to be given to an individual for whom it has not been prescribed (for example, the way Del has given it to me, as I've given it to King E., as King E. has given it to V. King, etc.), a condition that is common to the majority of drugs: antibiotics, antivirals, corticoids, and so on. In the case of testosterone, controls over "passage of the substance" seem more complicated, not only because it is liable to be sold on the black market and consumed without a prescription, but especially because Testogel applied to one body can "pass" imperceptibly onto another body through skin contact. Testosterone is one of the rare drugs that is spread by sweat, from skin to skin, body to body.

How can such trafficking—the microdiffusion of minute drops of sweat, the importing and exporting of vapors, such contraband exhalations—be controlled, surveyed; how to prevent the contact of crystalline mists, how to control the transparent demon's sliding from another's skin toward mine?

RENDEZVOUS WITH T

Paris, November 25, 2005. I'm waiting until ten in the evening to take a new dose of Testogel. I've taken a shower so that I don't have to wash myself after applying it. I've set out a blue work shirt, a tie, and black trousers to take Justine out for a walk afterward. I haven't felt any change since yesterday. I'm waiting for the effects of T., without knowing exactly what they'll be or how or when they'll become apparent. I've spent the last two hours on Skype talking with Del; we've been choosing the photos that will be published in his new book, *Sex Works*. I prefer the ones taken in public places, like that series from the S&M scene at Scott's Bar in the early 1980s. Three bodies are getting it on in the bathrooms, which have paneled walls: two lesbians with their clothes on are busy with a third, half-naked body. They're using a black leather switch to whip an ass that's been offered to them, someone leaning against a door with a plaid shirt rolled up around the neck and Levis 501 at the knees. In this series, the lens varies its point of view, getting nearer and farther from skin, objects, seeking out or evading glances, showing or hiding the affects that are produced. One of the photos disregards the main scene to focus on the geometric patterns of the tiles. Scott's Bar was a lesbian cathedral; the arrangement of its secret signs outlines the labyrinth of a Sapphic Chartres, shows the path of a pleasure that has never yet been experienced. Then the lens returns to the bodies. In the middle ground of the shot, a butch and a femme, who are nude, are rummaging through the shirts hanging in a makeshift wardrobe. Bill, the perfect embodiment of butch, is in the

foreground: short hair, a fifties rocker look, smooth face, a cigarette dangling slightly downward from the left side of the mouth, a small name tag around the neck (the graininess of the black-and-white photo makes it impossible to make out the details); a black leather jacket over a naked torso, nothing underneath except the hump of a stuffed white jockstrap and a studded black belt from which hangs a bunch of sparkling keys. To the left, a slender butch is leaning a shaved head against a fire extinguisher. We talk only about the photos, even though it was Del who gave me the packets of Testogel. I don't tell him that I'm hanging up in order to take my dose. I just tell him I have to hang up. He manages to keep me on a few minutes more by paying me compliments, and I'm late for my ten o'clock rendezvous with T. A minute later, there I am: I've opened the silver packet, and the cool, transparent gel has disappeared under the skin of my arms. All that's left is a cool whiff of mint that draws my shoulders up toward the sky.

No drug is as pure as testosterone in gel form. It's odorless. However, the day after I take it, my sweat becomes sickly sweet, more acidic. The smell of a plastic doll heated by the sun comes from me, apple liqueur abandoned at the bottom of a glass. It's my body that is reacting to the molecule. Testosterone has no taste or color, leaves no traces. The testosterone molecule dissolves into the skin as a ghost walks through a wall. It enters without warning, penetrates without leaving a mark. You don't need to smoke, sniff, or inject it or even swallow it. It's enough to bring it near my skin, and its mere proximity to the body causes it to disappear into and become diluted in my blood.

4. HISTORY OF TECHNOSEXUALITY

The discontinuity of history, body, power: Foucault describes the transformation of European society in the late eighteenth century from what he calls a “sovereign society” into a “disciplinary society,” which he sees as a shift away from a form of power that determines and ritualizes death toward a new form of power that technically plans life based on population, health, and the national interest. *Bio-pouvoir* (biopower) is his way of referring to this new form of productive, diffuse, sprawling power. Spilling beyond the boundaries of the legal realm and punitive sphere, it becomes a force of “somato-power” that penetrates and composes the body of the modern individual. This power no longer plays the role of a coercive law through a negative mandate but is more versatile and welcoming, taking on the form of “an art of governing life,” an overall political technology that is transformed into disciplinary architectures (prisons, barracks, schools, hospitals, etc.), scientific texts, statistical tables, demographic calculations, how-to manuals, usage guidelines, schedules for the regulation of reproduction, and public health projects. Foucault underlined the centrality of sex and of sexuality in this modern art of government. The biopower processes of the feminine body’s hysterization, children’s sexual pedagogy, the regu-

lation of procreative conduct, and the psychiatrization of the pervert's pleasures will be to Foucault the axes of this project that he characterized with some degree of irony as a process of sexual modernization.¹

In keeping with the intuitions of Michel Foucault, Monique Wittig, and Judith Butler, I refer to one of the dominant forms of this biopolitical action, which emerged with disciplinary capitalism, as *sexopolitics*.² *Sex*, its truth, its visibility, and its forms of externalization; *sexuality* and the normal and pathological forms of pleasure; and *race*, in its purity or degeneracy, are three powerful somatic fictions that have obsessed the Western world since the eighteenth century, eventually defining the scope of all contemporary theoretical, scientific, and political activity. These are somatic fictions, not because they lack material reality but because their existence depends on what Judith Butler calls the performative repetition of processes of political construction.³

Sex has become such a part of plans for power that the discourse on masculinity and femininity, as well as techniques of normalizing sexual identity, have turned into governmental agents of the control and standardization of life. Hetero- and homosexual identities were invented in 1868, inside a sphere of empiricism, taxonomic classification, and psychopathology. Likewise, Krafft-Ebing created an encyclopedia of normal and perverse sexualities where

1. Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité: La volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 136–39; see also Michel Foucault, *Naissance de la biopolitique: Cours au collège de France, 1978–1979* (Paris: Seuil, 2004).

2. Beatriz Preciado, "Multitudes Queer," *Multitudes* 12 (printemps 2003): 17–25.

3. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

sexual identities became objects of knowledge, surveillance, and judicial repression.⁴ At the end of the nineteenth century, laws criminalizing sodomy spread throughout Europe. “Sexual difference” was codified visually as an anatomical truth. The fallopian tubes, Bartholin’s gland, and the clitoris were defined as anatomical entities. One of the elemental political differences of the West (being a man or a woman) could be summed up by a banal equation: whether one had or did not have at birth a penis that was a centimeter and a half long. The first experiments in artificial insemination were accomplished on animals. With the help of mechanical instruments, interventions were made in the domain of the production of female pleasure; whereas, on the one hand, masturbation was controlled and prohibited, on the other, the female orgasm was medicalized and perceived as a crisis of hysteria.⁵ Male orgasm was mechanized and domesticated through the lens of a budding pornographic codification . . . Machinery was on the way. The body, whether docile or rabid, was ready.

We could call the “sexual empire” (if we can be allowed to sexualize Hardt and Negri’s rather chaste catchword)⁶ that biopolitical regime that uses sex, sexuality, and sexual identity as the somato-political centers for producing and governing subjectivity. Western disciplinary sexopolitics at

4. Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis: The Classic Study of Deviant Sex* (New York: Arcade, 1998).

5. For a visual history of hysteria see Georges Didi-Huberman, *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpetriere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004); for a history of the technologies of the hysteric body see Rachel P. Maines, *The Technology of Orgasm: “Hysteria,” Vibrators and Women’s Sexual Satisfaction* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001).

6. Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Empire* (Paris: Exils, 2000).

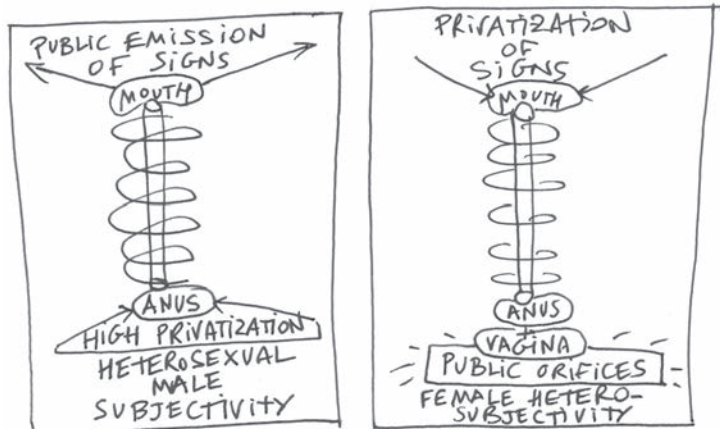
the end of the nineteenth and during a good part of the twentieth century boils down to a regulation of the conditions of reproduction or to those biological processes that “concern the population.” For the sexopolitics of the nineteenth century, the heterosexual is the artifact that will rake in the most success for government. The *straight mind*, to borrow an expression developed by Monique Wittig in the 1980s to designate heterosexuality—taken not as a sexual practice but as a political regime⁷—guarantees the structural relationship between the production of sexual identity and the production of certain body parts (to the detriment of others) as reproductive organs. One important task of this disciplinary work will consist of excluding the anus from circuits of production and pleasure. In the words of Deleuze and Guattari, “The first organ to suffer privatization, removal from the social field, was the anus. It was the anus that offered itself as a model for privatization, at the same time that money came to express the flows’ new state of abstraction.”⁸ The anus as a center of production of pleasure (and, in this sense, closely related to the mouth or hand, which are also organs strongly controlled by the sexopolitical campaign against masturbation and homosexuality in the nineteenth century) has no gender. Neither male nor female, it creates a short circuit in the division of the sexes. As a center of primordial passivity and a perfect locale for the abject, positioned close to waste and shit, it serves as the universal black hole into which rush genders, sexes, identities, and capital. The West has

7. Monique Wittig, *La Pensée straight* (Paris: Balland, 2001), 65–76.

8. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* (London: Continuum, 2004), 157.

designed a tube with two orifices: a mouth that emits public signs and an impenetrable anus around which it winds a male, heterosexual subjectivity, which acquires the status of a socially privileged body.

2 STRAIGHT SOMATIC FICTIONS



Until the seventeenth century, the sexual epistemology of the sovereign regime was dominated by what the historian Thomas Laqueur calls “a system of similarities”; female sexual anatomy was set up as a weak, internalized, degenerate variation of the only sex that possessed an ontological existence, the male.⁹ The ovaries were considered to be internal testicles and the vagina to be an inverted penis that served as a receptacle for male sex organs. Abortion and infanticide, practices of the time, weren’t regu-

9. Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 63–108.

lated by the legal apparatus of the state but by different economic-political micropowers to which pregnant bodies found themselves affixed (the tribe, the feudal house, the paterfamilias . . .). Two hierarchically differentiated social and political expressions divide the surface of a “mono-sexual” model: “man,” the perfect model of the human, and “woman,” a reproductive receptacle. In the sovereign regime, masculinity is the only somatic fiction with political power. Masculinity (embodied within the figures of the king and the father) is defined by necropolitical techniques: the king and the father are those who have the right of giving death. Sex assignment depended not only on the external morphology of the organs but, above all, on reproductive capacity and social role. A bearded woman who was capable of pregnancy, of putting a child into the world and nursing it, was considered a woman, regardless of the shape and size of her vulva. Within such a somato-political configuration, sex and sexuality (note that the term *sexuality* itself wouldn’t be invented until 1880) do not yet amount to categories of knowledge or techniques of subjectivization that are likely to outdo the political segmentation that separates the slave from the free man, the citizen from the metic, or the lord from the serf. Differences between masculinity and femininity remain, as well as between several modes of the production of sexual pleasure, but these do not yet determine the crystallizations of sexopolitical subjectivity.

Beginning in the eighteenth century, a new, visual sexopolitical regime that depends on a “system of oppositions” rather than on “similarities” takes form. It maps out a new sexual anatomy, in which the female sex ceases to be an

inversion or interiorization of the male sex and becomes an entirely different sex whose forms and functions proceed from their own anatomical logic. According to Thomas Laqueur, the invention of what could be called the aesthetic of sexual (and racial) difference is needed to establish an anatomical-political hierarchy between the sexes (male, female) and the races (white, nonwhite) in the face of upheavals resulting from movements of revolution and liberation that are clamoring for the enlargement of the boundaries of the public spheres for women and foreigners. It is here that anatomical truth functions like a legitimization of a new political organization of the social field.¹⁰

The change that will give birth to the disciplinary regime begins with the political management of syphilis, the advent of sexual difference, the technical repression of masturbation, and the invention of sexual identities.¹¹ The culmination of these rigid and cumbersome technologies of the production of sexual identity will come in 1868 with the pathologizing of homosexuality and the bourgeois normalization of heterosexuality. From then on, abortion and postpartum infanticide will be subject to surveillance and punished by law. The body and its products will become the property of the male/husband/father and, by extension, the state and God.

Inside this system of recognition, any corporal divergence from the norm (such as the size and form of the sex organs, facial pilosity, and the shape and size of the breasts)

10. Ibid., 149–92.

11. See Thomas Laqueur, *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation* (New York: Zone Books, 2003).

will be considered a monstrosity, a violation of the laws of nature or a perversion, a violation of moral law. As sexual difference is elevated to a category that is not only natural but even transcendental (going beyond historical and cultural contexts), differences between homosexuality and heterosexuality appear as both anatomical and psychological, and so do the differences between sadism, masochism, and pedophilia; between normalcy and perversion. Considered simple sexual practices until this moment, they become identities and conditions that must be studied, recorded, hounded, hunted, punished, cured. Each body, as Foucault tells us, becomes an “individual to correct.”¹² Invented as well are the child masturbator and the sexual monster. Under this new epistemological gaze, the bearded woman becomes either an object of scientific observation or a fairground attraction in the new urban agglomerate. This double shift toward medico-legal surveillance and mediatic spectacularization, intensified as it is by digital and data-processing techniques and communication networks, will become one of the characteristics of the pharmacopornographic regime, whose expansion begins in the middle of the twentieth century.

The sexopolitical devices that develop with the nineteenth-century aesthetics of sexual difference and sexual identities are mechanical, semiotic, and architectonic techniques to naturalize sex. And here we can list a loose collection of the resulting phenomena: the atlas of sexual anatomy, treatises on optimizing natural resources com-

12. Michel Foucault, *Les anormaux: cours au Collège de France (1974–1975)* (Paris: Seuil, 1999), 53.

mensurate with the growth of population, legal texts on the criminalization of transvestism or sodomy, the tying of little girls' masturbating hands to their beds, irons for forcing apart the legs of young hysterics, silver nitrate photographic prints that engrave images of the dilated anus of passive homosexuals, straitjackets immobilizing the uncontrollable bodies of masculine women . . . These devices for the production of sexual subjectivity take the form of a political architecture *external* to the body. Their systems have a firm command of orthopedic politics and disciplinary exoskeletons. The model for these techniques of subjectivization, according to Foucault, could be Jeremy Bentham's architecture for the prison-factory (panopticism, in particular), the asylum, or the military barracks. If we think about devices of sexo-political subjectivization, then we must also speak about the expansion of a network of "domestic architecture." These extensive, intensive, and, moreover, intimate architectural forms include a redefinition of private and public spaces, the management of sexual commerce, but also gynecological devices and sexual orthopedic inventions (the corset, the speculum, the medical vibrator), as well as new media techniques of control and representation (photography, film, incipient pornography) and the massive development of psychological techniques for introspection and confession.

If it is true that Foucault's analysis up to this point, although not always chronologically exact, seems to have great critical acuity, it is no less true that his analysis loses intensity the closer it gets to contemporary society. Foucault neglected the emergence of a group of profound trans-

formations of technologies of production of the body and subjectivity that progressively appeared beginning with World War II. They force us to conceptualize a third regime of subjectivization, a third system of knowledge-power that is neither sovereign nor disciplinary, neither premodern nor modern. In the postscript to *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari, inspired by William S. Burroughs, use the term “control society”¹³ to name this “new monster” of social organization that is a by-product of biopolitical control. Adding notions inspired by both Burroughs and Bukowski, I shall call this the “pharmacopornographic society.” A politically programmed ejaculation is the currency of this new molecular-informatic control.

After World War II, the somato-political context of the body’s technopolitical production seems dominated by a series of new technologies of the body (biotechnology, surgery, endocrinology, genetic engineering, etc.) and representation (photography, cinema, television, internet, video games, etc.) that infiltrate and penetrate daily life like never before. These are biomolecular, digital, and broadband data-transmission technologies. This is the age of soft, featherweight, viscous, gelatinous technologies that can be injected, inhaled—“incorporated.” The testosterone that I use is a part of these new gelatinous technologies.

These three regimes of production of sexual bodies and subjectivities should not be understood as mere historical periods. The disciplinary regime didn’t erase the sovereign necropolitical techniques. Likewise, the pharmacoporno-

13. Gilles Deleuze, “Post-scriptum sur les sociétés de contrôle,” in *Pourparlers* (Paris: Minuit, 1990), 241.

graphic regime has not totally obliterated biopolitical disciplinary techniques. Three different and conflicting power regime techniques juxtapose and act upon the body producing our contemporary subject and somatic fiction.

In disciplinary society, technologies of subjectivization controlled the body externally like orthoarchitectural apparatuses, but in the pharmacopornographic society, the technologies become part of the body: they dissolve into it, becoming *somatechnics*.¹⁴ As a result, the body-power relationship becomes tautological: technopolitics takes on the form of the body and is incorporated. One of the first signs of the transformation of the somato-power regime in the mid-twentieth century was the electrification, digitalization, and molecularization of these devices for the control and production of sexual difference and sexual identities. Little by little, orthopedic-sexual and architectural disciplinary mechanisms were absorbed by lightweight, rapid-transmission microcomputing, as well as by pharmacological and audiovisual techniques. If architecture and orthopedics in the disciplinary society served as models for understanding the relation of body to power, in the pharmacopornographic society, the models for body control are microprosthetic: now, power acts through molecules that incorporate themselves into our immune system; silicone takes the shape of our breasts; neurotransmitters alter our perceptions and behavior; hormones produce their systemic

14. In the early 2000s, a group of academics at Macquarie University, including Susan Stryker, coined the term "somatechnics" to highlight the complex relationship between body and technology. Technology does not add upon a given body, but rather it is the very means by which corporeality is crafted.

effects on hunger, sleep, sexual arousal, aggressiveness, and the social decoding of our femininity and masculinity.

We are gradually witnessing the miniaturization, internalization, and reflexive introversion (an inward coiling toward what is considered intimate, private space) of the surveillance and control mechanisms of the disciplinary sexopolitical regime. These new soft technologies of micro-control adopt the form of the body they control and become part of it until they are inseparable and indistinguishable from it, ending up as techno-soma-subjectivities. The body no longer inhabits disciplinary spaces but is inhabited by them. The biomolecular and organic structure of the body is the last hiding place of these biopolitical systems of control. This moment contains all the horror and exaltation of the body's political potential.

WESTERN SEXUAL EPISTEMOLOGY

