

### 3. TESTOGEL

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

—HERVÉ GUIBERT

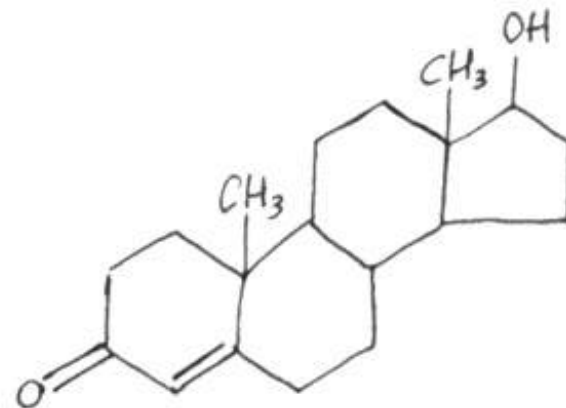
A few months before your death, Del, my master gender hacker, gives me a box of thirty packets of fifty-milligram testosterone in gel form. I keep them in a glass box for a long time, as if they were dissected scarabs, poison bullets extracted from a corpse, fetuses of an unknown species, vampire teeth 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*<sup>1</sup> 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.

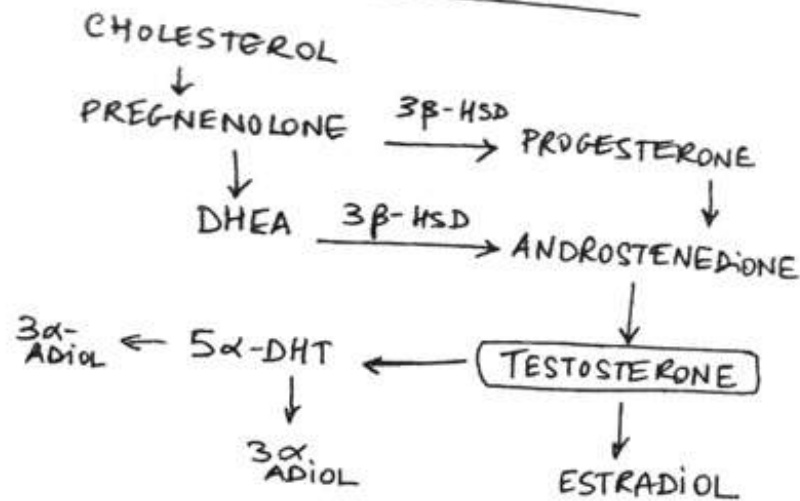
Writing is the place where my secret addiction resides, at the same time as the stage on which my addiction seals a pact with the multitude. On the fourth night, no sleep. I'm lucid, energetic, wide awake, like I was the first night I had sex with a girl, when I was a kid. At four in the morning, I'm 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

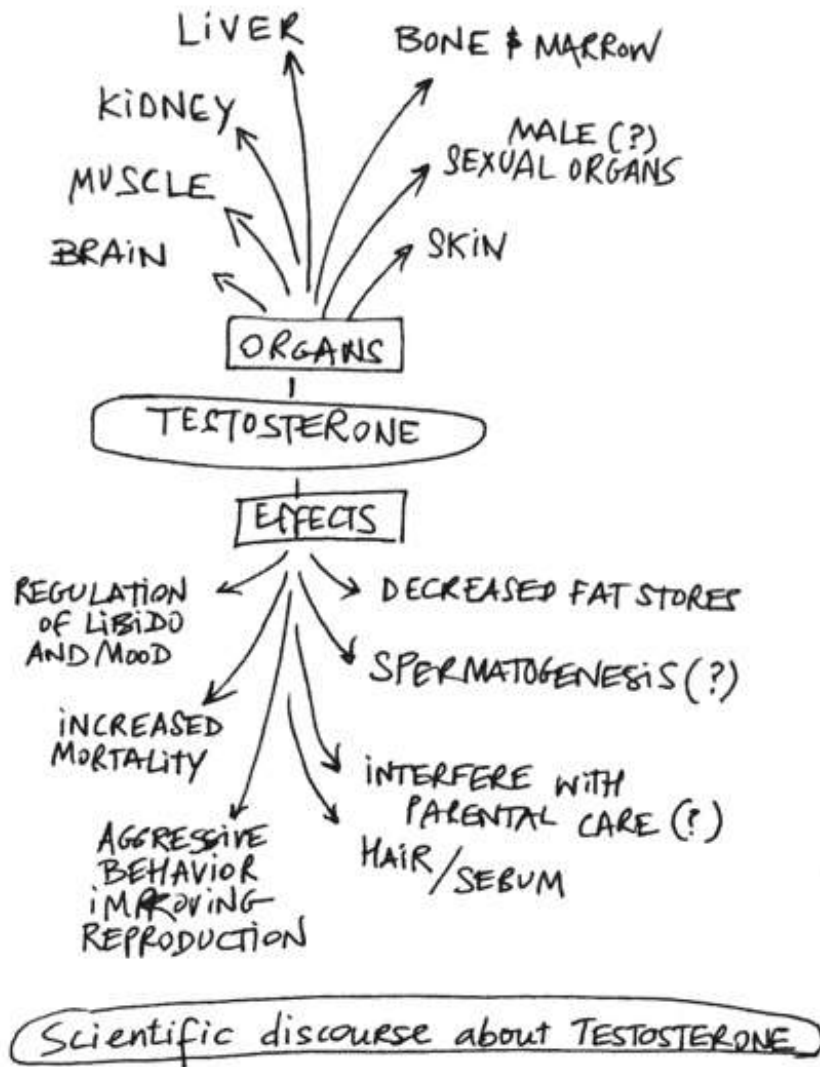
serotonin, the same way that clinical masculinity does not exist without synthetic testosterone.

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.<sup>2</sup> 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. *Biopouvoir* (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.<sup>1</sup>

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*.<sup>2</sup> *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.<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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)<sup>6</sup> 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 Salpêtrière* (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: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

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

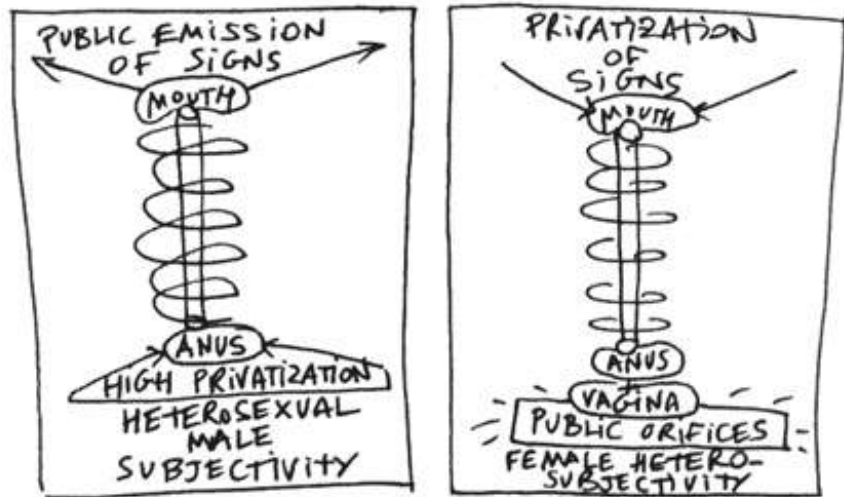
the end of the nineteenth and during a good part of the twentieth century boils down to a regulation of the conditions of reproduction or to those biological processes that "concern the population." For the sexopolitics of the nineteenth century, the heterosexual is the artifact that will rake in the 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 regime<sup>7</sup>—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."<sup>8</sup> 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: Baland, 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.<sup>9</sup> 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 "monosexual" 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.<sup>10</sup>

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.<sup>11</sup> 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."<sup>12</sup> 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"<sup>13</sup> 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 *Fourparlers* (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.

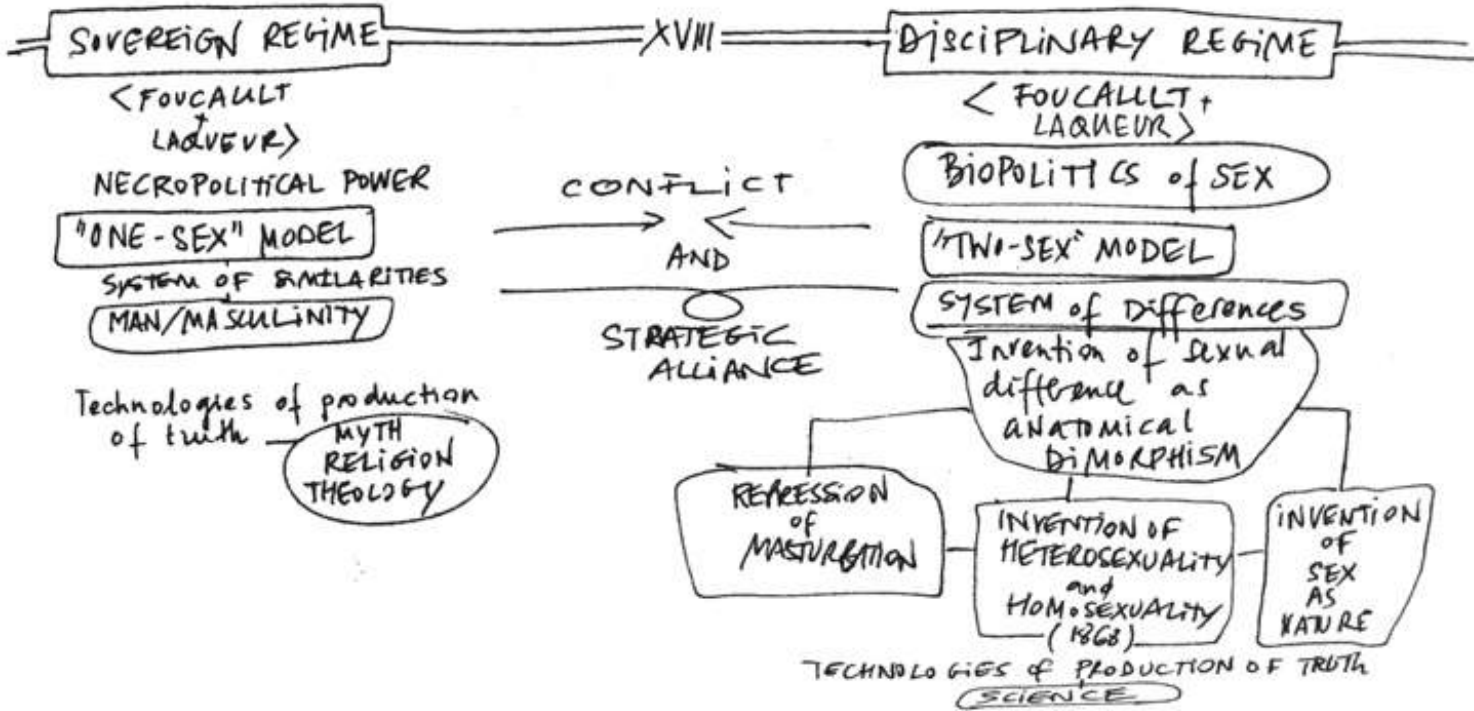
In disciplinary society, technologies of subjectivization controlled the body externally like orthoarchitectural apparatuses, but in the pharmacopornographic society, the technologies become part of the body: they dissolve into it, becoming *somatechnics*.<sup>14</sup> As a result, the body-power relationship 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

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

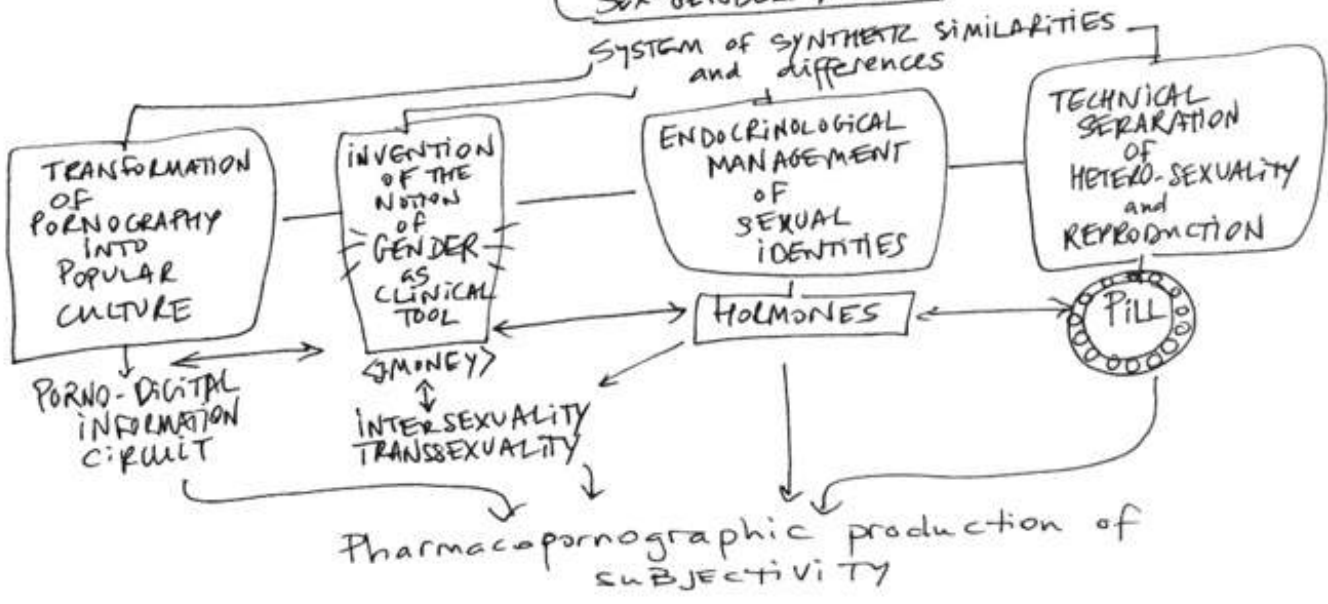
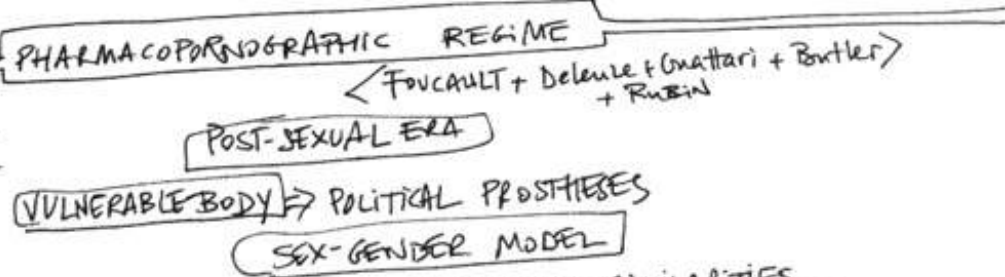
We are gradually witnessing the miniaturization, internalization, and reflexive introversion (an inward coiling toward what is considered intimate, private space) of the surveillance and control mechanisms of the disciplinary sexopolitical regime. These new soft technologies of micro-control adopt the 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.

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.

# WESTERN SEXUAL EPISTEMOLOGY



TECHNOLOGIES OF WAR  
 1950s  
 NUCLEAR ENERGY  
 PLASTIC TIMES  
 TOXIC ENVIRONMENT



## 5. IN WHICH THE BODY OF VD BECOMES AN ELEMENT IN AN EXPERIMENTAL CONTEXT

I'd seen her twice before you died, but never with you. The first time, it was for the release of *Baise-Moi*; the second, five years later, five days before your death, was September 27, 2005, at the Lydia Lunch concert at Divan du Monde, in Paris. And it was my body, a biopower prosthesis, a micro-excitable platform of resistance that fell in love. This is how it happened.

Spring 2000. Under pressure from an organization of the extreme Right, the Council of State of the Socialist government decides to revoke the distribution permit allowing the showing of the film *Baise-Moi* in theaters. Terrified by their own addiction to pornography and by the potential visibility of their flaccid cocks, a federation of censors attacks the film as a way of saying "no to pornography." They prevent its distribution, prohibit it in all movie theaters, and confine it to distribution in DVD.

In reality, they are saying no to the only feminism that could save us, a kind of feminism that has the potential to turn pharmacopornographic hegemony upside down. I go to a Parisian movie theater, the MK2 Odéon, where a small support group created by Catherine Breillat is expecting women directors. At the time, I've been working with various different queer groups that include lesbian rebels, fags

who have had it up to here with the gay ghetto and "pink" buying power, trannies who can't take any more of the system of medical protocols. This is the beginning of queer politics in Europe, and like everything, when it begins, people come with a joyful, innocent vitality. For months I devote all my time to organizing what I think is an impending pansexual revolution: the crumbling of sexual identity into a multiplicity of desires, practices, and aesthetics, the invention of new molecular sensibilities, new forms of collective living . . . All of it seems possible, real, and inevitable at the time. Several of us queer activists meet at my place on rue Jean-Pierre Timbaud to put together two hundred photocopies of a leaflet; there's no money to create any more. The idea is to funnel the pornopolitical forces of the film into the queer faction, not because the two protagonists in *Baise-Moi* are lesbian or anything as banal as that, but because they destroy everything in their path, because they're Franco-Arab girls who finish off a crowd of white men at the same time that they get down with all the good-looking boys they encounter. Certainly, the fact that both are superhot is an asset to the queer cause.

I feel a bit ridiculous when I see VD for the first time, right outside the movie theater. My hands are full of photocopies to the extent that I can't even offer her one as I greet her. I'm impressed by her Nordic peasant arms, her decidedly warriorlike walk. V is stoned on alcohol, coke, speed, I suppose. Coralie, too, but I see them as very confident about what they're doing, capable of shutting up any ideologue at all from the extreme Right. They're two dogs without a master, barking at the pack of liberals who are

denouncing the sexual violence of the protagonists in the film. When I tell them that Nadine and Manu are heroines for a potential queer revolution, they look at me expressionlessly. Nobody knows what the word *queer* means at this point in France. Mainlining gender, class, and race terrorism—now, that kind of thing speaks to them. Seeing her among these people, some of whom I know and others whom I don't, immediately gives me the desire to get it on with her. Wanting to get done by VD must be a widespread sentiment. I'm attracted to her, beyond any concrete reference to the fact that she is, apparently, heterosexual. Or maybe that's the reason, and for the pleasure of knowing that someday she'll stop being it to become the queen of the dykes and the boy-girls. I figure it has something to do with the title of her book and the actresses in the film, with their way of fucking everything that passes by. The feeling doesn't impress me and even makes me feel a bit ashamed because there's something in it that's an unconscious response to an advertising gimmick, as if the performative power of the words *B-a-i-s-e-M-o-i (F-u-c-k-M-e)*<sup>1</sup> had appealed immediately to my synthetic urge to fuck her. However, I don't understand exactly why it's *she* who attracts me. And not Coralie, with her beauty reminiscent of the half-Nazi great lady of an Asian brothel; or Raffaëlla, as hot-tempered and jumpy as a lesbian pit bull; or Karen, who lets the crowd fawn on her the way a queen of the sand slowly cleaves the waves of a choppy sea. They pull

1. This is a reference to *Baise-Moi*, the groundbreaking and controversial novel by Virginie Despentes. "*Baise-moi*" translates as *Fuck Me*, but the American edition (trans. Bruce Benderson, Grove Press, 2003) was re-entitled *Rape Me* by the publisher to avoid censorship problems in the United States. —Trans.

me toward her. They're her harem, her Amazons, her hot, irascible she-wolves, her lady's companions with looks that kill, her tattooed bodyguards, revolutionary sluts, but she's the one I want. What astonishes me is the certainty with which her presence strikes me. But I do nothing to get to her, I'm too busy with queer politics. I've just published the *Manifesto* in your series, and, despite its editorial peculiarity, it does well enough. I'm invited to every part of France, especially by gay and lesbian organizations, and I travel to more than twenty cities where presidents of gay or trans associations with Club Med names—like Women Together, Women on Track, Trans-formation, Rose-Colored Glasses, the Am(orous)zons, Sappho's Way, the Violets—welcome me . . . I also do presentations at big bookstores, but only on Gay Pride Day. A healthy dose of affirmative action. I don't make a penny from all these trips, the organizations take months to reimburse me for train travel, and I always end up paying something out of my own pocket. Ruin. But I learn to think in public, to love crowds, to receive their vast impersonal love. At the time, this is how I become involved with organizing drag king workshops; lectures on American feminism and queer theory; reading workshops about Butler, Foucault, and Derrida; seminars on the history of sexuality in the electronic age. I'm too involved for a sex life.

The problem is that when I meet her again, five years have passed. During this time, I've become distanced from queer politics and she has put a lot into a heterosexual company that's going bankrupt and in which she ends up losing everything. After the breakup with RS, and after K's death, VD "would really have liked to be mowed down, to



have someone put a bullet in the back of her neck, to finish her off like an animal."<sup>2</sup> Will I be capable of giving her what she wants?

September 2005. Five days before your death. I walk into Le Divan du Monde, see her. She's blond now. She looks a lot younger than she did the first time, as if she'd traveled backward, toward her teenage years. She's standing near the stage with a camera. Her eyes reach me first, before her body. The movements of her fans, gathered together like a swarm of wasps, transform the entire theater into a vortex coming toward me. My hair is long. I've hidden a large part of my head under a black winter hat, as if I'm trying to keep my ideas from scattering or being visible to anyone on the outside. I'm a mess; but I'm masculine, which gives me confidence. We exchange shy kisses on the cheek; her smell is intense, animal. We speak a few words to each other. It's impossible for me to remember the details of that conversation. A few seconds of it remain in my brain, like fragments from a silent film. I know the following was said: "Now I'm a lesbian," and "I've wanted to make it with you since the first time I laid eyes on you."

We'll come together at a fractal moment, on the edge of a techno-Greek tragedy: she has just started to go out with girls, and I've started to take testosterone. She is becoming a lesbian; and, as for me, I'm becoming something other than a girl. She loves breasts, and I love cocks. But she's what I'm looking for. And I'm what she's looking for. She has the cock I need, and I have the breasts she wants. Each

2. Virginie Despentes, *Bye Bye Blondie* (Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle, 2004).

of these life vectors could have moved in a different direction, but they converged toward us and met here, exactly, under her skin and mine.

We see each other again two days after a Lydia Lunch concert. You're still alive. So I'm still unaware that the ground that supports us is about to be overturned. The future: your death, my addiction to testosterone, VD's love.

### FIRST SEXUAL CONTRACT

Our first contract is very clear: she's the whore; I'm the transsexual. She takes me to a hotel in Pigalle. It's neither night nor day. A translucent winter evening. That day, as we enter our room, she pays me. She wants me to be her slave. She turns on the television, as if she's summoning witnesses to watch what is about to happen. Without losing any time, she says, "Tomorrow you'll get out of here before I wake up." She places her bag on the chair, gets undressed, then falls onto the bed. She stretches out her arms, arranging her body in the form of an S. I look at her, not knowing if I'm supposed to get undressed, too, or not. I don't take anything off. I lie down next to her. It's Saturday, and *Star Academy*<sup>3</sup> is about to get rid of a new victim. As if she were still wearing her clothes, she makes remarks about which participants she thinks might win. She favors the older contestant, the one wearing orange-colored shades, who's the

3. The French version of a reality show, in which the contestants are singers or other types of performers but also live in a boarding school called the Academy, where they receive coaching to compete against one another, with the goal of being chosen for a nationwide tour.—Trans.

most rock 'n' roll of all; she's betting on him. Meanwhile, I'm taking in the room, down to its last detail. I glance at her out of the corner of my eye. Under the randomly changing beams of the television, I can see the shape of the areolas of her nipples, allergy or eczema in the area of her solar plexus; the rest of her skin is very white, her bush short and slightly blond. Next I think of my own nipples under my sweater, my completely shaved pubes, a cut at my right side, the alchemy of the testosterone coursing through my blood. I take turns imagining myself with and without a cock, and the two images keep following each other like a game on a seesaw. But I know that the moment I get undressed, she'll see only one of these bodies. Being reduced to one fixed image frightens me. I keep my clothes on a few minutes more, so I can enjoy the double option a little longer. When I get undressed, she won't know whether or not I have an erection. For me, an erection is an obvious fact, to the same extent in a body without a cock as in a body with one.

Then she leans over me, takes control of my legs without touching my pelvis, climbs astride my waist without wasting any time on my chest. I stick my tongue out. She takes it with her mouth. When our lips are almost touching, my tongue sharpens like an arrow. Her mouth fucks my tongue, mounting it and descending rapidly. She has found my erection. At times, a lock of her blond hair becomes part of the mechanics. She gently pulls it aside with one hand, using the opportunity to fuck the point of my tongue by raising her head. She changes rhythm. My tongue comes out of my mouth, and she grabs hold of the muscle by folding her palm into the shape of a ring. Her fingernails are impecca-

bly red; her movements precise, *full of class*. Our bodies turn in tandem, our pelvises drawn magnetically nearer, united and at the same time separated by the cloth of my trousers. Next, I'm the one who takes her mouth with my tongue. Again and again, until saliva drips onto her breasts. Our bodies turn again, rise upward slightly. My mouth follows the path of the saliva, descending all the way to her vulva. She moans like a hooker, "Chérie, chéri." I suck her while pulling her head backward at the same time. "Tomorrow, I'll leave when I feel like it, slut." The violet light from the television floods the room. I did say that to her, but actually, I'm afraid of her. Afraid she'll kick me out into the street in the middle of the night. Afraid she'll get up and begin bawling me out. Afraid that she'll rip out the electric sockets with her fingernails. During that time, she has stretched out her arms to cling to the head of the bed. She's ready to come. I get up and leave her like that, like a dismembered animal. I'm thinking of leaving now, to up my masculinity quotient. Instead I put on a harness with an 8½ inch x 1½ inch dildo. Then I come back to fuck her. And I do—for an amorphous period of time that is neither long nor short, until we both come, me first and then she, my whore. Then she falls asleep. I move my arms, feeling entirely helpless. I get up, wash my dildo in the bathroom, take off the harness to soap it up. The suds flow through my fingers. I rinse, then glue it to the tiling with the plunger, leaving that erect organ looking as if it has sprung from the wall, in case somebody comes for a visit. I'll put it away when it's completely dry. I go back into the room. She's sleeping, hasn't changed position; her eyelids are quivering, but her

face is still. They just eliminated a blond teenager from *Star Academy*, and half the audience is shouting out in despair. I lie down next to her. Can't sleep. I'm waiting for dawn so I can leave. But I fall asleep unexpectedly: in my dream, I'm the one who's the whore, something I knew. When I get up the next morning she's already gone. I unfasten the dildo from the bathroom wall, get dressed, and leave the hotel.

### ALPHA BITCHES

Up to this point, I can't say that my gender revolt has ever put me in the position of victim. Actually, my love affair with VD is the apex of a sexual career as a conquistador without a cock, which began in my very innocent childhood days. Since fifth grade I've gone out only with the *sexiest* girls of the class, and I don't feature relinquishing that status. When I was fourteen, my first psychoanalyst explained to me that, fundamentally, I want to arm-wrestle God. I don't see why, on behalf of my mental health, she insists that I relinquish my desire to fuck only those at the top of the femininity pyramid, the alpha bitches, the supersluts—a desire that she calls “megalomaniacal.” She thinks this desire is excessive because I'm not a cis-male, who could simply call the same thing “self-esteem.”

Since childhood I've had a fantastical construction worker's cock. I react to every piece of ass that moves. It doesn't really matter whether it's a cute chick or a mommy, a bourgeois or a peasant, a faggot, bride of Christ, lesbian, or slut. The reaction in my cerebral sex organ is immedi-

ate. All girls, the most beautiful, the most heterosexual, the ones waiting for a Prince Charming full of natural testosterone, are actually destined without knowing it to become bitches that my dildos penetrate. Until I was twelve, I went to an all-girl Catholic secondary school. A real lesbian paradise. The best of the little ones were for me. Before they'd even had the time to cross the street and meet the boys at the secondary school opposite, they'd already put their tongues in my mouth. They're mine. I should make it clear, however, that this gravitating of the female sex around me isn't due to my beauty. At the age of four I was diagnosed with a maxillofacial deformation that would become radically more pronounced during my adolescence, to the point of looking grotesque. With the years, I become a myopic monster who was dramatically skinny, had a pronounced jaw and arms and legs that were too long. But during a good part of my childhood and adolescence, obviously because of some unrevealed secret, girls feel attracted to me. They say they're not lesbians, moan and weep after they've let their breasts be fondled and taken off their panties in my room, then stop speaking to me. They denounce me to the teachers after shutting themselves up in the girls' room with me and asking me to tell them smutty stories. But they keep the letters that I send them, keep the little ceramic tiles on which I write their name with a pink marker. They fight like warriors possessed by trying to monopolize my attention on the playground. They're mine. Marked forever with the fire of the revolution. One day, when I'm ten, someone calls my home and says to my mother, “Your daughter is a dyke,” then hangs up. From that moment on, my mother reads my

notebooks, goes through my pockets, rummages every day through my wallet to make sure I'm not hiding anything weird. She changes into a private detective being hired by the heteropatriarchal regime to disable my novice activities in terrorism: surveillance and home inspections, interrogations, interdictions, detentions, censorship . . . Those are the sophisticated methods that the system puts at the disposal of a simple housewife from post-Franco Spain to root out the masculine desire living inside my girl's body.

My mother and I often argue. She asks me if I'm on drugs, if I'm sleeping with boys, if I'm taking the Pill, if I'm stealing the money that she hides in the linen cabinet between the sheets. I answer no to all her questions. She insists. Tells me that girls like me end up having abortions. That if my father finds out, he'll kill me. I say no to everything she suggests. She's taken in by her own lies. I think she's accusing me of being a whore to avoid facing what she already knows. She warns me that if I go out with guys from the ETA,<sup>4</sup> she'll tie me up and won't let me leave the house any more. She tortures me until I finally tell her. Simply. Like a confirmation of her worst fears. A lot worse than being any kind of whore, than going to bed with everybody, than having abortions. I've been terrorized, too. But after having resisted her unrelenting heterosexual surveillance system, I revel in this moment of truth. With icy cruelty I tell her: I like girls. And immediately after that, without giving her time to answer: I'm a lesbian, a dyke, butch; I'm a boy, and you didn't realize it. I don't want to wear the skirts you

4. ETA is the Basque nationalist and separatist organization in Spain.—Trans.

buy for me. I don't want those shoes. I don't want blouses with frills. I don't want hairpins. I don't want nightgowns. I don't want to grow my hair long. I don't want to wear a brassiere. I don't want to talk like a girl. I don't want to be in love, and I don't want to get married; I don't want to comb my dolls' hair. I don't want to be beautiful. I don't want to stay home evenings. I don't want you to treat me like a girl. I say: I'm a boy, get it?—and I lift my shirt, show her my nipples that dot a still flat chest—and I deserve the same respect my father gets.

I was born during the dictatorship in a small Spanish city dominated by Catholic Francoism; I was assigned the female gender; Spanish was made my maternal language; I was brought up to be a perfect little girl; I was given an expensive education and private lessons in Latin. In the words of Judith Butler, these are "forcible reiterations of the norm"<sup>5</sup> that shaped me.

Today I live in several metropolises (four to eight million inhabitants, counting their suburbs) in which I survive sexually and politically thanks to a network of underground microcommunities. My life consists of circulating among different places that are both centers of production of the dominant discourses and cultural peripheries. I travel among three languages that I think of neither as mine nor as foreign to me. I personify a dyke-transgender condition made up of numerous biocodes, certain of which are normative and others spaces of resistance and still others potential places for the invention of subjectivity. In any

5. See Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 232.

case, these are artificial environments, synthetic islands of subjectivization that overlay the dominant sexo-urban tissue.

Twenty years later, when I go back to the city where I was born to visit my parents, I sometimes run into girls that I loved during my childhood. They're married, have children, dye their hair natural colors, wear leather coats, and actively resist relaxing their neck muscles. They greet me with terrorized surprise. They say to me, "You haven't changed." I'm always the little guy they knew at the school for girls. On the other hand—and this goes for the most bourgeois as much as it does for the most working class—they've already lived the best years of their heterosexual life and are preparing to reach forty, with only the hope of a rejuvenation technique. Some are happy about having children or are justifying not having had them; others seem indifferent; some are still in love with their husbands, or pretend to be. But in a certain way, within a temporary rift, they are still my little girls, my bitches. They still have time for the revolution.

### ADDICTION

I don't see her for several days. She writes me and tells me that it can't go on, that it isn't going to be possible, that after P, she can't begin another relationship like that, in which there is such a level of connection and everything flows as easily as water. On the fifth day without her, I take another dose of fifty milligrams of testosterone. That night,

I don't sleep. I get up several times to reread her emails. I filter them, examine them, read them as the medieval monks read the Bible. Find grace in deciphering them. *Quis potest fallere amantem?* I remain sitting there on the couch for hours, in the darkness, and I enter a state close to self-hypnosis. I notice that the last four doses of fifty milligrams are interacting for the first time, forming a chemical bond that is getting me high. The skin inside my mouth has become thicker. My tongue is like an erectile muscle. I feel that I could smash the window with my fist. I could leap to the balcony opposite and fuck my neighbor if she were waiting for me with her thighs spread. But this time, like an energizing biosupplement being activated within a female cultural agenda, the testosterone compels me to tidy up and clean my apartment, frenetically, all night long. For a start, a profound and efficient sorting. I make practically no noise. My movements are precise. Eyes, arms, and legs move forward and draw back successively: right, left, forward, back. In my library, I move all the piles of Foucault to the cyberpolitics shelf and arrange them under the letter F; I put the Tomatis back in its place, as well as two Eliases, two Bourdieus, the Jo Spence, a Ragan, three Haraways, a Virno, a stack of Butlers in three languages, two Davises, the Nina Roberts; I put the Lemebel first, and the photo of Pedro and Paco both disguised as Frida Kahlo, their wounded hearts united by transparent tubing; I throw the English translation of Flaubert in the garbage, go and get Houellebecq's *Rester vivant* from the bedroom to put it on my desk. I pick up all the chairs, move the couch, the bed, the TV table, and a chest in order to sweep and mop the

floor with antibacterial soap. I become involved in a disinfecting process. Justine the bulldog doesn't follow me in my testosterone delirium. She stays on the bed, even when I lift it a foot off the floor to take out what's under it. In less than twenty-five minutes, I've done the entire apartment. It's 5:35 a.m. I open the windows. The night air comes in like a vampire blowing its breath directly into the channels of my neocortex. And, like the other times, I begin to feel again that uncontrollable desire to go out, to feel the city awoken under my feet. So I do.

This is the way several days of T go by.

Finally her answer arrives: "Come."

She takes me to the Terrasse Hotel to make me her whore. I'm completely high on testosterone. I've become witness to my own body's experiencing the opening of new cellular centers of reception and excitation, aggressiveness, strength. But this state isn't permanent. The weakness can attack at any moment: once again I can start feeling in love, fragile, and all with somatic certainty, without needing to lie to myself. We've barely made it through the entrance to the hotel when she heads for reception, gives them a pseudonym, opens her great-lady Chanel bag, takes out her credit card, and pays for everything in advance, including two Cokes and two Toblerone bars from the minibar, which we'll have later. I don't make the slightest gesture of wanting to pay. That's our contract: she pays, I fuck.

We walk up to the fourth floor. In the stairway she says to me, "I want to be able to eat you out right here, right

away." Gets undressed without speaking. She touches her nipples, moaning. Her tattoos look like ink bas-reliefs on her alabaster skin. Come. Come. We're at the Terrasse Hotel in the eighteenth arrondissement, where she and CTT filmed the scene from *Baise-Moi* in which Karen and Raffaëlla dance together. Before this, on the beach, with the sea as a background and the car on the sand, Manu has said to Nadine, "I think we should stay together." While they dance, the lyrics of the music repeat, "It's to see what I want to see, it's to feel what I want to feel." This pleasure is unlike any other, even the pleasure of masturbating in front of the television or the pleasure of smoking; it's the pleasure of knowing that they'll stay together whatever happens. After this, they go out and steal credit cards, bump off a girl at a cash machine. On the way back, they choose two guys, go up to their room with them—the room where V and I are now fucking—and they watch each other, from one bed to the other, sharing the pleasure of getting penetrated at the same time.

That day, in the same room as Karen and Raff's, we screw naked for the first time. Her pelvis is glued to mine, her vulva connected to mine, our organs gnawing each other like the muzzles of two dogs that recognize each other. As we screw, I feel as if my entire political history, all my years of feminism, are moving directly toward the center of her body and flowing into it, as if her skin provided their only real niche. When I come, Wittig and Davis, Woolf and Solanas, La Pasionaria, Kate Bornstein, and Annie Sprinkle bubble up with me. She is covered with my feminism as if with a diaphanous ejaculation, a sea of political sparkles.

When I wake up later, her hand is inside me. Her entire body has become my cock, is emerging from my loins. But the veins of her arms have a lot more class than the veins of a biocock. I catch her arm between my two hands and rub it from top to bottom as if for a counter-sexual jerk-off. Then I go all the way back to her right shoulder, her neck, and push two fingers into her mouth. She sucks them, without taking her hand off my body. Pleasure follows this arrangement of forces, this hierarchy of functions whose stability is necessarily precarious. We go on like that until I come in her hand, until my hand comes in her mouth.

We leave the hotel. My elbows are burning. Fucking her is harder than factory work, harder than driving a truck loaded with nitroglycerine in a cowboy film. She tears off my skin, every time.