

## Pharmaco-pornographic Politics: Towards a New Gender Ecology

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During an era, recent and already irretrievable, Fordism and the automobile industry synthesized and defined a specific mode of production and of consumption. It instituted a Taylorist protraction of life: a smooth and polychrome aesthetic of the unanimated object, a way of thinking about interior space and of living in the city, a conflicting promise of the body and of the machine, a discontinued manner of desiring and of resisting. In the years following the energy crisis and the collapse of the assembly line, new sectors were said to explain the transformations of the global economy. Thus people begin to speak of the biochemical industry, electronics, informatics or communication as the new industrial supports of capitalism.<sup>1</sup> But these discourses are not sufficient to explain the production of value and of life in present society.

It seems possible and vital to assemble a chronology of the transformations occurring in industrial production over the last century. With certain radical changes in view, the political management of body technologies that produce sex and sexuality can be seen to progressively become *the* business of the new millennium. It is today philosophically pertinent, following Foucault, to carry out a somatic-political analysis of the ‘world economy’.<sup>2</sup> Economists usually situate the transition to a third type of capitalism around the 70s, after industrial and slavery regimes. These have traditionally been said to set in motion a new type of ‘governmentality of the living’, emerging from the corporal, physical and ecological urban ruins of the Second World War.<sup>3</sup> The mutation of capitalism that we witness in our time can be characterized by the conversion of ‘sex’, ‘sexuality’, ‘sexual identity’ and ‘pleasure’ into objects used for the political management of life, and also by the fact that this ‘management’ itself takes place through the innovative dynamics of advanced techno-capitalism. But first let us review some of the somatic-political events in recent history.

During the period of the Cold War, the United States invested more dollars in scientific research related to sex and sexuality than any other country had done before throughout history. Let us remember that the period between the beginning of the First World War (1914) and the end of the Cold War (1991) constitutes a moment without precedence 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.<sup>4</sup> Alongside this social development, American McCarthyism – rampant throughout the 50s – added to the patriotic fight against communism the persecution of homosexuality as a form of anti-nationalism while exalting at the same time the family values of masculine labour and domestic maternity.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, architects Ray and Charles Eames collaborated with the American army to

manufacture small boards of moulded-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 disposable American architecture.<sup>6</sup> In 1941, George Henry carried out the first demographic study of 'sexual deviation', a quantitative study of masses known as *Sex Variants*.<sup>7</sup> The Kinsey Reports on human sexual behaviour (1948 and 1953) and Robert Stoller's protocols for 'femininity' and 'masculinity' (1968) followed in sexological suit. During the early 50s and into the 60s Harry Benjamin systemized the clinical use of hormonal molecules in the treatment of 'transsexualism', a term first introduced in 1954. In 1941 the first natural molecules of progesterone and estrogens were obtained from the urine of pregnant mares (Premarin) and soon after synthetic hormones (Norethindrone) were commercialized. In 1946, the first contraceptive pill was invented using synthetic estrogens, a hormone that would soon become the most used pharmaceutical molecule in the whole of human history.<sup>8</sup> In 1947, the laboratories Eli Lilly (Indiana, The United States) commercialized the molecule called Methadone (the most simple opiate) as an analgesic, which became in the 70s the basic substitution treatment for heroine addiction.<sup>9</sup>

Also in 1947, 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' behaviour and physical expression. Money famously affirms that it is possible to 'change the gender of any baby up to 18 months.' In 1953, U.S. soldier George W. Jorgensen is transformed into Christine, the first transsexual person discussed widely in the popular press; Hugh Hefner founds *Playboy*, the first North American porno magazine to be sold in newspaper stands, with a photograph of Marilyn Monroe naked on the front page of the first publication. In 1958, the first phallus surgery (the construction of a penis from skin grafts and arm muscles) was performed in Russia as part of the process of a female's 'sex change' into a male form. In 1960, the laboratories Eli Lilly commercialize 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', becomes one of the drugs of the rock underground culture of the 60s. At the start of the 60s, Manfred E. Clynes and Nathan S. Kline use 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'.<sup>10</sup> They experimented with a laboratory rat, which received an osmotic prosthesis implant that it dragged along – a cyber tail. The first antidepressant that intervenes directly in the synthesis of a neurotransmitter called serotonin was invented in 1966. This would lead to the conception in 1987 of the molecule called Fluxetine that will become commercialized under various names, the most renowned being Prozac®. In 1969, as part of a military investigation programme, *Arpanet* was created; it was the predecessor of the global Internet, the first 'net of nets' of interconnected computers capable of transmitting information. In 1971, the United Kingdom establishes 'The Misuse of Drugs Act' that regulates the consumption and trafficking of psychotropic substances. The seriousness of the crimes for drug use and traffic range from category A (including cocaine, methadone, morphine) to category C (e.g. cannabis, ketamine). Alcohol and tobacco were not included in this classification. In 1972, Gerard Damiano produces the film

*Deep Throat* with money from the California mafia. The film, starring Linda Lovelace, was widely commercialized in the United States and became the most watched movie of all times, grossing more than 600 million dollars. From this time on, porn film production boomed: from thirty clandestine films in 1950 to 2500 films in 1970. Homosexuality is withdrawn from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) in 1973. The soviet Victor Konstantinovich Kalnberz patents, in 1974, 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 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. The same method had already been applied in a Nazi German programme 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 they substituted it for the methods of gas chambers or simply death caused by inanition. In 1983, 'Gender Identity Disorder' (clinical form of transsexuality) was included in the DSM with diagnostic criteria for this new pathology. 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 permits an erection by remote control.

During the 80s, new hormones were discovered and commercialized such as DHEA or the growth hormone, as well as numerous anabolic steroids that would be used legally and illegally in sports. In 1988, the pharmacological use of Sildenafil (commercialized as Viagra© by Pfizer laboratories) was approved of for the treatment of penile 'erectile dysfunction'. It is a vasodilator without aphrodisiac effects that induces muscular relaxation and the production of nitric oxide in the cavernous body of the penis. From 1996 on, American laboratories produced synthetic oxyntomodulin, a hormone found to suppress human appetite by affecting the psycho-physiological mechanisms that regulate addiction; it was quickly commercialized to induce weight loss. At the beginning of the new millennium, four million children are being treated with Ritalin for hyperactivity and for the so-called 'Attention Deficit Disorder' and more than two million children consume psycho-tropics destined to control depression.

We are facing a new kind of capitalism that is hot, psychotropic and punk. These recent transformations indicate new micro-prosthetic mechanisms of control emergent from advanced bio-molecular techniques and media networks. The new world economy does not function without the simultaneous and interconnected production and deployment of hundreds of tons of synthetic steroids, without global dissemination of pornographic images, without the manufacturing of new varieties of legal and illegal synthetic psycho-tropics (e.g. enaltestovis, Special K, Viagra©, speed, crystal, Prozac©, ecstasies, poppers, heroine, omeoprazole) without the global dispersal of mega-cities of misery knotted into high concentrations of capital,<sup>11</sup> or without an informatic treatment of signs and numeric transmission of communication.

These are just some snapshots of a post-industrial, global and mediatic regime that I will call from here onwards *pharmaco-pornographic*. This term references the processes of

a bio-molecular (pharmaco) and semiotic-technical (pornographic) government of sexual subjectivity – of which ‘the pill’ and *Playboy* are two paradigmatic offspring. During the second half of the twentieth century, the mechanisms of the pharmaco-pornographic 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 precisely thanks to what Ian Hacking, Steve Woolgar and Bruno Latour call science’s ‘material authority’, that is to say, its capacity to invent and produce life artefacts.<sup>12</sup> These sciences have established their ‘material authority’ by transforming the concepts of the psyche, libido, consciousness, femininity and masculinity, heterosexuality and homosexuality 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 techno-science consists in transforming our depression into Prozac©, our masculinity into testosterone, our erection into Viagra©, our fertility/sterility into the pill, our AIDS into Tri-therapy without knowing which comes first; if depression or Prozac©, if Viagra© or an erection, if testosterone or masculinity, if the pill or maternity, if Tri-therapy or AIDS. The pharmaco-pornographic regime is differentiated in part by the production of performative self-feedback.

Contemporary society is inhabited by toxic-pornographic subjectivities: subjectivities defined by the substance (or substances) that dominate their metabolism, by the cybernetic prostheses and various types of pharmaco-pornographic desires that direct 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, hetero-vaginal subjects, double-penetration subjects, Viagra© subjects...

There is nothing to discover in nature, there is no hidden secret. We live in a punk hyper-modernity: 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 artefact acquires natural status. The Oncomouse, the laboratory mouse biotechnologically designed to carry a carcinogenic gene, eats Heidegger.<sup>13</sup> Buffy, the mutant vampire on television, eats 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 nor in sexual identity, there is no hidden secret. The truth about sex is not a disclosure; it is *sexdesign*. Pharmaco-pornographic bio-capitalism does not produce *things*. It produces mobile ideas, living organs, symbols, desires, chemical reactions and conditions of the soul. In biotechnology and in porno-communication there is no object to be produced. The pharmaco-pornographic business is the *invention of a subject* and then its global reproduction.

In this period of the body’s techno-management, the pharmaco-pornographic industry synthesizes and defines a specific mode of production and of consumption, a masturbatory temporization of life, a virtual and hallucinogenic aesthetic of the body, a particular way of transforming the inner in outer space and the city in a private junkspace<sup>14</sup> by means of self-surveillance devices and ultra fast information distribution, resulting in continuous and uninterrupted loops of desire and resistance, of consumption and destruction, of evolution and self-extinction.

## The History of Techno-sexuality

In thinking about the transformations of European society at the end of the eighteenth century, Foucault describes the transition from what he calls a sovereign society towards a disciplinary society. A new form of power that calculates life technologically in terms of population, health and national interest, he notes, displaces a prior form of power that decided and ritualized death. Foucault calls this new diffuse set of *dispositifs* to regulate life *biopower*. This power overflows the legal and punitive spheres, to become a force that penetrates and constitutes the body of the modern individual. This power no longer behaves as a coercive law or as a negative mandate, but becomes versatile and responsive. Biopower is a *friendly-power* that takes the form of an art for governing life. As a general political technology, biopower morphs into disciplinary architectures (prison, barracks, schools, hospitals, etc.), scientific texts, tables of statistics, demographic calculus, employment options and public hygiene. Foucault underlined the centrality of sex and of sexuality in the modern art of governing life. The biopower processes of the feminine body's hysterization, children's sexual pedagogy, regulation of procreative conduct and the psychiatrization of the pervert's pleasures will be to Foucault the axes of this project that he distinguishes, not without irony, as a process of sexuality's modernization.<sup>15</sup>

The sex-political devices that develop with these new aesthetics of sexual difference and sexual identities are mechanical, semiotic and architectonical techniques to naturalize sex. These devices include *The Atlas of Human Sex Anatomy*, treatises on maximizing the natural recourses available from population growth, judiciary texts about the penalization of transvestism or of sodomy, handcuffs that restrain the hands of masturbating girls to their beds, iron ankle spreaders that separate the legs of hysterics, silver films that engrave photographic images of the dilated anuses of passive homosexuals, straitjackets that hold the indomitable bodies of masculine women ...<sup>16</sup> These devices for the production of sexual subjectivity take the form of a political architecture *external* to the body. These systems have a firm command of orthopaedic politics and disciplinary exoskeletons. The model for these techniques of subjectivization, according to Foucault, could be the architecture of the prison (and in particular of panopticism), the asylum or military barracks. If we think about devices of sex-political subjectivization then we must also speak about the net-like expansion 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 gynaecological devices and the sexual orthopaedic 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.

It is true that up till here Foucault's analytical overview, although historically and chronologically inexact, is critically sharp. However, it is also true that the valuable insights he offers begin to blur the closer the analysis comes to contemporary societies. It seems that Foucault does not consider the profound changes, beginning during the Second World War, that occur with a new set of technologies for producing sexual subjectivity. As I see it, these somatic-political technologies require us to conceptualize a third regime of power-knowledge, not sovereign and not disciplinary, not pre-modern

and not modern, in order to take into consideration the deep and lasting impact of these new body technologies on contemporary constructions of subjectivity. In the Postscript of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari are inspired by Williams S. Burroughs to name this 'new monster' of social organization derived from bio-political control a 'society of control'.<sup>17</sup> I prefer to call it, reading Burroughs along with Bukowski, *pharmaco-porn-power*: a politically programmed ejaculation is the currency of this new sexual-micro-informatic control.

The somatic-political context after the Second World War seems to be dominated by a set of new technologies of the body (e.g. biotechnologies, surgery, endocrinology) and of representation (e.g. photography, film, television and cybernetics) that infiltrates and penetrates everyday life as never before. We live in an era of proliferating bio-molecular, digital and high-speed technologies; of the soft, light, slimy and jelly technologies; of the injectable, inhalable, and incorporable technologies. Testosterone gel, the pill and psycho-tropics all belong to this set of *soft technologies*. We are heavily involved in something that can be called – recalling the work of Zygmunt Bauman – a sophisticated form of 'liquid' control.<sup>18</sup>

Whereas in the disciplinary society, technologies of subjectivation control the body from the outside as an ortho-architectonic exterior device, in the pharmaco-pornographic society of control, technologies enter the body to form part of it: they dissolve in the body; they become the body. Here somatic-politics become tautological: techno-politics take the form of the body; techno-politics becomes (in)corporate. In the middle of the twentieth century, the first signs of the new somatic-political regime's transmutation were the electrification, digitalization and molecularization of devices of control that specifically produce sexual difference and sexual identities. Little by little, the orthopaedic sexual mechanisms and disciplinary architectonics are being absorbed by pharmacological micro-informatics and instant audiovisual transmission techniques. If in the disciplinary society, architecture and orthopaedics served as models to understand the relation of body-power, in the pharmaco-pornographic society, the models for body control are micro-prosthetics: pharmaco-porn-power acts through molecules that become part of our immune system; from the silicon that takes the form of breasts, to a neurotransmitter that modifies our way of perceiving and acting, to a hormone and its systematic affect on hunger, sleep, sexual excitation, aggression and the social codification of our femininity and masculinity. The devices of surveillance and control that are common to a disciplinary sex-political regime will thus progressively assist the pharmaco-pornographic subject's miniaturization, internalization and reflexive introversion (a twist towards the inside, towards the space that is considered to be intimate, private). A common trait of the new soft technologies of micro-control is that they take the form of the body; they control by transforming into 'body', until they become inseparable and indistinguishable from it. Soft technologies become the stuff of subjectivity. Here the body no longer inhabits disciplinary spaces, but is inhabited by them. The bio-molecular and organic structure of the body is a last resort for these control systems. This moment contains all the horror and exaltation of the body's political potential.

Unlike the disciplinary society, as Foucault understood it, the pharmaco-pornographic society no longer works over a *corpus*. The new pharmaco-pornographic body does not

have its limits at the skeletal wrapping that the skin delineates. This new body cannot be understood as a biological substratum outside the framework of production and cultivation, typical features of techno-science. As Donna Haraway teaches us, the contemporary body is a techno-life, multi-connected net that incorporates technology. It is neither an organism, nor a machine; nature, nor culture: it is a techno-body.<sup>19</sup> The new pharmacological and surgical techniques set in motion tectonic construction processes that combine figurative representations derived from cinema and from architecture (editing, 3D modelling or personality design, etc.), according to which the organs, the vessels, the fluids and the molecules are converted into the prime material from which our corporality is manufactured.

### Techno-gender

The invention of the category *gender* announces the arrival of the new pharmaco-pornographic regime of sexuality. Far from being the creation of 60s feminism, the category of gender belongs to the bio-technological discourse from the end of the 40s. 'Gender', 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are inventions of the Second World War that would see their full commercial expansion during the Cold War, along with objects such as canned food, the computer, plastic chairs, nuclear energy, television, the credit card, the disposable pen, the bar code, the air bed and the artificial satellite.

Arguing against the rigidity of the nineteenth century concept of 'sex', John Money, who conducted the first methodological treatment of intersex babies, advanced the technological plasticity of 'gender'. In 1947, Money used the notion of 'gender' for the first time in speaking about the possibility of technologically modifying, through the use of hormones and surgery, the bodily presentation of babies born with 'unclassifiable' (according to medicine's visual and discursive criteria) feminine or masculine genital organs and/or chromosomes. With Anke Ehrhardt and Joan and John Hampson, Money would later develop his claim into a strict clinical procedure for tinkering with young intersexual bodies.<sup>20</sup> When Money uses the term 'gender' to refer to 'psychological sex', he basically thinks about the exciting possibility of using technology to modify the deviant body, in order to bring it into accordance with pre-existing prescriptive ideals for feminine and masculine human bodies. If in the nineteenth century disciplinary system *sex* was natural, definitive, untransferable and transcendental, then *gender* now appears to be synthetic, malleable, variable, and susceptible of being transferred, imitated, produced and technically reproduced.

Far from the rigidity of exterior techniques to normalize the body practiced by the disciplinary system at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, the new gender techniques of the bio-capitalist pharmaco-pornographic regime are flexible, internal and assimilable. Twenty-first century gender functions as an abstract device of technical subjectivation: it is glued, it is cut, it is displaceable, it is named, it is imitated, it is swallowed, it is injected, it is grafted, it is digitalized, it is copied, it is designed, it is bought, it is sold, it is modified, it is mortgaged, it is transferred, it is downloaded, it is applied, it is transcribed, it is falsified, it is executed, it is certified, it is exchanged, it is dosed, it is provided, it is extracted, it shrinks, it is subtracted, it is denied, it is renounced, it is betrayed, it mutates.

Gender (femininity/masculinity) is not a concept, it is not an ideology, and it is not simply a performance: *it is a techno-political ecology*. The certainty of being a man or a woman is a somatic-political fiction that functions as an operational program of subjectivity through which sensorial perceptions are produced that take the form of affections, desires, actions, beliefs, identities. One of the defining results of this technology of gender is the production of an interior knowledge about oneself, of a sense of the sexual 'I' that appears to one's consciousness as emotional evidence of reality. 'I am man', 'I am woman', 'I am heterosexual', 'I am homosexual' are some of the formulations that condense specific knowledges about oneself, acting as hard bio-political and symbolic nuclei around which it is possible to attach a set of practices and discourses.

The pharmaco-pornographic regime of sexuality cannot function without the circulation of an enormous quantity of semiotic-technical flows: hormonal flows, silicon flows, digital flows, textual and of representation. *Definitively, this third regime cannot function without the constant trafficking of gender bio-codes*. In this political economy of sex, the normalization of difference depends on the control, re-appropriation and use of these flows of gender.

Nowadays, the synthetic molecules of testosterone, oxytocine, serotonin, codeine, cortisone, estrogens, etc. are edible somatic-political programs for the manufacturing of subjectivity and its affects. We are equipped techno-bio-politically to fuck, to reproduce or to control the possibility of reproduction. We live under the control of molecular technologies, of hormonal straitjackets, forever destined to invest in the power of gender. The objective of these pharmaco-pornographic technologies is the production of a living political prosthesis: namely, the production of a body docile enough as to put its total and abstract capacity to the task of creating pleasure in the service of capital's production. Outside of these somatic-political ecologies that regulate gender and sexuality there is no man or woman, just as there is no heterosexuality or homosexuality.

What I call *gender programming* is a pharmaco-pornographic technology for modelling a subjectivity that permits its productive (or successful) subjects to think and to act as individual bodies. Hence, such gender-producing subjects understand themselves as delimited spaces and as private property, with a gender identity and a fixed sexuality. The programming of a dominant gender starts from the following premise: an individual = a body = a sex = a gender = a sexuality. There are a wide variety of models for *genderization*, for so-called gender programs, depending on the historical moment and on the political and cultural context. Some gender programs have lost their potential for achieving subjectivization (i.e. the systems of matriarchal genderization or of Greek paedophilia) because the *political ecologies* that activated them have become extinct. Still others are in complete transformation, as is the case for our current genderization model.

In the pharmaco-pornographic regime, gender is constituted in the 'nets' of bio-political materialization. Gender, as Judith Butler has brought sharply into focus, is produced and socially consolidated in the act of performance, in an image in movement, in digital worlds, in cyber code. There is no longer a masculine or feminine gender unless it is facing a public, that is to say, gender is a somatic-discursive construction of a collective kind, apparent only when facing the scientific community or the net. Gender is public, it is the scientific community; it is the net itself.



Our contemporary societies are enormous sex-political laboratories where gender is being produced. The body, the body of each and every one of us, is the precious enclave where complex transactions of power are taking place. My body=the body of the multitude. That what we call sex, but also gender, masculinity/femininity and sexuality are *techniques of the body*, bio-technological extensions that belong to the sex-political system whose objective is production, reproduction and colonial expansion of heterosexual human life on the planet.<sup>21</sup>

Since the Second World War, the new bio-political ideals of masculinity and femininity are created in laboratories. These ideals of gender cannot exist in a pure state; they only exist in our *confined sexual techno-ecosystems*. As sexual subjects we inhabit a bio-capitalist theme park (providing entertainment, education, excitement, leisure ...) surrounded by a gigantic junk backstage. We are laboratory man and woman. We are the effects of a kind of political and scientific bio-Platonism. But we are alive: at the same time we materialize the power of the pharmaco-pornographic system and its possibility of failure.<sup>22</sup>

We are molecularly equipped to remain complicit with dominant repressive formations. But the contemporary pharmaco-pornographic body, just like the sex-disciplined body from the end of the nineteenth century, (different from what Foucault affirms) is *not* docile.<sup>23</sup> This body is not simply an effect of the pharmaco-pornographic systems of control; it is first and above all the materialization of '*puissance de vie*', 'power of life' that aspires to transfer to all and to every body. Paradoxically the pharmaco-pornographic subject embodies the force of the worldwide transformation of technoculture.<sup>24</sup>

The body in the pharmaco-pornographic era is not a passive material but a techno-organic interface, a techno-life system segmented and territorialized by different political models (textual, computing, bio-chemical).<sup>25</sup> There are no successions of models that will be historically superseded by others, no ruptures, no radical discontinuities, but unconnected simultaneity, transversal action of several somatic-political models that operate at diverse intensities, diverse rates of penetration, and diverse grades of effectiveness in the production of subjectivity.

I will give only one example of such a juxtaposition of somatic fictions that exert an effect on our bodies, our lives. How do we explain that at the beginning of the twentieth century, nasal surgery (nose surgery) is considered to be a cosmetic surgery while vaginoplasty (surgical construction of the vagina) and phalloplasty (surgical construction of the penis) are considered as sex change operations?<sup>26</sup> We could say that nowadays, and inside the same body, the nose and the sexual organs are understood through two completely different regimes of power. The nose is regulated by a pharmaco-pornographic power in which an organ is considered as an individual property and a market object, while the genitals are still enclosed in a pre-modern and almost sovereign regime of power that considers them to be state property (and in extension of this theocratic model, God's property) by virtue of a transcendental and immutable law. But the statute of the organs in the pharmaco-pornographic regime is undergoing a rapid change, so that a shifting multiplicity of production systems operates simultaneously on any given body. Those who survive the current mutation will see their body change from a semiotic-technical system; in other words, they will no longer be the bodies they were.

Forty years after the invention of the endocrine gender control techniques (like the pill) all sexual bodies are subject to a *common* pharmaco-pornographical platform. Today a bio-man will take a hormonal testosterone supplement to increase his performance in sports; a subcutaneous compound of estrogens and progesterone, active over three years, will be implanted in an adolescent as a contraceptive; a bio-woman who defines herself as a man could sign a protocol of sex change and access an endocrinology therapy based on testosterone that will make him grow a beard and moustache, increase musculature and pass socially as a man in less than eight months; a sixty year old bio-woman who ingested a high dose of estrogens and progesterone in her contraceptive pills for over twenty years will have kidney failure or breast cancer and receive chemotherapy similar to the kind administered to the victims of Chernobyl; a heterosexual couple will turn to in vitro insemination after discovering that the male of the couple cannot produce sufficient mobile spermatozooids to fertilize the ovule of his partner, due to a high intake of tobacco and alcohol ...

All this indicates that the diverse sexual identities, the various models of having sex and producing pleasure, the plural ways of expressing gender coexist with a '*becoming-common*'<sup>27</sup> of the technologies that produce gender, sex and sexuality.<sup>28</sup>

### Resistances, mutations ...

But a process of deconstructing and constructing gender that Judith Butler has called 'undoing gender' is always already taking place.<sup>29</sup> Dismantling these gender programmes requires a set of denaturalizing and disidentification operations. These take place, for example, in 'drag king' practices and 'hormonal self-experiments', which in a real sense are forms of 'de-installing gender'.

In the year 2000, establishing in a certain way our corporal future in the new millennium, the Scottish surgeon Robert Smith became the subject of an international bioethics controversy for accepting the petition of Gregg Furth, a patient who applied for the amputation of his healthy legs. He was suffering from what is known today under the nomenclature of 'Body Integrity Identity Disorder' (BIID), an illness of misidentifying one's real and imagined corporal integration. Furth perceived his own biped body to be contrary to what he thought was *his* ideal body image. Even though the bioethics committee prevented the operation from taking place, Smith confirmed that he had amputated several patients with similar pathologies of 'corporal dysmorphism' between 1993 and 1997. To some, nostalgic for the modern body, these operations are considered to be appallingly aberrant. But who would dare to cast the first stone at Furth: candidates for lifting and liposuction, people fitted with pacemakers, consumers of 'the pill', addicts to Prozac, to Tranquimazin or to cocaine, slaves of the hypo calorie regime, consumers of Viagra, or those who spend an average of eight hours per day connected to an informatic-mediatic prosthesis, i.e. computers, television, games on the net?

Furth is not an isolated madman who wants to submit himself, under medically controlled conditions, to a surgical bacchanal worthy of the *Massacre in Texas*. On the contrary, he is one of the known creators of a set of micro-political movements that

demand the right to redefine the living body outside of a hegemonic society's normative restrictions for legitimate able bodies. The political defenders of elective mutilation adopt the slogan of Mies Van der Rohe 'less is more' as the new economy for their project's ideal corporal architecture. The BIID project resists corporal normalization imperatives and brutally brings to light the cultural and political law constructed out of the binary disability/normality.

In parallel, activists of the self-styled 'crip' movement are putting the medical industry on the rack by refusing to receive cochlear electronic prostheses implants that would enable them to hear. Crip activists, inspired by the political tradition of the feminist, black and queer movements, defend their right to stay in the 'culture of deafness'. They argue that access to sound through prosthesis is a normative imposition that forces them to be part of the dominant auditory culture. Similarly, at the end of the 80s, the transgender movement commenced by criticizing the enforced use of technologies for sex changes, which sought to normalize the transsexual's body. Bio-men and the bio-women (indistinctly heterosexuals and homosexuals), but also those transsexuals who have access to surgical, endocrinological or legal techniques to produce their identity, are not simple economical classes in the Marxist sense of the term, but authentic *pharmaco-pornopolitical factories*. These subjects are at the same time prime *pharmaco-pornopolitical material* and the *producers* (rarely the proprietors), as well as *consumers* of gender's bio codes. Activists like Kate Bornstein, Pat Califia, Del LaGrace Volcano, Dean Spade, Jacob Hale, Sandy Stone and Moisés Martínez reject the psychiatrization of transsexuality (until now defined, in a similar way as BIID, as 'gender dysphoria') and defend their right to define their own sex, re-appropriating hormonal and surgical techniques to construct themselves, in loud disagreement with normative codes of masculinity and femininity. They produce self-designed sexes.

Hackers use the Internet and 'copyleft' programs for the free and horizontal distribution of information tools. They affirm that the social movement that they lead is within everyone's reach, via the Internet. The copyleft pharmaco-pornographic movement has a techno-life platform far more accessible than the Internet: the body. But not the naked body, or the body as immutable nature, but the techno-life body as bio-political archive and cultural prosthesis. Your memory, your desire, your sensibility, your skin, your dick, your dildo, your blood, your sperm, your vulva, your gonads, etc. are the tools of a possible *gender-copyleft* revolution. Gender-copyleft tactics should be subtle but determinant: the future of sex and the open gender of the species is at stake. There should not be one single name that can be patented. It will be our responsibility to remove the code, to open political practices, to multiply possibilities. This movement – that has already begun – could be called Postporno, Free Fuckware, Bodypunk, Opengender, Fuckyourfather, PenetratedState, TotalDrugs, PornTerror, Analinflation, TechnoPriapismoUniversalUnited ...

By voluntarily declining politically marginal identities or by electing their own sex-political status, these corporal self-determination movements show that the desired 'normal body' is the effect of violent devices of representation, control and cultural production. What the BIID, crip or transgender movements teach us is that it is no longer a question of making a choice between a *natural body* and a *techno body*. No, now the question is whether we want to be docile consumers of bio-political techniques and

complicit producers of our own bodies, or, alternatively, if we want to become conscious of the technological processes of which we are made. Either way, we must collectively risk inventing new ways of installing and reinstalling subjectivity.

Translated by Yvette Vinke and edited by Beatriz Preciado and Eliza Steinbock.

#### Notes

Thank you to Yvette Vinke for her quick translation and to Eliza Steinbock for taking care of the editing process and endless email exchange. Beatriz Preciado.

<sup>1</sup> Some of the most influential analyses of the current transformations of industrial society and capitalism relevant to my own work are: Mauricio Lazzarato, 'Le concept de travail immatériel: la grande entreprise', in *Futur Antérieur*, n.10 (1992); Antonella Corsani, 'Vers un renouveau de l'économie politique, anciens concepts et innovation théorique', in *Multitudes*, n.2 (2000); Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Multitudes* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 2004); Yann Moulier Boutang, *Le capitalisme cognitif. La grande transformation* (Paris: Amsterdam, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> I refer here to Foucault's notion 'somato-pouvoir' and 'technologie politique du corps'. See Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), pp.33–36, and Michel Foucault, 'Les rapports de pouvoir passent à l'intérieur du corps', *La Quinzaine Littéraire*, 247 (January 1977), pp.4–6. Also, here I draw on the well-known expression used by Immanuel Wallerstein in *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Michel Foucault, *Du gouvernement des vivants* (Collège de France, 1980) (unpublished).

<sup>4</sup> Alan Berube, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (New York: The Free Press, 1990).

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

<sup>6</sup> See Beatriz Colomina, *Domesticity at War* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).

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

<sup>8</sup> Andrea Tone, *Devices and Desires. A History of Contraceptives in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), pp.203–231.

<sup>9</sup> Tom Carnwath and Ian Smith, *Heroin Century* (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp.40–2.

<sup>10</sup> M. E. Clynes and N.S. Kline, 'Cyborgs and Space', in *Astronautics* (September, 1960).

<sup>11</sup> See Mike Davis, 'Planet of Slums', *New Left Review* 26 (April–March 2004).

<sup>12</sup> Ian Hacking, *Representing and Intervening. Introductory Topics in the Philosophy of Natural Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), and Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *La vie de laboratoire. La construction des faits scientifiques* (Paris: La Découverte, 1979).

<sup>13</sup> See Donna Haraway, 'When Man™ is on the Menu', *Incorporations*, ed. Jonathan Crary and Sanford K Winter (New York: Zone Books, 1992).

<sup>14</sup> See Rem Koolhaas's notion of 'junkspace' in 'Junkspace', *October*, 100, Obsolescence. A special issue (June 2002), pp.175–190.

<sup>15</sup> Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), pp.136–39.

<sup>16</sup> 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)

<sup>17</sup> Gilles Deleuze, 'Post-scriptum sur les sociétés de contrôle', *Pourparlers* (Paris: Minuit, 1990), p.241.

<sup>18</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

<sup>19</sup> Donna Haraway, *Modest\_Witness@Second\_Millennium. FemaleMan\_Meets\_OncoMouse* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997).

<sup>20</sup> John Money, Joan Hampson and John Hampson, 'Imprinting and the Establishment of the Gender Role', *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry* (1957).

<sup>21</sup> See Marcel Mauss, 'Techniques du corps' [1934], *Sociologie et anthropologie* (Paris: PUF, 2001).

<sup>22</sup> About this relationship between power, failure and resistance see: Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp.15–16.

<sup>23</sup> I am referring her to Michel Foucault's notion of 'corps docile': *Surveiller et punir*, first chapter of the third part.

<sup>24</sup> For the elaboration of this Spinozian concept of 'puissance' see Maurizio Lazzarato, *Puissance de l'invention* (Paris: Les empêcheurs de penser en rond, 2002).

<sup>25</sup> Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p.162.

<sup>26</sup> Dean Spader, 'Mutilating Gender', *The Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp.315–32.

<sup>27</sup> I am using here the notion of 'becoming-common', '*devenir-commun*' invoked by Michael Hardt and Toni Negri to explain the new common

condition of biopolitical work. See: Michael Hardt and Toni Negri, *Multitudes*, p.142.

<sup>28</sup> See Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Multitude: War and democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005).

<sup>29</sup> Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

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