

FROM HERCULINE'S "HAPPY LIMBO" TO PRECIADO'S "TECHNOGENDER": A NEW SCENARIO FOR PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACHES TO SEXUATION

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ABSTRACT: Based on formulations by Birman & Hoffmann, Claude Allouch and Geneviève Morel, the first part of this paper attempts to highlight the importance of continuing, in the psychoanalytic field, the true interlocution Lacan established with Foucault, now establishing an interlocution between Lacan's sexuation theory and the practices and theories coming from the queer movement. In the second part, the paper will approach Foucault's *Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth-century French Hermaphrodite* and Paul B. Preciado's *Testo Junkie*, indicating some similarities and differences between the disciplinary and "pharmapornographic" regimes theorized by both authors, as well as between the two modalities for resistance they bring forth.

Keywords: sex, gender, sexuation, psychoanalysis, queer theory

Resumo: Do "limbo feliz" de Herculine ao "tecnogênero" de Preciado: um novo cenário para a abordagem psicanalítica da sexuação. Partindo das formulações de Birman e Hoffmann, Claude Allouch e Geneviève Morel, busca-se, na primeira parte deste artigo, destacar a importância de o campo psicanalítico dar continuidade à verdadeira interlocução que Lacan estabeleceu com Foucault, empreendendo agora uma interlocução entre a teoria lacaniana da sexuação e as práticas e teorias provenientes do movimento *queer*. Na segunda parte, serão abordados *O diário de Herculine*, publicado por Foucault, e *Testo junkie*, de Paul B. Preciado, indicando-se algumas das semelhanças e das diferenças entre os regimes disciplinar e "farmacopornográfico" teorizados por estes dois autores, assim como entre as duas modalidades de resistência que eles colocam em cena.

Palavras-chave: sexo; gênero; sexuação; psicanálise; teoria *queer*.

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PSYCHOANALYSIS, FOUCAULT AND THE QUEER MOVEMENT: A NECESSARY INTERLOCUTION

“Psychoanalyst, ourselves and for a long time confined to our experience, saw that it becomes clearer if we use the terms by which Freud defined it not as precepts, but as concepts that are appropriate for these terms.”¹

Lacan

Lacan e Foucault. Conjunções, disjunções e impasses (BIRMAN; HOFFMANN, 2017, p. 17) delineates the history of the “true dialogue” established between Lacan and Foucault. By highlighting this history’s crucial moments and the important echoes they produced in both the philosopher and the psychoanalyst, Birman and Hoffman attempt to fight against the *resistance* a significant portion of the psychoanalytic community manifests regarding the *philosopher* and the continuation of this dialogue. At the core of that resistance is the naive identification of his critical points with the goal of promoting the destruction of psychoanalysis, or the malicious arguments referring to the *philosopher’s* alleged *resistance* to the unconscious experience. However, as posited by the authors, that argument

“should be entirely banned from the psychoanalytic scene, because the psychoanalytic community of all stripes shouldn’t only learn to live with critiques to the psychoanalytic discourse, but also use them to advance and make its theoretic discourse richer and more complex, in the interdisciplinary field’s historical and epistemological contexts.” (*idem*)

In our century’s first decades, the first lines are drawn to circumscribe a new “crucial moment” in this “true dialogue”. It’s now the interlocution we, as psychoanalysts, are invited to undertake with the field defined as queer². The configuration of this new moment depends, however, on the psychoanalytic field’s possibility of banning the resistance opposing these studies, a resistance that’s widely based on the same identification of its critical formulations with the goal of overthrowing its essential categories and on the same argument that finds in them a resistance to the psychoanalytic discourse and the truth it presumes, now placed in terms of the *irreducible sexual difference*, the insurmountable difference between *men and women* imposed to talking beings through the logics of *sexuation*. It also depends on the psychoanalytic field not identifying, often too quickly, in the field of queer studies – its practices and discourses – the constituting or reinforcing references of community identity politics.

As highlighted by Allouch (2002), when referring to some works articulated in the field of queer studies, their authors are “perfectly warned about the impasses, traps and other libidinal defeats borne by every inflexible identity position” (ALLOUCH, 2002, p. 13). Therefore, we wouldn’t need to “fear giving way to a community identity combat that isn’t ours” (*idem*). On the contrary, according to the author: we could take it as “an occasion offered to psychoanalysis to define itself better” (*ibidem*, p. 2). Indeed, since 1998, even before they were referred to and defined as queer³, the psychoanalyst already highlighted the importance of the Freudian

1 All quotes were translated by the paper’s translator, unless indicated otherwise.

² As observed by Louro (2001), the queer movement encompasses a diverse set of theoretic and political propositions which, around the 1990s, start using this term to describe its perspectives. It’s worth noting that if the movement is, on one hand, the heir of propositions developed in the context of feminist movements (since the 1950s) and the “gay and lesbian” and transgender movements (since the 1970s), on another hand, it’s defined precisely by the problematization, largely based on Foucault’s contributions, of the central category, as well as of identity classifications and gender oppositions (men/women, lesbian/gay, trans/cis) in which those movements are based. This footnote intends to clarify the divergence between movements for the reader, but also to indicate that, due to the fact that this terminological distinction is very recent and delimitates a sometimes very subtle border, references to the perspectives of the queer movement might appear in this paper under other names, such as “gay and lesbian studies” or “gender studies”.

³ Teresa de Lauretis is the first to propose, in a 1990 paper, the use of “queer” instead of “gay and lesbian”, then commonly used to describe practices and theories developed in those two fields. As clarified by the author, with the

field welcoming the then-called *gay and lesbian studies*, particularly contesting the *university subjects*⁴ they presented, a contestation in relation to which psychoanalysis now seems to be positioned more as an object than as an agent.

If, on one hand, the author attributes the strange "change in field" of psychoanalysis – from "contesting presented prejudices" to "contested by the prejudices it presents" – to the fact that it has largely become another normalizing discipline (ALLOUCH, 2003, p. 75), on the other hand, he highlights the fact that it was precisely where adaptive psychoanalysis proliferated – in the United States – that queer studies emerged. He also observes that it was by directing its reflection towards the field of sexual practices that were widely deserted by psychoanalytic inquiries – sexualities outside of the realms of family, faithfulness and love (a field that also has its codes, rites and limits), such as, for example, violent S/M practices or navire-nights multiple anonymous and diversified practices – that these studies were developed. From these observations, Allouch poses the following questions: "Isn't the field of gay and lesbian studies (also) a creation of psychoanalysis? Based on what it did, what it didn't do and what it shouldn't have done?" (ALLOUCH, 1998, p. 145). Perhaps the reflection on the place it occupies in relation to the field of queer studies and practices can be now considered a privileged pathway for psychoanalysis to better define its terms. Or yet, for it to become clearer, using the terms by which Freud defined it "not as precepts, but as concepts that are appropriate for these terms", as suggested by Lacan when celebrating the centennial of the birth of the creator of psychoanalysis (LACAN, 1956/1991, p. 461).

Despite his efforts to ban the disciplinarization of psychoanalysis, Lacan couldn't prevent a significant portion of his heirs to use his categories in the same prescriptive way as Freud's heirs had used his concepts. This use was particularly visible in the occasion of discussions regarding PaCS in France in the turn of the century and, more precisely, in the arguments that, in the name of Lacanian categories, defended positions contrary to the civil recognition of homosexual unions. Indeed, as observed by psychoanalyst Geneviève Morel (2004), these arguments were based on an ideologically directed interpretation of the Lacanian category of Name-of-the-Father, which then becomes "a norm for family, for the difference between sexes and for mental health" (MOREL, 2004, p. 13). Therefore,

with this sole signifier and the phallic signified that follows, it was intended to definitively define psychosis in its difference from neurosis, separate real men from real women and, finally, say what were the acceptable psychoanalytic forms of family and marriage" (*idem*)⁵.

As a consequence of this transformation of certain *concepts* created by Lacan in *precepts*, a great conceptual and clinical void, according to Morel, "manifested itself in the field of contemporary psychoanalysis, particularly in France, regarding the issue of sexual identities" (*idem*). Thus, it's vitally important that psychoanalysis undertakes an effort to "better define" what Lacan articulated as *sexuation*, in which formulas would be found, in his opinion, "the only possible definitions of the part said men or women for whatever finds itself in the position of inhabiting language" (LACAN, 1972-73/1982, p. 107). Thus, it's also important

term, she attempted to "trace a critical distance" (LAURETIS, 2007, p. 98) regarding the use of the "politically correct 'gay and lesbian'" expression (*ibidem* p. 101), in the measure that the differences between those two fields were, in her opinion, *less represented* by the "discursive coupling" of its terms than, in fact, *elided* by the particle "and" which connected both terms.

It's also worth noting that, with this footnote, we not only intend to historically place the emergence of the term "queer", but also to insinuate, even though very vaguely, some possible approximations between issues raised here by Lauretis and those raised by Lacan in his theory of sexuation.

⁴ Those two terms should refer here to the meanings they usually carry in Foucault (disciplinary regime) and Lacan (university discourse).

⁵ These formulations can be found in the author's *post-scriptum* in the 2004 edition of her first book, originally published in 2000.

that the psychoanalytic field extracts from these definitions the conditions to support, as formulated by Morel, a discourse that's simultaneously connected to the great issues of the present and detached from its time's prejudices. Thus, finally, the value of not missing the occasion offered by queer studies to interrogate ourselves on "what we did, what we didn't do and what we shouldn't have done", in theory and practice, with what Lacan bequeathed us under the name of *sexuation*.

Keeping with the differences that mark its specificities, the theoretic productions undertaken by Geneviève Morel and Jean Allouch in the field of sexuality (or *erotics*, as preferred by Allouch) stand out in the contemporary psychoanalysis scene due to the originality and rigor with which they undertake their reading and articulation of Lacanian conceptual categories, providing valuable subsidies for us to deal with the new ways from which subjects, bodies, sexes and the names given to them are now articulated. It's worth mentioning that, while Allouch's theories are strongly based on Foucault's thinking, as well as, in good measure, instigated by queer theory and by the sexual practices towards which the studies are directed, Morel's formulations, on the contrary, are essentially guided by clinical cases and supported by psychoanalytical conceptual tools. However, if, on the psychoanalyst's first book (2004), neither Foucaultian thinking nor queer studies are present among Morel's theories, in the second, on the other hand, the author's dialogue with both can be clearly noted.

In effect, in 2000 – when she identifies gender theory with gender *identity* theories, having in mind particularly the Stollerian notion of *gender identity core* –, the psychoanalyst restricts herself to emphatically highlighting the *insufficiency of gender identifiers* – imaginary and/or symbolic – to determine *sexuation* – whether real or of *jouissance* – as well as the conceptual insufficiency in gender theories to approach its various complex ambiguities. The following terms summarize the author's arguments:

There's something below identifications, which might also be something below, something more primordial, only apprehensible through psychoanalytic discourse. It doesn't mean we can discard them, but gender, which we consider as equivalent of a system of imaginary identifications and signifiers, doesn't exhaust the relationship between the subject and their sex and the sex of others. That relationship is also real." (MOREL, 2004, p. 141)

In 2008, however, even though Morel continues to insist in the difference between psychoanalytic theories on *sexuation* and gender theory, her references to those studies attest to the fact that psychoanalysis has broadened its *rapprochement* to this field, including queer theories, based on other conceptions of gender, not those marked by identity categories. As examples of this *rapprochement*, we can highlight the psychoanalyst's references to Judith Butler, more particularly to the convergence that she points out between Butler's thesis of performative gender and Lacan's thesis of the mask as a secret of desire. We should also mention the appeal to Leo Bersani's⁶ *homoeudade (homoité)* theory to support her arguments regarding Gide's *sinthoma*.

Similarly, even though she highlights the differences between psychoanalytical and Foucaultian conceptions of sex, the author also highlights in which measure her own formulations align themselves with the denouncement of identity syndrome and the injunction of identification with sexuality and its different forms as undertaken by Foucault.

As we've seen, between those two books, a few differences stand out regarding the author's connection to the field of queer studies. In the first book, her references to the field are restricted to theories in which the category of gender is conceived in terms of identity (subjective or culturally constructed). It's in this measure that the psychoanalytic formulations on *sexuation* and the formulations articulated by gender theories are contrasted. In the second book, her references become broader, giving way to a "true dialogue".

⁶ An important disciple of Foucault and critical interlocutor of Butler's thesis.

Along with these transformations regarding the approach of the field of queer studies, we can also observe an important theoretic (and political) inflection in the author's propositions on the theme of sexuation in those two moments. It's possible to illustrate this inflection pointing to the different terms with which Morel formulates and approaches, in each of the two books, a same question – one of the thornier ones among those asked of psychoanalysis by the new practices and theories in the field of sex: "can we talk about sex in psychoanalysis without referencing sexual difference?" (MOREL, 2008, p. 321). Furthermore: without referring this difference to a binary, in whatever term it might be?

In her first book, the way in which the question is phrased – "Why two sexes?" (MOREL, 2004, p. 148) – is already an indicator that the author isn't questioning the pertinence of the binary, only intends to clarify it, answering that "if there is only one function of universal *jouissance*, the phallic function, there are two ways of being inscribed in the function, corresponding to two different forms of phallic *jouissance*, thus, two sexes" (*idem*), that is, "two 'options of sexual identification', man and woman" (*ibidem*, p. 150). The emphasis on the necessary binary of sexuation stands out in this clarification.

We should now make it clear that the context in which this emphasis happens, i.e., the field of practices and discourses in reference to which it seems necessary that the author supports this position, is that of practices and discourses postulating the existence of a third sex. As specified by the author, this postulation would have been based, throughout history, first in theories and treatments for homosexuality based on an equivalence between object choice and sexual identification and, more recently, in theories and treatments of transsexuality based on the idea of a natural error. Therefore, it's with the intent of reiterating the objections directed by Freud and Lacan, respectively, to these two approaches, that Morel is led to emphasizing the existence of two, and only two, sexes.

In the second book, the question comes up again. This time, however, it's phrased in radically different terms, inserted in a radically different context. Morel interrogates us in the following terms: "is 'having a sex' reduced, or even silenced, under the dimorphism of physical appearances or over a dualist dichotomy of *jouissance* in relation to the phallus?" (MOREL, 2008, p. 326). The context in which this question is posed is now that of countless possibilities for physical modifications available on the market, through which the promises of "putting back in order" sex and gender and "countering that order" are proposed. Regarding this, the author states:

Lacan's psychoanalysis brings a much more original contribution than the one that's now usually evoked to support a rigorously bipolar sexual order, allegedly fit to protect us from the eventual anger of a dispositive-invention of the self and of oneself's sexuality, conceived as a threat." (*ibidem*, p. 326)

We see that, when returning in 2008, that is, in the context of her efforts to extract from Lacan's conceptual tools the possibility of supporting another discourse, different from the one who turned Name-of-the-Father in "the norm for family, the difference between sexes and mental health"; when resuming, then, in 2008, the same question first formulated in 2000, another opposition seems to guide the author's theoretic advances. We dare to state that in this moment it's not as important, for the author, to oppose the discourses supported, on one hand, by psychoanalysis and, on the other, by gender studies, but to formulate a psychoanalytic discourse that's capable of opposing certain discourses articulated inside the same psychoanalytic field since the discussions on PaCS and particularly "regarding the issues of sexual identity" (MOREL, 2004, p. 13). We also dare to state that the author's success in elaborating this discourse was due (at least in part), in first place, to welcoming what was first rejected, Foucault's elaborations and gender studies, and, in second place, to an outlook turned towards practices of construction and deconstruction of sexes and gender which aren't now necessarily guided by the notions of "gender identity" or "natural error", but by other "codes, rites and limits", bringing to the contemporary scenario issues that go beyond those proposed, in their respective eras, by Freud and Lacan.

With the formulations presented until here, particularly with the importance given to the inflection perceived in Morel's theoretic developments, we attempt to highlight in what measure Foucault's thinking and queer studies, as well as new practices of construction and deconstruction of sex and gender, can reveal themselves as occasions offered to psychoanalysis for it to define itself better. Or, more precisely, to do with the terms with which Lacan defines sexualization the same use he suggested for Freud's terms for defining psychoanalysis, i.e., "not as precepts, but as concepts".

We can point out two important moments in which this opportunity was offered to psychoanalysis: the first one was in 1978, when Foucault published *Herculine Barbin*, and the second one was more recent, with the 2008 (2018 in Brazil) publication of Paul B. Preciado's *Testo Junkie*. We consider that a joint approach of these two books can help us to take a few shy steps in the path of an interlocution – that's now as hard as it is necessary – between psychoanalysis and the new practices and discourses on sex and gender which permeate contemporary subjects, cultures and politics. It is, therefore, towards this approach that we now turn.

HERCULINE AND THE "TRUE SEX"

Go, accused one, pursue your fate! The world that you invoke was not made for you. You were not made for it. In this vast universe, where every grief has its place, you shall search in vain for a corner where you may shelter your own, for it would be a blemish there. It overturns all the laws of nature and humanity.⁷

Herculine Barbin

The manuscript containing the memoirs of Herculine Barbin was found in 1868, with the body of its author, a "hermaphrodite" who lived as a girl in their childhood, and then, having been "recognized" by medicine as a "true boy", was forced to legally change their sex. From there, Herculine writes, "it was all over. According to my civil status, I was henceforth to belong to that half of the human race which is called the stronger sex" (FOUCAULT, 1978/1983, p. 85). Unable to adapt to their new identity, they see themselves over "an even deeper abyss into which I cannot look without feeling a horrible dizziness" (*ibidem*, p. 95). At the age of 25, they're driven to suicide, announced as certain in the first words of the journal. As observed by Foucault, in his brief introduction, the journal tells the story of "one of those unfortunate heroes" (*ibidem*, p. 5), whose body was torn from the pleasures experienced in "the happy limbo of non-identity" (*ibidem*, p. 6)⁸ so that the *only, true and unquestionable* sex to which it belonged could be extracted from it through the medical and legal apparatus at the time.

Foucault finds in this journal a rare archive, a pivot even, of the "strange story of the true sex" (*ibidem*, p. 4). And that's because the years during which, as said by Herculine, "it was all over" – the 1860s and 1870s – weren't only intensely dominated by the theme of hermaphroditism, but also the time when the obstinate medical and legal interrogation on the true sexual identity of individuals was the most stubbornly practiced. Herculine is also a pivot in this story, since they "find themselves in the rupture point of two sexuality *epistemes*" (PRECIADO, 2018, p. 400). Or, using Lacqueur's terms, of two regimes of sex intelligibility, i.e.: the regime of *similarity* (*only sex* or *sexual monism* model), dominant until the classical age – a regime which admitted both the combination of sexes in a same body and the passage from one sex to the other –, and the regime of *opposition* (*sexual difference* or *sexual binarism* model), hegemonic since the 18th Century, where the combination is conceived as deceiving, illusory and hiding a *true and only sex*, meaning that an individual

⁷ *Herculine Barbin* quotes use the Richard McDougall 1980 translation published by Penguin Random House.

⁸ In her book *Gender Trouble* (2003, p. 140-155), Butler questions this reading of Foucault, which she sees as tributary of an emancipatory ideal that's incompatible with the philosopher's own formulations in his *History of sexuality*. We won't delve deeper into this critique since it would go beyond the scope of this paper. However, we thought it was necessary to mention it.

couldn't pass *to*, but only pass *as* another sex. It's in the latter model that the medicine becomes responsible for carefully examining bodies to reveal the true sexes hiding under nature's disguises and the right to recognize what nature has determined, enforcing its law: for each body, *one*, and *only one*, true sex.

In the beginning of their youth, Herculine is ripped, by the modern dimorphic *episteme*, from the old, monosexual, world where they lived. Unable to continue inhabiting the old world, and also unable of living in the modern world, they're cut off from both, thrown into a fatal void. In Preciado's words:

Herculine exists in the void between two frames for sexual representation, as if their body had fallen in the gap separating two divergent fictions of the self. Herculine isn't a man trapped in a woman's body, nor a woman trapped in a man's body, but a body trapped between diverging discourses on sexuality. (PRECIADO, 2018, p. 400).

TESTO JUNKIE: ON CUT AND JOUISSANCE

This book is the mark left by that cut.

Preciado

As we've seen, Herculine's journal puts into words the *pains* lived by its author in the 19th Century, when, due to the medical recognition of their "true sex" and the legal imposition of a name change as well as a change in sexual identity, they see their body thrown into an *abyss* that leads them to *death*. Foucault based his theoretic formulations on what that body went through and how that pain was put into words, clarifying in what measure the categories of "true sex" and "sexual difference" were strategically operating in the modern power apparatus: the apparatus of sexuality.

Exactly thirty years after Foucault's *Herculine Barbin*, Paul B. Preciado publishes his own "journal", *Testo Junkie*, which is revealed, in various important aspects, as a precise counterpoint to the former.

In the pages of *Testo Junkie* (2018), we find the account, or the "mark", of the "political experiment" that Preciado, following the principle of the auto-guinea pig (i.e., being simultaneously the lab rat and the subject theorizing about it) and crossing "theories, molecules and affections", undertook during the 236 days and nights when he applied to his own body, by himself (outside of a medical protocol), doses of testosterone, filming each application and sending the videos anonymously to an internet page. As observed by the author: "In this audiovisual network, my face is indifferent, my name is insignificant. Only the strict relationship between my body and the substance is the object of worship and surveillance" (PRECIADO, 2018, p. 22-23).

Before we enter the book's content, we should make some introductory comments. First, concerning the author's name. Paul B. Preciado is the name that the philosopher – until recently known as Beatriz Preciado – started adopting in 2014. As he clarifies, by collectively adopting the male name Paul, the possibility of "inhabiting masculinity and the political *jouissance* it implies" opens up to him (PRECIADO; CURIA, 2015). On the other hand, through the permanence in his new name of the letter "B", extracted from his previous female name, he keeps a "trace of his personal history, including the commitment to feminisms" (*idem*). Still regarding this change, Preciado clarifies that he carries his new name as *another mask* and that, more than naming a new identity, it represents the possibility of experimenting with being called a name in which he doesn't recognize himself. In his own terms, it serves as an "exercise to unidentify myself" (*idem*).

We should also make some clarifications regarding our use of the term "journal" to refer to this book. Indeed, if we use this term it is to indicate the proximity between what interests Preciado in writing his "journal" and what interested Foucault in reading Herculine's "journal". In first place, such as Foucault, Preciado points out that he isn't interested in recording individual feelings, but the ways in which they're crossed by what isn't his, "that is, by what emanates from our planet's history" (PRECIADO, 2018, p. 13). Also, just as Foucault found

in Herculine's journal the traces of a time spent under the imposition of the power regime of modern science (of which end Herculine's death would be a trace), Preciado states: "the change happening in me is a change of time" (*ibidem*, p. 23). In this regard, it's interesting to note that in both journals, the figure of death shows up in the first words. However, while in Herculine's journal it's foreshadowed as their ineluctable destiny, in Preciado's journal, it refers to another death, not the author's⁹, referred as "the human distillation of a time" (*ibidem*, p. 13) marked by a kind of sexual insurrections which has been exhausted. It's to avenge this death that Preciado attempts to experiment, through voluntary testosterone intoxication, with a new modality of insurrection.

With his experiment, Preciado doesn't intend to transform into a man. On his own words: "I don't want the female gender which was assigned to me. Neither do I want the male gender that transexual medicine promises me and that the State will end up granting me if I behave" (PRECIADO; CURIA, 2015). What he intends with the administration of testogel is, as he says, to infect himself with a chemical signifier culturally marked as masculine, in order to "contaminate the molecular bases of the production of sexual difference" (PRECIADO, 2018, p. 153). He explains: testogel, which he adds as a prosthesis to his "low-tech transgender identity, made of dildos, texts and moving images" (*ibidem*, p. 18) is only the materialization of a chain of signifiers taking the form of a molecule that can be assimilated by his body. He is "a political drug, a chemical weapon with the potential of exploding the sex/gender system from inside out" (PRECIADO; CURIA, 2015). Thus, he suggests: the journal – where the "physiological and political micromutations" aroused by testosterone in his body are recorded – can be read as a "manual of gender bioterrorism in a molecular scale" (*ibidem*, p. 14).

His *body* appears, then, in the essay, as the essential political *resistance* space. But that's in a very precise sense, and its understanding implies situating it in a *new power regime*. Resuming Foucault's and Laqueur's formulations, Preciado indicates that since the 18th Century science operate as a key piece in the disciplinary regime for legitimizing a new political organization of the social field for the establishment of a sexual binarism linked to an anatomical truth, fixed on natural difference and immutable between bodies. Throughout the 20th Century, however, with the invention of the biochemical notion of hormones and the pharmaceutical development of synthetic molecules for commercial use, a new regime of sex production and government takes shape. It's the pharmapornographic regime, built on the *alliance* between the *18th Century naturalist dimorphism* and the *21st Century's biotech industry's hyperconstructivism*; a regime which power "you don't obey, but inhale. In the form of caps, through the mouth, or through the pores. It's liquid, viscous, aspirable and injectable. Sometimes, transparent. Always willing to flow" (PRECIADO; CURIA, 2015).

Preciado presents a history of this regime, which would have originated in the early 1940s, when the first molecules of progesterone and estrogen were obtained and then commercialized as synthetic hormones. In the 1950s, due to the possibilities of bodily transformation opened by the administration of hormones, along with the relaxation of identities due to the sociological invention of the category of gender, "the epistemology of dimorphism and of sexual difference was simply in ruins" (p. 114). However, instead of producing an alternative (multiform) epistemology, political-scientific discourses decided to use these same discoveries and practices to "intervene directly in the structures of living beings to artificially construct sexual dimorphism" (PRECIADO, 2018, p. 115). The pharmapornographic regime then establishes its authority, transforming the concepts of femininity and masculinity in material realities which manifest themselves in chemical substances, synthetic hormones, commercialized molecules. The new regime isn't, therefore, opposed to the previous one: it reproduces it, reiterates it, but still introduces important modifications. Let's see what they are.

⁹ The death of writer and gay activist Guillaume Dustan.

As opposed to the disciplinary model, with technologies that control the body from the outside and which conceives of sex as the truth hiding behind the artifice, as what can remain invisible under a dissimulating appearance, the new model – where technologies become part of the body, diluted in it, becoming somatitechnical – artificially constructs sex, which will then be revealed as truth in the body's visible surface. According to Preciado:

While the disciplinary regime of the 19th Century considered sex as natural, definitive, immutable and transcendental, the pharmapornographic gender seems to be synthetic, malleable, variable, open to transformation and mimicable, as well as technically producible and reproducible. (*Ibidem*, p.116)

The paradoxical result of this regime of "gelatinous technologies" (*ibidem*, p. 85) – where the distinctive characteristic of sex is in gel, where "the being isn't substance, but gel" (*ibidem*, p. 429) – is that it takes nature and identity to the level of a "somatic parody" (*ibidem*, p. 116). It's in this sense that it opens escape hatches for resistance. Therefore, on one hand, biotechnological apparatus that now operate on bodies and sexual identities reconfigure the subjugation and control devices, transforming it in a "gigantic and viscous integrated circuit" (*ibidem*, p. 54) of "biomolecular, digital and high speed information transmission technologies" (*ibidem*, p. 85): the body now becomes "naked technolive" (*ibidem*, p. 52). On the other hand, it's through the strategic reappropriation of these biotech apparatuses, the self-experimentation with these "soft, quick, viscous and gelatinous technologies, which can be injected, inhaled, 'incorporated'" (*ibidem*, p. 85), that it becomes possible to invent resistance, to undertake a micropolitic of unidentification.

Bodies, pharmacological networks and communication networks constitute, then, the political laboratories for constructing and deconstructing the self. Whoever wants to be a political subject, writes Preciado, "should start by being the rat of their own lab" (*ibidem*, p. 370). Or, even, a hacker of their own body, a hacker of gender, a sexual hacker. After all, the body is "a living platform even more easily accessible than the internet" (*ibidem*, p. 411).

CONCLUSION

In the last few pages we discussed two books: *Herculine Barbin*, a fundamental reference in queer studies, and *Testo Junkie*, the most recent contribution to these studies published in Brazil. We should now question in what measure putting these books side by side can help us advance a few steps in the path towards articulating the psychoanalytic formulations on sexuation, articulated by Lacan in the early 1970s, and the queer practices and discourses put forward since the 1990s.

In first place, it seems possible to see these two books as fundamental archives – or crucial moments – of the history of the political production of sexual bodies. In each one, a specific modality (or regime) of power is revealed, intervening through a set of medical technologies for investing in bodies and of legal devices for controlling civil records. In each one, a particular rationality through which bodies can recognize themselves or be recognized in *terms* of male and female or *other terms* is revealed. In *Herculine Barbin*, it's the disciplinary regime, with technologies which control the body from the outside to extract its true sex. In *Testo Junkie*, it's the pharmapornographic regime: in it, technologies are diluted in the body and can serve both to reinforce disciplinary norms for sexuality and the production and naming of male and female bodies and to point out the limits in these norms, subvert its terms and, also, for the subject to enjoy (*jouir*) from and with them.

At the same time, each of these books tells a story of resistance. Hercule resists abandoning the "happy limbo of non-existence" and adapting to the new identity that's imposed to them. Their resistance even leads them to the extreme end of suicide. The resistance experienced in *Testo Junkie*, on the other hand, doesn't culminate in death; on the contrary, it starts with it. Finally, if Herculine's memoirs bear the mark of a

resistance translated into pain, Preciado's "autopolitical fiction" refers to an experience that's translated, on his own terms, in political *jouissance*.

By diving deeper in these two "journals" we intend to present or, more modestly, suggest some of the notable similarities and differences between the scenario where the critical interlocutions between Foucault and Lacan, and then Lacan and gender studies, were set, as well as the one we're now invited to undertake with queer discourses and practices, which articulate, around new norm and in terms of other ties, body and word, sex and discourse, *jouissance* and politics.

In his introduction to Herculine's memoirs, Foucault directs a criticism to the participation of psychoanalysis in the history of true sex, in the sense that it integrates the set of discourses which spread "the idea that between sex and truth there are complex, obscure and essential truths" (FOULCAULT, 1978/1983, p. 3), promising us "our true sex and the truth of ourselves that's secretly hidden in it" (*ibidem*, p. 4). Indeed, depending on the reading that's made of Lacan's formulations on sexuation, we can integrate it to the history of discourses which, in the limits of stubbornness, state the existence of a true sex, *necessarily male or female*. We could say that now there are various theories that find in Lacanian sexuation formulations basis for support participating in this history – going beyond, and even in opposition, what's naturally conferred by anatomy, artificially constructed by medical and legal devices as body image and civil name, and symbolically inscribed by community norms –, a *real* and ineluctable *difference between sexes*, between men and women, each one referred to a specific modality of *jouissance*. We could also say that these theories are now based in great measure in a contrast between what the clinical experience and the psychoanalytic conceptual body support and what would be affirmed in queer practices and studies, which are considered strongly connected to the identity category of gender and thus insufficient to seize the "complex, obscure and essential" differences between different positions of *jouissance* and the division of speakers between male and female. However, it's also unquestionable that we can find in the same formulations by Lacan on sexuation the basis not to support a real and inescapable bipartition of speakers between men and women, but to read this bipartition as a symptomatic response, common¹⁰, yet contingent, on the *real impossibility of sexual relations*. In his time, Lacan was led to articulate and highlight the terms of that impossibility not only through a rigorous logic argument, but also through a critical interlocution with what some practices and discourses strongly supported in the identity category of gender were then supported. Both the definition of transexuals as "at least one" (LACAN, 1971-72/2011, p. 15) which doesn't support in countenance the naturalness of difference, and the famous formulation that "woman doesn't exist" (cf. *ibidem*, Jan. 12 1972 lesson) can be taken as examples of this interlocution. If, in the former case, the formulation is explicitly opposed to Stoller's notion of "gender identity core", in the latter, we hazard the hypothesis that, with it, Lacan was opposing the universalizing contours that the feminist movement of his time was conferring to the then recent identity category of "female gender". Maybe, nowadays, elaborations such as Preciado's can help us underline the impossibility of the sexual relation in new terms. Mentioning only two prominent points: Paul B. Preciado shows us how the "B" he carries in his name brings traces of a feminism and a conception of gender which are very different from those known by Lacan, and that could hardly be categorized as studies limited to the analysis of imaginary and symbolic dimensions of identity, excluding the question of *jouissance*. He also shows us how "technogender" presents itself as a possible new way of inhabiting the space of *atleastone*, a space that, as highlighted by Fink, isn't, in Lacan's work, "only the exception proving the rule, but, more radically, that which forces us to redefine rules" (FINK, p. 155).

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¹⁰ "Common" both in the sense of "usual" and in the sense of "community".

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