

Here's
-Health
-Strength
-Beauty

**ARNOLD
MASSAGE VIBRATOR**

The advertisement features a central illustration of a hand holding a vintage Arnold Massage Vibrator. The device has a cylindrical metal body with a textured grip and a circular head with a row of small, pointed protrusions. The background of the illustration is a light pink color with radiating lines emanating from behind the vibrator, suggesting power or vibration. The text is in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

GOOD VIBRATIONS

From Repression to Stimulation



Helena Bosch Vidal

Supervised by Damien Delille

MA Space and Communication

—HEAD Genève

2018





To Damien Delille, for
shaking my ideas and follow me
in this process.

To the inestimable good vibes of
the late-night work gear.

And to my family, for being
always my wholehearted
support.

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Introduction





Introduction

Legend has it that Cleopatra VII, the last and youngest queen of the Ptolemaic Kingdom, in ancient Egypt, was the first who designed a vibrator for a sexual purpose. She is also known for being independent of men power, and for using her connotation as a free and proud sexual being as an expression of her seductress autonomy. The story says that she often used a carved out gourd, or a box made of papyrus, and inserted buzzing bees inside as a powerful vibratory source in order to give pleasure to herself. Cleopatra invented the vibrator made out of objects from her context and used her sexual desire to activate their vibratory power¹.

Fig 1



Fig.1 — Illustration by Laetitia Coryn.
From the book: Brenot, Philippe, & Coryn, Laetitia. Sex story: La première histoire de la sexualité en BD, 2016

This study is an attempt to prove the subversive character of vibratory objects that were created as an apparatus to master the female body and sexuality. Those devices were designed and operated from positions of power —first the medical and then the commercial.

For the purpose of the research, I focus on the conception of vibration toward the female body. The iconography and signification of both objects and bodies from the late nineteenth century until the 1960's in the western world will be analyzed from an object perspective.

Following the suggestion that the French theoretician Michel Foucault launched in *The subject and the Power*². Foucault proposes to investigate acts of resistance against the power structures, aiming to conjugate an alternative version of history, from the perspective of the oppressed. In this study, I propose an object-based research examining the history, evolution and subversive possibilities of the vibrator object as a sexual device. Analyzing its context, intentions, official discourses, and subversions, as attempts to dissociate the relations of power.

Continuing with Foucault's idea, the context is set up in a dialogue with three figures implied; starting with the designer, as the person, organization or system that invents an object, its intention, and discourse. Then, the user, being the agent who executes the action with the vibratory object. And finally, the body, in which the vibration is applied.

Assuming that the designer, who has the most powerful position, can generate discourses and knowledge. Therefore, my interest resides in the figure and perspective of the body, who, within this structure, owns the subordinate status. Finally, the role and abilities of the user will be considered as an in-between position.

The connection between vibration and modernity in the nineteenth century sets the chronological starting point of the research. Vibratory movements showed the impact of modernity in the nineteenth century when the vibration was read as a product of modernity. At the time, both served to understand and define each other, almost like a mutual cause and effect³.

It was believed that earthquakes, shakes, and convulsions were a worldwide cause of modern times⁴. The technological vibrations that were implanted in the growing European and American cities became an intriguing topic for the medical system in the Western world. Railways, bicycles, sewing machines, and other repetitive vibration producers appeared in medical literature as a cause of damage to the nervous system; Especially in female bodies, due to a high sensibility to vibratory movements⁵.

The nineteenth century is within the context that Foucault named the “repressive hypothesis”⁶, in which the medical institutions gained a position of domination through strategies of biopower. Biopower was defined as the body’s control as an object of political strategy, or any other power strategy. Sexuality was one of the main focus of attention for a repressive medical system. Any practice out of the borders of the reproduction logic would be forbidden. This process made sex inexistent, and unspeakable, but treatable in the medical space.

In that context, the medical system —as the one that held the consistency of the discourse— would be the designer of the vibratory objects and strategies to treat nerve diseases, like hysteria, onanism, or nymphomania. The particular doctors would be the users of these tools in their medical practice inside a clinic space, and finally, the diagnosed

women would represent the bodies in which to apply the vibration.

The signification of the vibratory objects shifted from medical to commercial in the first decades of the twentieth century, a fact that changed the logic and uses of the vibrators. It shifted from a medical tool to heal and punish, to a home appliance for beauty and health. Later on, vibrators were employed as symbols for the sexual revolution of the 60's in the US. Then, in what way could those vibratory objects serve medical, and commercial, as well as revolutionary movements; consequently promoting a subversion of the three of them?

In order to understand the emancipating possibilities of the body in which the vibration would be applied; I will follow the Affordance's theory by the psychologist J. J. Gibson⁷. According to him, it is necessary to have three key elements to understand how the subversive actions can happen; the agent—in this case, body—, who has certain abilities. The environment is the space where to find clues or hints. And the object, which holds a number of affordances, possibilities⁸. The multiple combinations of the three define the options for the resistance. How could the vibratory objects, created by repressive control systems, be redesigned into tools for self-pleasure and liberation? I will define required abilities in the bodies to be able to subvert the designed purpose of those objects. Focusing on the hints to be taken from the environment in each case.

It is important to mention that emancipating discourses are normally small events that occur in the subsoil of the officiality. Being commonly hidden, if not invisible. It is because of that secrecy that the resistance discourses are raised with hypothesis and possibilities rather than proved actual facts.

The research will be integrated by the diagnosis of the nerve sicknesses related to vibratory causes or treatments, which is analyzed in *The Secret Vice Masturbation in Victorian Fiction and Medical Culture* by Diane Manson⁹. The erotic representation of the female image, in the Hospital frame by Didi-Huberman in the book *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*¹⁰, and a contemporary version of Foucault's theory through the eyes of the feminist theoretician Susan Bordo. The connection between modernity and vibration exposed in the writings by the historian Shelley Trower and Anthony Enns as in the *Vibratory modernism*¹¹. Lastly, I focus on the history of the vibratory object itself developed in the book by the historian Rachel P. Maines, *The Technology of the orgasm*¹².

14 It was again Foucault who stated that there is no perfect system of oppression. There are always leaks that lead us to areas of freedom within the discipline, cycles of resistance, fostered games of strategy whereby one can grasp bits of autonomy¹³. He states that there is not process essentially negative or positive because they both produce each other. As coins will have always two sides, every domination implies a certain degree of emancipation and vice versa.

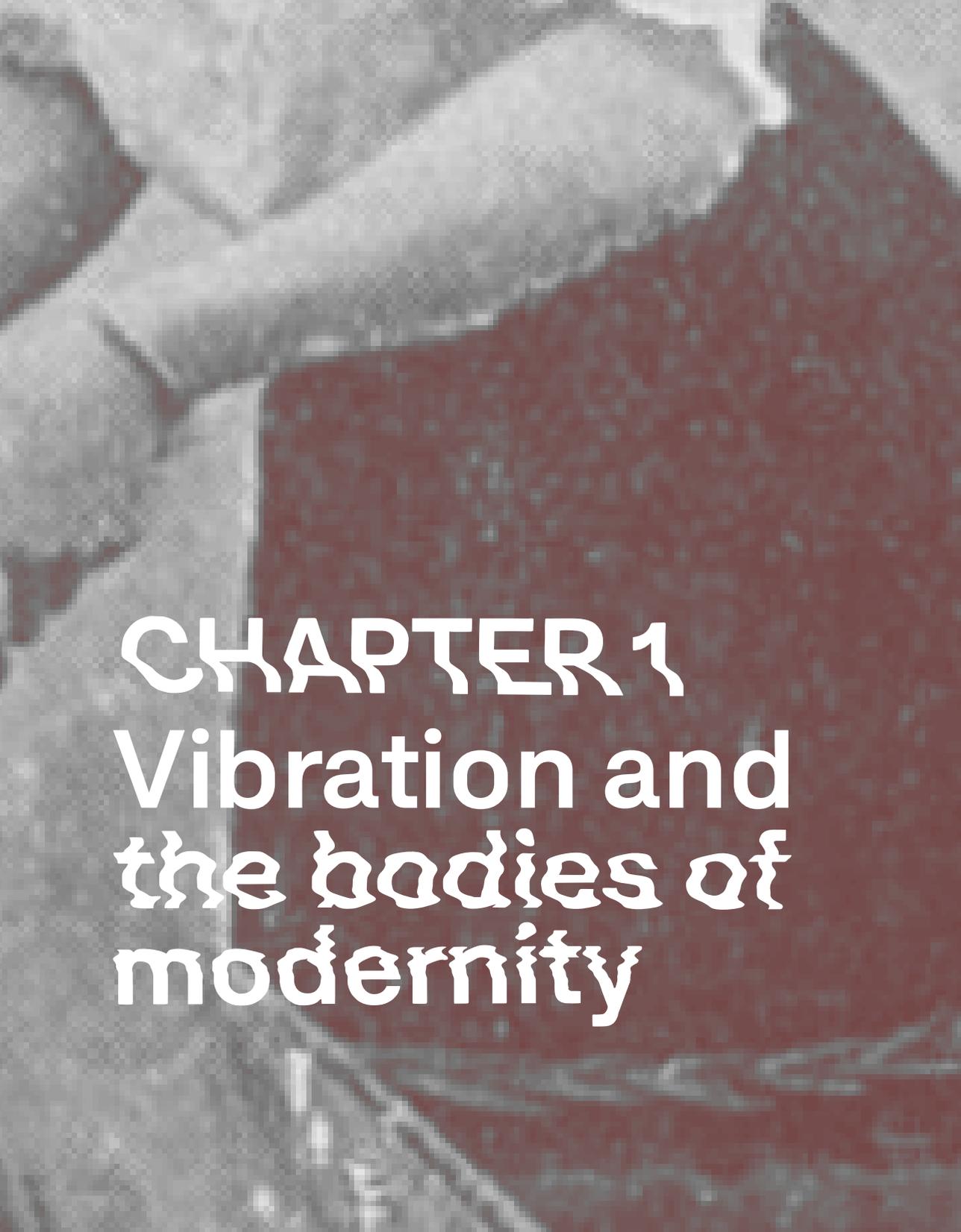
Along the study, vibration power will be transported from the designer to the body, from men to women. The shift of the control is generated by a process of emancipation. My attempt is to show in the course of this study, how women used the hints in their context, as well as the usage possibilities —affordances— of those vibratory objects in order to redesign them into objects for sexual resistance and subversion.¹⁴

NOTE

Along the work, terms such as women, men, female, male, as well as feminine and masculine are used. One must understand those terms as expressions of social role constructions, gender. When the female genitalia is mentioned, it makes reference to the physicality of the organs—vagina and clitoris—that are mostly assigned to women. Despite the assumed connection between the body and the identity, it does not mean that female gender is imperatively linked to what is understood as female genitalia.

The male/female binary distinction is used in this work in order to analyze their roles, tensions, and oppositions as a way to dissect relations of power. Despite not being included in the research, it is essential to give full-consideration to all non-binary gender constructions.





CHAPTER 1
**Vibration and
the bodies of
modernity**

CHAPTER 1

Vibration and the bodies of modernity

Modernism, Vibration and Biopower

At the end of the 19th century, the study of vibration by the medical system understood the functioning of body nerves as something that is constantly in a state of vibration. Vibratory movements were seen as the cause and effect of nerve diseases. And that, unavoidable, awoke old treatments and theories based on vibration and bodies. Those theories positioned the modern vibrations as a possible treatment for nerve disease. Vibration became, then, cause and cure of modern nerve sickness. The medical system tried a diverse range of treatments that could be both harmful and healing, painful and pleasurable. As the historian, Shelley Trower states¹: “the bodies of modernity can be seen as a mechanism sensitive to vibrating machines: the railway train, the percuter, and the vibratoide².” The clue of the vibratory treatments resides in the mastery of the effect, if it is under control, it will be healing, if it isn't, it will be harmful.

It is important to frame the health system in its context. It was placed in a period between the seventeenth and the nineteenth century in the Western World and represents what Foucault called the “repressive hypothesis.” It created a strong and narrow ideal and moralism coming from the bourgeoisie that was applied in every possible nook. As a strategy to control the conception of the nuclear family, the home space and the repression of sexual practices without a reproductive purpose.

The medical system acted as a way to control bodies and behaviors. It was as a practical executor of the Biopower domination. Biopower is the master of the bodies following power strategies; moral, economic, political, or any other. Like the legal system, medicine appears to be neutral and objective, and that gives to it a respectable status to them. The medical system assumed a supreme authority— “it claimed to ensure the physical vigor and the moral cleanliness of the social body; it promised to eliminate defective individuals, degenerate and bastardized populations. In the name of a biological and historical urgency, it justified the racisms of the state, which at the time were on the horizon. It grounded them in ‘truth³.’”

The politicization and control of sexuality and identity through health institutions is one of the clearest examples. In the 17th century, masturbation was believed to be one of the most common signs of mental illness. Masturbation is indeed linked to vibration, the continuous movement realized to masturbate is the basic principle of the vibratory technology. Hence, masturbation can be considered the primal use of vibration for the purpose of sexual pleasure. Masturbation was also called onanism, self-pollution, or self-abuse,

and it was believed to be the cause of many sicknesses, fraud for reproduction, the main fruitless pleasure. The onanist appears to be a representative figure of madness, a victim of an addiction. It could be applied to men and women of all ages, but it was especially diagnosed in young adults. As the historian Thomas Laqueur said, masturbation was “a new highly specific, thoroughly modern, and nearly universal engine for generating guilt, shame, and anxiety”⁴.

Foucault exposes the Onanist as the third of the three abnormals⁵. The masturbator is a child that discovers his own sexuality and must be controlled by the adults around him. It is a figure that is developed in the home frame, in a bedroom. That room, supposed to be space of privacy and freedom is converted into a space of discipline and punishment⁶. The control of the spaces through surveillance forbids the onanism and the research for pleasure by means of vibratory movements.

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The repression of the space creates the need for the new spaces of resistance. Foucault argues that in the Victorian era, the mental hospital and the brothel were signified as spaces of exception, where sex would be tolerated⁷, spaces in where to discover and treat sexuality. One of the main features of biopower is its omnipresence, it could be applied everywhere and by anyone with a—even if small— position of power. In the case of the child, the control had to come from the power figures around him; their parents, doctors, siblings, or teachers served as the eyes and ears of the system⁸.



Fig.1 — Tissot, Samuel Auguste André David. *Jeune Fille*. in *Dissertation physique sur les maladies produites par la masturbation*. Lausanne, 1836.

But how to master onanism? Due to the modern understanding of sexuality, the methods to control onanism changed. Formerly it was believed that genital organs had autonomy on themselves, later on, sexuality was related to the brain and the nerve system. The focus of attention varied from genitalia —the instinct— to the brain —the reason—. The visualization of the sick body was, at the same time, a medical tool for documenting, teaching. But it was also an instrument for the public fear and spectacle. For instance, an image that showcases the physical effect of onanism on the body worked as a visual threat to the youngest, a persuasive tool to direct their behavior and produce anxiety.

Fig 1

Some special tools were designed to control the physicality of the onanist in the nineteenth century. Being object proofs of the biopower domination. Historically, the first tool used was the chastity belt⁹.

Fig 2

Variations of it appeared as modernized models and technological systems. The chastity belts in the nineteenth century were re-shaped and normally used at night, when it was believed that the unconscious would play with the body, without the regency of the reason.

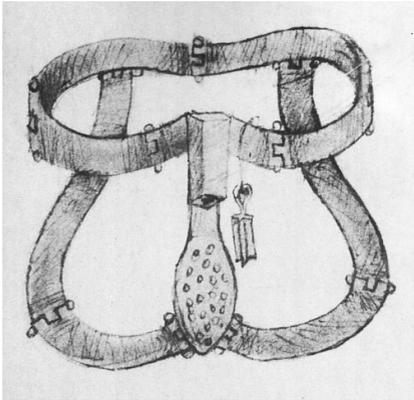


Fig. 2 — First illustration of a Chastity belt.
Von Eichstadt, Kyesser. *Sketch of a chastity belt*,
in Bellifortis, 1405

22

There are some non-electrical variations of the chastity belt: The Body guard¹⁰, in which a system of ropes would keep the legs of the one sleeping closed during the night. By attaching them to the neck, the tensioned cords between knees and neck wouldn't allow the access to the genital organs, in both male and female. It is a non-mechanical system to prevent frictions and involuntary seminal emissions.

Fig 3

Later on, radicalized tools would come with the electricity, there are devices to prevent onanism in which the focus shifts from the act of touching, to the more automatic body reactions. The tool presented as a surgical appliance had the will to control erections during the night. The apparatus is a phallic case for the penis with a bell at the end and a small electrical system. The mechanism would detect the growth

Fig 4

in the size of the male organ, and when this happens, the bell would ring at the same time than a small electroshock would be applied to the testicles. It works as a warning and punishing device to dominate the body. In its patent, the surgical appliance is defined as a tool to prevent “male organs involuntary emissions from any cause or used as a preventive for self-abuse or masturbation frequently practiced by weak-minded boys or young men”.

As Foucault states, the control of some acts, like masturbation, was a negative process governed by a positive process. The censorship of masturbation and the consequent confession¹¹ of it work indirectly as a way to accept it. Even if it was under a certain filter when masturbation became something to talk about, it also became real, and that reality is already a difference compared the taboo, nonexistence, and silence from before. Foucault defends that there is no process entirely negative or positive because they both create each other.

In the case of the onanist, the moral repression through medicine diagnosis, made it a topical subject, being very present in the order of the day.

Analyzing those designs and looking for the modern evolution of them, some questions arose: Can those oppressive objects be questioned by means of a possible sexual reappropriation? There is a connection between the three objects above presented —the chastity belt, the bodyguard, and the electrical surgical appliance —with previous and contemporary peripheral (i.e. Peripheral meaning non-mainstream, minority erotic behaviors.) sexual practices. Can the tools to dominate bodies and sexuality, actually feed the empowerment of erotic practices?

No. 879,534.

PATENTED FEB. 18, 1908.

C. W. FRASER.
BODY GUARD.

APPLICATION FILED FEB. 21, 1907.

Fig. 1.

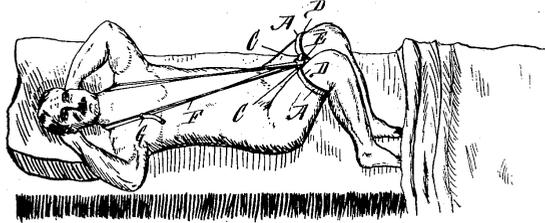


Fig. 3.

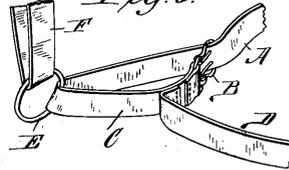


Fig. 2.

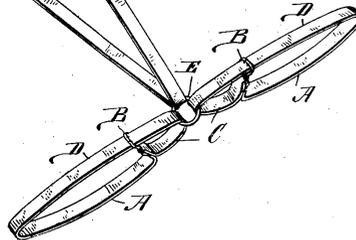
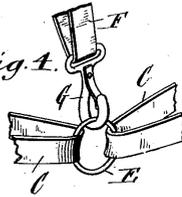


Fig. 1.



Witnesses:
Christ Feinle.
Harry D. Rapp.

Clarence W. Fraser, Inventor.
By Emil Neubach,
Attorney.

Fig.3 — Foster, Clarence W. Body Guard. US 879,534. United Stated Patent and Trademark Office, 18 feb. 1908, New York.

A. V. TODD.
SURGICAL APPLIANCE.
APPLICATION FILED MAY 29, 1903.

NO MODEL.

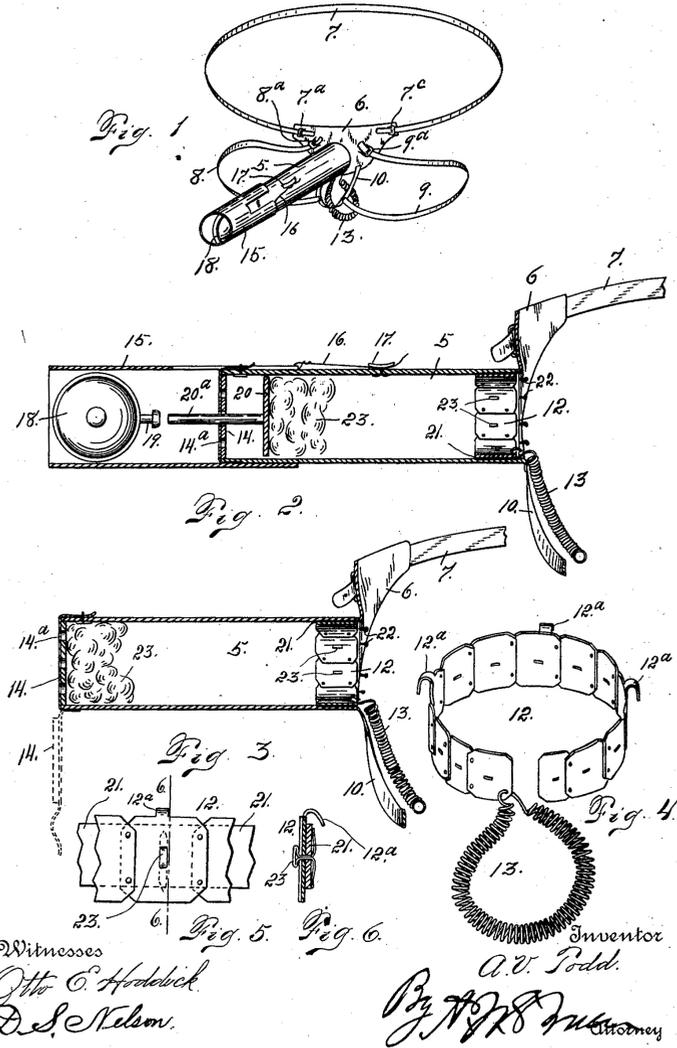


Fig. 4 — Todd, Albert V. Surgical Appliance. US 745,264. United States Patent and Trademark Office, 24 Nov. 1903, Colorado.

Fig 5 For example, the body guard could be connected to the ropes and ties used as methods of suspension and submission in the sexual fantasies by Marquis de Sade¹². Whose practices and texts now give the name to a whole universe of sexual activities, the sadism, and masochism. In the case of the surgical appliance, its shape is invariably linkable to the modern sexual harnesses, suggesting a possible form of resistance to the treatment through experimenting sexual penetration in female — or male— onanist.

Then, where can we trace the limit between the control systems and the pleasure practices? Speculating about it, it emerges the possibility that the onanist patients used those same tools for a sexual purpose. It becomes an imaginable situation as a small area of subversion and resistance. The act to use the tools that were designed by the power to subvert the same power structures.



Fig. 5 — Illustration from the novel *Nouvelle Justine De Sade*. Dutch edition from 1800

Curing disorders: hysteria and the medical devices

Hysteria was another mental disease related to sexuality. Its oldest trace can be found in ancient Egypt, where a description of the disease was found in the Kahun Papyrus (1900BC) and in Eber Papyrus (1600 BC). It had been said that hysteria is a disease caused by a wrong position of the uterus, that affects exclusively women. It was Hippocrates, in the 5th century BC, who used the term Hysteria for the first time. He described it as a disease of the womb that must be treated with massage and exercise in order to return it to its natural position¹³.

Fig 6

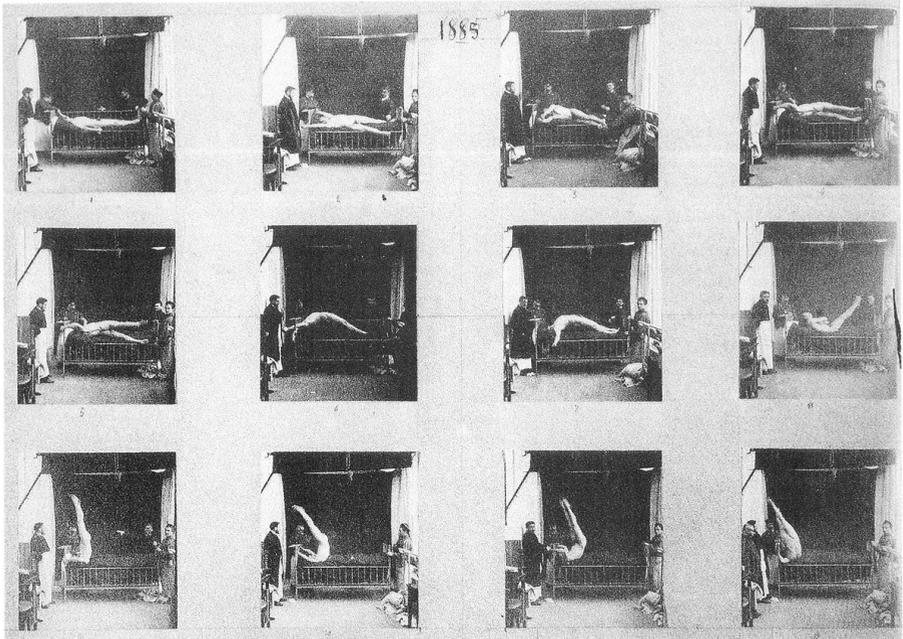


Fig. 6 — Londe, Albert. *Hysteria Attack in Humans*. Photography from the medical hospital Salpêtrière, Paris, 1885.

Hysteria was, like other nerve diseases, treated with vibration. Before the invention of the vibratory machines, physicians found vibratory effects in existing objects. The medical agents twisted the usage of some daily artifacts and brought them under the umbrella of the respected medical discourse, reshaping its definition and designed purpose. Some of the most common vibratory therapies at the debut of modernity were the horseback riding, to heal hysterical women and impotent men, bicycles ridings, and the usage of foot-powered sewing machines¹⁴ to provoke a vibratory stimulation to arms and legs. As well as exercising the pelvis in a swing or in a rocking chair¹⁵. All these exercises would apply an indirect vibration to patients genital organs. Finally, the shaking effect of the railway train and the carriage riding would be two common technique to calm an hysterical attack.

According to neurologist Charcot “this attack proceeds in four phases or periods: the *epileptoid* phase, mimicking or “reproducing” a standard epileptic fit; *clownism*, the phase of contortions or so-called illogical movements; “*plas-tic poses*” or “*attitudes passionnelles*”; finally *delirium*, so-called terminal delirium, the painful phase during which hysterics “start talking,” during which one tries to stop the attack, by every possible means¹⁶.”

Physician Galen, in antique Rome, described in detail the genital massage therapy for hysterical women. It consisted of a continuous, both internal and external, stimulation of female genitalia. According to him, the purpose of the treatment was to get to the physical state of Hysterical Paroxysm¹⁷, and the fluid release from the vagina that needed to be expelled¹⁸. It started to be a very common technique, which was probably the most used one from the invention of hysteria

until the 19th century. The handily continuous movement, as the masturbation, —either internal or external — was the beginning of the voluntary vibration principle, a technology itself. There have been other ways to try to reach a vibratory effect before the electric vibration. Objects designed specifically to heal hysteria and other diseases.

Fig. 7 The tool that is believed to be the precedent of the first electrical vibrator is the Blood circulator by Dr. Macaura, patented in September of 1905 in London¹⁹. It consists of a small apparatus with a crack that would give one thousand vibrations per minute to the zone applied.

As its name implies, it was used to activate circulation in some parts of the body. Blood circulation has everything to do with sexual arousal, the increase in blood flow is the main source of lubrication in women. The object was made of metal, with a wood handle and an attachment to reach the body made of a soft plastic. In the printed leaflet, there is a picture of G. J. Macaura treating a woman with the Blood circulator in the lowest part of her back. It was believed to be a beautiful gesture in the shape of the feminine body, an erotized area of women complexion.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the conception of hysteria became confusing due to many new theories and voices working on it. The causes, symptoms, and treatments of hysteria were diffused. It was the French Psychiatrist Charles Lasègue, who called hysteria the “wastepaper basket of medicine, where one throws otherwise unemployed symptoms”. At that point, the medical system showed the ambiguousness of hysteria and the subjective diagnosis of it. In other words, Lasègue placed hysteria in the basket of biopower domination. He pronounced it as a disease that is and isn't, depending



Fig. 7— Photography detail of Macaura's blood circulator. Patented in 1905, London.

Fig. 8 — Picture from Mavaura's blood circulator booklet, 1905, London.

dr. John Macaura and a Patient.

on politics and androcentric exercises of medicine. Hysteria started to be part of the classification of “female complains” that included also nymphomania and onanism, among other nervous disorders linked with the malfunctioning of the feminine sexual organs. Sick women were strongly categorized and divided by groups, which makes them controllable, dominate and treatable from the position of power.

If we assume the ambiguousness and fakeness of hysteria proved by Didi-Huberman²⁰, as well as the awareness of the spectacle from both the medical and the patients’ side, we should ask ourselves why the medical system treated hysteria, and why did they do it using the genital stimulation? Including the handy massage, horse riding, hydrotherapy, or the posterior electrical vibratory massage. It proves an accepted and systematized biopower sexual domination towards the bodies of the hysterical patients. But could it also be a hint for emancipation based on learning the pleasures of masturbation by being treated with them? Maybe those patients found tools for self-pleasure in the in the same structure that was oppressing them? Maybe the objects and technologies used to dominate the bodies were also serving as a hidden liberation?

32

Fig.
9-10

There was an episode in Salpêtrière in Paris, mentioned by Didi-Huberman, in which “Augustine treated herself to *jouissance*, imposed it on herself, and thus climaxed, and her “a-void-ed” [*à-void*] *jouissance* was diffracted into the *jouissances* of others (including us, beyond her death) at seeing hers, or at seeing her lose herself in a (masquerade of) masochistic passion²¹.”

The episode not only highlights the fakeness of hysteria, but also the direct connection between sex and hysteria, and consequently, the

public representation of both. The erotization of the disease means the erotization of the images and bodies that illustrate it, the hysterical women were openly shown as sexual subjects. The mental hospital acted as a space of a permitted sexual expression, thus the women interneers were asked to perform pleasure and desire for an audience. Their spectators were a collection of male figures; the doctors, their colleagues, the students, the photographer, and the medical institutions. As Huberman says, Augustine faked pleasure is indeed the pleasure for the ones watching her, using her body and sickness as a tool for an erotic spectacle.

That episode can also act as the Foucault's double-sided coin; the same negative process governed by a positive process that commanded the case of the onanist. Augustine was oppressed by the act of being gazed. But could that oppression liberate the possibility of an tolerated masturbation for other women? Regarding Gibson's theory²², the medical objects, as well as Augustine's episode, could act as clues for other women to be able to see, with their own abilities and desires, the possibility of the self-pleasure in the vibratory object used for the spectacle. Huberman transports the pleasures of Augustine to the others by seeing her. Could it be also possible that she was able to translate her *jouissance* to the others by teaching, inventing or showing ways to masturbate? Her oppression was maybe a demonstration to other patients and women, of possible liberation through the vibratory oppressive objects used in Salpêtrière.



Planche XIX.

ATTITUDES PASSIONNELLES

APPEL

Fig. 9 - *Attitudes Passionelles*, Appel

Fig. 10 - *Attitudes Passionelles*, *Hallucinations de l'ouïe*.

Potography of Augustine in the Salpêtrière, Paris



Planche XXIV.

ATTITUDES PASSIONNELLES

HALLUCINATIONS DE L'OUÏE

Recreating automatic vibration: The origin of the electrical vibrator

The nineteenth century represents the culmination of the industrial revolution. The electrical machines started to be frequently used in medicine, it was a revolution of techniques and treatments in many areas. The link between body and electricity was a major subject, it was believed that electricity could change the state of a body, even able to bring death to life and life to death. The medical system saw the connection between the vital force of electricity and the energy that flows between the body and mind. They exploited the possibilities with healing electrical tools; the electrical belts to give vigor to men, and electrical corsets to reshape the figure of any women. In the

Fig. 11 advertisement for the Harness' Electrical Corset in 1890 in London it says: "By wearing this perfectly designed corset the most awkward figure becomes graceful and elegant, the internal organs are speedily strengthened"

36

However, the first electrical vibratory machines used in medicine were, not by chance, to treat hysteria in the Salpêtrière of Paris in 1878. Despite it wasn't the first Vibratory machine patented, it seems to be one of the first ones to be used.

Nevertheless, the first electric vibrator patented and largely produced was in 1883 by Dr. Mortimer Granville, a physician based in London. He called it the Percuteur, also known as the "Granville's hammer", it was produced by Weiss. The electrical machine was imparting a rapid and rhythmic pressure to the massaged area, which was a perfect substitute for the manual massage or Macaure's blood circulator.

*Fig.
12-13
14-15*

THE "VERY THING" FOR LADIES
FOR AN ELEGANT FIGURE & GOOD HEALTH.

HARNESS' ELECTRIC CORSETS

PRICE ONLY $5\frac{S}{6}^D$
POST FREE.

FOR WOMEN OF ALL AGES.

HARNESS' ELECTRIC CORSETS

ONLY By wearing these perfectly designed Corsets the most awkward figure becomes graceful and elegant, the internal organs are speedily strengthened, **THE CHEST IS AIDED IN ITS HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT.** ONLY

And the entire system is invigorated.

Send at once Postal Order or Cheque for 5s. 6d. to the Secretary, C. Dept.
THE MEDICAL BATTERY CO. LIMITED.

52, OXFORD ST. LONDON. W.

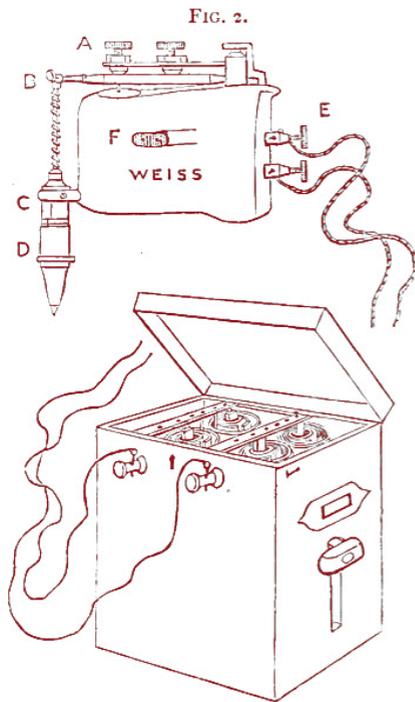
REG. DESIGN. P.T.O.

Fig. 11 – Harness' Electric Corsets advertisement, London, 1891



Fig. 12 - Photograph of the first electric vibrator, the Percuteur by Dr. Mortimer Granville.

Fig 13 - Illustration of the power battery and the device in the book *Nerve Vibration & Excitation*. Columbia University - Medical Library, 1883



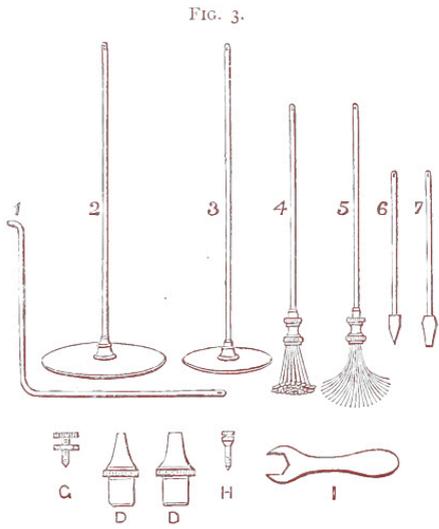


FIG. 4.

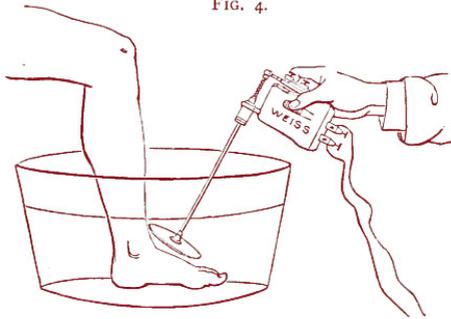


FIG. 5.

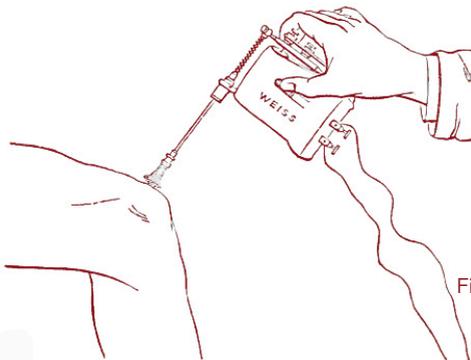


Fig 15 — The Percuteur in use. In the book *Nerve Vibration & Excitation*. Columbia University - Medical Library, 1883

Fig. 14 — Illustration from the book. *Nerve Vibration & Excitation*. Columbia University - Medical Library, 1883

7, Flat-headed hammer ;
 6, pointed hammer ;
 5, light brush for relief of superficial pain and to redden the surface ;
 4, hard brush. This brush grew out of a suggestion made by Dr. Hugh Campbell, and is very effective ;
 3, small disc ;
 2, large disc for use in water ;
 1, bent hammer.

G, connection screw, tipped with platinum ;
 D, vulcanite tubes to protect hammers ;
 H, screw to attach hammer to percuteur ;
 I, clamp to fix connecting screws

The Percuteur was much more efficient and fast. The machine consisted of a large and heavy battery that powered a vibrator equipped with a suitable collection of vibratodes made of different materials, in order to treat many areas and pains²³.

Because of the previous usage of vibratory machines in the treatment of hysteria, Granville officially refused that his vibrator was created to perform genital massage. He was a firm opponent to its use on hysterical cases²⁴. Many doctors from the period were trying to maintain their honorability and reputation, writing and demonstrating their professionalism, in order to stay away from the charlatan consideration²⁵. That being said, it is also true that even if he refused to use it as a treatment for hysteria, his percuteur was the first vibrator produced and marked internationally, and after it, many other models emerged.

The following devices were variations and evolutions of the electric vibratory principle discovered by Dr. Granville. One of the first doctors to develop electrified vibratory devices was Dr. Charcot.

Fig. 16 Before 1900, he created the vibratory helmet and chair, both to treat hysteria and other nerve diseases. He improved those tools using electrical vibration. The treatment on patients head was very common since it was thought that the problem would be initiated in the brain. Another example is the Rocking chair by E. Hartelius in 1893. The three objects consisted of common objects hacked with an electric vibration, that turned them into vibratory tools.

All the tools and apparatus shown in this chapter were mainly governed by the medical discourse in the context of Foucault's Biopower. The mix of circumstances that joined the apogee of the

industrial revolution, the electricity and modern understanding of sexuality, led to the invention of vibratory objects. All of them were conceived under the guarantee and professionalism of a closed structure of power, that gave discourse and consistency to the tools and theory. A structure ruled by men, conformed by men and supported by an industry that was also restricted to men. Ironically, all those men were the ones with the right to decide and diagnose on the female body, and sexuality. The women performed the agent at the end of the structure that had no voice but whose body became the focus of attention and study.

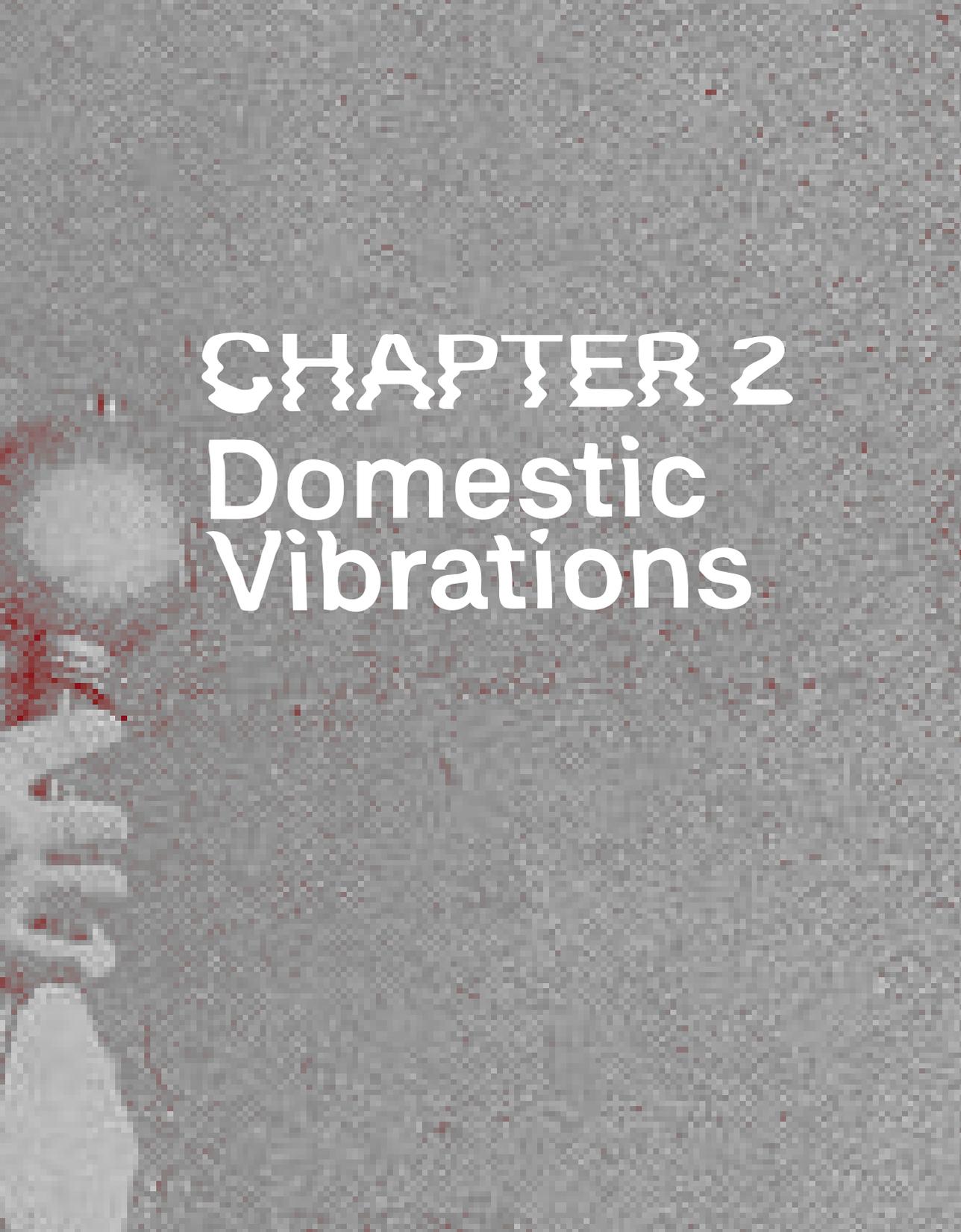
Nevertheless, those women had the chance to twist the power that was being applied to them, reverting and using it. They subverted the biopower discourse and making it play on their favor. They used secretly oppressive tools as emancipating tools. By being treated in their genitals with vibratory mechanisms, they could discover and understand ways to reach pleasure on themselves. The medical institutions played a double role, aiming to master the female sick bodies, they gave them tools and knowledge to nurture their emancipatory capacities.

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Fig. 16 — Charcot's vibrating chair.
Image from *Nouvelle iconographie de la
Salpêtrière*, Vol. V





CHAPTER 2

Domestic Vibrations

CHAPTER 2

Domestic Vibrations

The Mechanical Bride¹

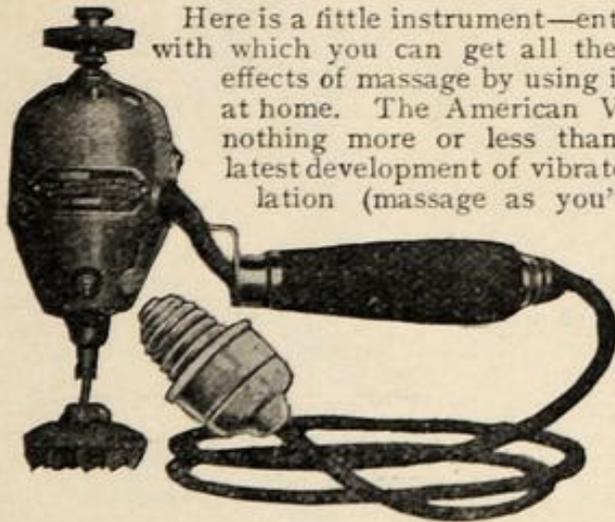
44

The introduction of electric appliances in private homes is a characteristic of the first half of the twentieth century in the Western world. Due to an advanced industrial system and the globalization of electricity, it became common to have electrical devices in every individual home space. This phenomena happened first in America and then in Europe, because of an earlier electrification of the cities.

In parallel to that, at the beginning of the century, there was a fervent increasing capitalist system. It procured the production and marketing of many new objects that appeared as necessary tools for everyone's daily life. For instance: washing machines; vacuum cleaners; refrigerators; flat irons; toasters; heating pads and vibrators. Those devices conformed a new domestic and mechanized landscape. It was charged with moral values, and that included the housewife as a guardian of the household, the moral keeper.

Fig. 1

A NEW HOUSEHOLD NECESSITY A PORTABLE VIBRATOR



Here is a fittle instrument—entirely new, with which you can get all the beneficial effects of massage by using it yourself at home. The American Vibrator is nothing more or less than the very latest development of vibratory stimulation (massage as you've always

called it), in shape of a portable instrument weighing less than two and one-half lbs. You attach it

to any ordinary lamp socket and regulate it to suit yourself.

The daily use of the American Vibrator will increase deficient circulation—develop the muscles—remove wrinkles and facial blemishes, and permanently beautify and preserve the complexion

Guaranteed by a National Bank

We will send you the American Vibrator, by express prepaid, and allow you to use it 30 days to prove its value. All we ask you to do is to deposit the price of the instrument in the Washington National Bank of St. Louis, during trial period, subject to *your order*. If the Vibrator isn't all it is represented to be and you are not entirely satisfied just notify the bank and your deposit will be returned. Write today for free booklet.

AMERICAN VIBRATOR COMPANY

New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, St. Louis, Mo.

Fig. 1— Advertisement from The American Vibrator Company, New York, 1906

The emergence of the home electric appliances made the housework less physical and the need to have a servant started to disappear in the early 1920's². Through this process of electrification, the fair gender would take care of the housework. The new machines took territory from the working hand, a process that mimics the process in which manual massages were replaced by electrical messages in nervous diseases patients. The electrification of the home space, as in the medical space, reduced the physical working of the cleaners or doctors. Electricity became the new labor in both fields.

Electrical devices, like any other objects, were never neutral, innocent or unpolitical. Objects are linked to a discourse, intention, and context that gives them meaning and sense. The same vibratory objects that first followed medical purposes and served as an external disciplinary agent acting on a body, would, at this point, follow commercial and aesthetic guidelines. The body would adopt the vibratory tool as a part of it. The border between the device and the body became diffuse and the conjugation of the both would become the disciple itself. The treatment was not established by an outer system as the medical, instead, it was inserted into bodies, homes and social structures from a persuasive position.

The new devices that configured the new domestic landscape included, among others, electric vibrators as devices for health and beauty³. Taking care of the self-image and body started to be very popular decades ago, becoming a feature of society. Some of the objects for that purpose were clearly an evolution transported from the medical clinic space to the home space.

“Ours is the first age in which many thousands of the best-trained individual minds have made it a full-time business to get inside the collective public mind. To get inside in order to manipulate, exploit, control is the objective now.”

McLuhan, *Mechanical Brides*, 1951⁴

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“Mechanical devices are designed to perform work; the work they do is cultural as well as utilitarian, helping to define the difference between women and men.”

Lupton, *Mechanical Brides*, 1993⁵

The massification of female image and beauty was very much linked to public figures. The role models drew a pattern in which the female society seemed forced to fit in. The vibratory object started to be related to glamour, fashionability and the social construction of femininity. In the case of The Star Electric Massage vibrator

Fig. 2

advertisement from 1920 in the *Tatler*⁶. In it, there are two women sitting on armchairs, the one on the right is wearing a fashionable suit, white gloves, and a hat. She seems to be talking to the one on the left, like if she was explaining her the virtues of the product. It quotes “The Star has actually made me look ten years younger!”. The woman on the left wears a simpler dress without any complements and has the Star vibrator in a table next to her. Also in the advertisement, the actresses Martha Hedman, Evelyn Gosnell, Olive Tell, and Gladys Leslie are cited as satisfied users of the Vibrator. The vibrator is sold as the object through which one can make the transition from the woman on the left —probably closer to the target of the advertisement— to the woman on the right, pretty, fashionable and youthful.

Fig. 2 — Advertisement of the Rite Star Electric Massage Vibrator. “The *Tatler Magazine*.” The *Tatler Magazine*, 1920, US

Five dollars for a lovely, girlish complexion



MORE than half a million women keep their skin and hair beautifully youthful by a once-or-twice-a-week home treatment with The Star Electric Massage Vibrator. Quick. Convenient. Eliminates "beauty parlor" worries. Skin, scalp and hair respond surprisingly soon to this delightfully soothing method.

Don't have a pale, oldish, unattractive complexion. Or course, brittle unmanageable hair. Stir up your circulation! Bring back the roses of girlhood. Look and feel your best—always. Electric massage is the secret!—for headaches, insomnia, neuralgia and fatigue. Martha Hedman, Evelyn Gosnell, Olive Tell, Gladys Leslie and many other stage and screen beauties use and endorse The "Star."

At all drug, department and electrical-goods stores. Price, \$5 for complete outfit. (Canadian price, \$7.50). If your dealer hasn't the "Star," send price, with his name and address, to us, We'll ship direct to you. Fitzgerald Mfg. Co. Dept. 505, Torrington, Conn. Get a "Star" today!

"The 'Star' has actually made me look ten years younger!"



The STAR



\$ 5⁰⁰
Complete

Electric Massage
VIBRATOR

HEITLAND

Keep her young and pretty: Pioneer devices in the domestic space

At the debut of the twentieth century, a general transaction from the medical discourse to the commercial area happened. It was a blurred process in which part of the medical functions was redesigned into domestic activities, patients became consumers. The shift of perspective towards the medical system created a lighthearted conception of the clinic practices in the first decades of the twentieth century. At the same time than some of the strongest medical discourses on bodies lost strength and were smoothly minimized⁷.

To illustrate that process, we find an advertisement from 1887 of Dr. Swift who publicized his magic power of fine gentle massage. That massage would be done in the privacy of the patients home—a space of freedom—, without the knowledge of anyone in Broadway. The image from the Advertisement is a reappropriated illustration of a medical book representing a vaginal examination⁸. In it, the gentle wonderful healer has a knee in the floor while he explores underneath the skirt of a woman.

Fig. 3

One of the first home appliances to replace medical devices was a substitution of the horseback riding, introduced by Dr. Vigor in London in 1897. That treatment was already replaced by machines, electrical or not, in different medical centers and hospitals. It consisted of a high bench on a wooden structure that contained a mechanized flexible structure with a saddle on top—for frontal and side sitting—. The mechanism would create the indicate circular movement to treat the patient. It also included stirrups to place the feet and a hold bar.

Dr. Swift A WONDERFUL HEALER
 STATES
HERE IS HEALTH
 THROUGH *The Magic Power* of Fine GENTLE
MASSAGE

His Home Treatment, which cures the patient in the privacy of their own home without the knowledge of any one, is creating a profound sensation because it is curing the hopeless and those pronounced incurable.

FOR ALL
DISEASE
 Of the MID-
 QUARTERS
 FROM
 NECK
to
 KNEE

ON AND AFTER
 FEBRUARY 1, 1887
 Broadway & 7th St.

Fig. 3 — Dr. Swift, The wonderful Healer, California, 1887.

Not exclusively, in the advertisements of the horse riding machine, there was two different advertisements of the same product, one for him and one for her. For him, the message shows strength and vigor and mind, curing corpulence and making life enjoyable. For her, it brings the organs into inspiring action, curing obesity, and hysteria. It also warrants the efficiency by affirming that the Princess of Wales is completely satisfied with it.

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

LIVE YOUR LIFE HEALTHILY

DO NOT PERMIT YOUR SYSTEM TO RUN DOWN.

ORDER *Vigor's*
Horse-Action
Saddle.

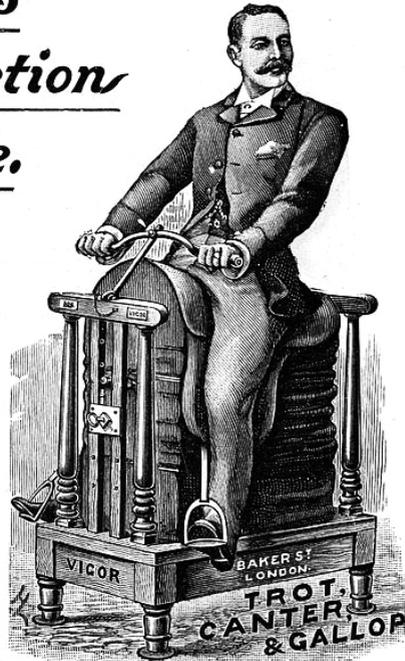
"A PERFECT SUBSTITUTE
 FOR THE LIVE HORSE."

You can ride in your own room, at your own convenience, at only a small initial expenditure.

No Horse Keep, No Risk of Accidents, No Weather Danger, but

Safe, Exhilarating Exercise,

GIVING
**STRENGTH AND VIGOUR TO
 THE SYSTEM,
 BRACING THE NERVES,
 QUICKENING THE CIRCULATION,
 BRIGHTENING THE MIND,
 CURING CORPULENCE,
 AND
 MAKING LIFE ENJOYABLE.**



SEND FOR PARTICULARS AND TESTIMONIALS, POST FREE.

Vigor, 21, Baker St, London.

Fig. 4 — "Life your life Healthily", Advertisement of the horse exercise device by Vigor & Co. London, 1900's.

Fig. 5 — "Horse exercise at home". Advertisement of the horse exercise device by Vigor & Co. London, 1900's.

HORSE EXERCISE

By Royal Letters Patent

AT HOME.

Vigor's
Horse-Action
Saddler

PERSONALLY ORDERED BY
H. R. H. THE PRINCESS OF WALES.

Her Excellency the Countess of Aberdeen writes: "That the Saddle has given her complete satisfaction."



The ADVANTAGES of this UNIQUE SUBSTITUTE for Horse-Riding are:

- It promotes health in the same degree that Horse-Riding does.
- It invigorates the system by bringing all the **VITAL ORGANS** into **INSPIRING ACTION.**
- It acts directly upon the **CIRCULATION**, and prevents **STAGNATION OF THE LIVER.**
- It is a complete cure for **OBESITY, HYSTERIA, and GOUT.**

LANCET:—"Both the expense and difficulty of riding on a live horse are avoided. The invention is very ingenious."

FIELD:—"We have had an opportunity of trying one of the Vigor's Horse-Action Saddles, and found it very like that of riding on a horse; the same muscles are brought into play as when riding."

WORLD:—"It is good for the figure, good for the complexion, and especially good for the health."

PARTICULARS, TESTIMONIALS, and PRESS OPINIONS POST FREE.

Vigor & Co. 21, Baker St. London.

In some particular cases, domestic vibrators came directly from the medical practice. Doctors themselves fostered their own products for mass usage in an attempt to enter the commercial system. For instance, Doctor John Butler invented in 1888 the electro-massage machine. In 1899 he started to recommend it to his patients as a home treatment, and in 1904 it was advertised in a magazine as a medical device to use at home. The setup of the advertised image is a sky at night, with a central image of a woman with long hair wearing a dynamic white dress and surrounded by stars. Portraying a version of an angel announcing “Glad tiding for all men and women” “The greatest medical discovery ever known”. It signifies the vibrator and the women as unearthly. In one hand she holds the machine that generates the vibration, that is linked to a small representation of the world as if it was being held or created by the machine. At once, the machine connects the figure with the sky, electricity, and storm. On the other hand, she wears a “patch” that transfers the vibration to the massager’s hand. It is the first case in which the vibration is applied to a body through another body, as an in-between part of the tool⁹.

Fig. 6

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One of the most successful products in the US was the Arnold Vibrator, produced for the first time in 1908 in New York¹⁰. It consisted of a black painted wood handle and a metallic corp, with a screwable attachment in which one could plug the different heads. In the poles of the main body, it has a continuous pattern of round holes that made it distinctive from the others. Putting it side by side with the booklet that came along with the product, we can denote a few aspects: The image on the cover shows a pink background in which a hand holding the vibrator appears, like a symbol of power. It says here is Health, strength, and beauty.

Fig. 7

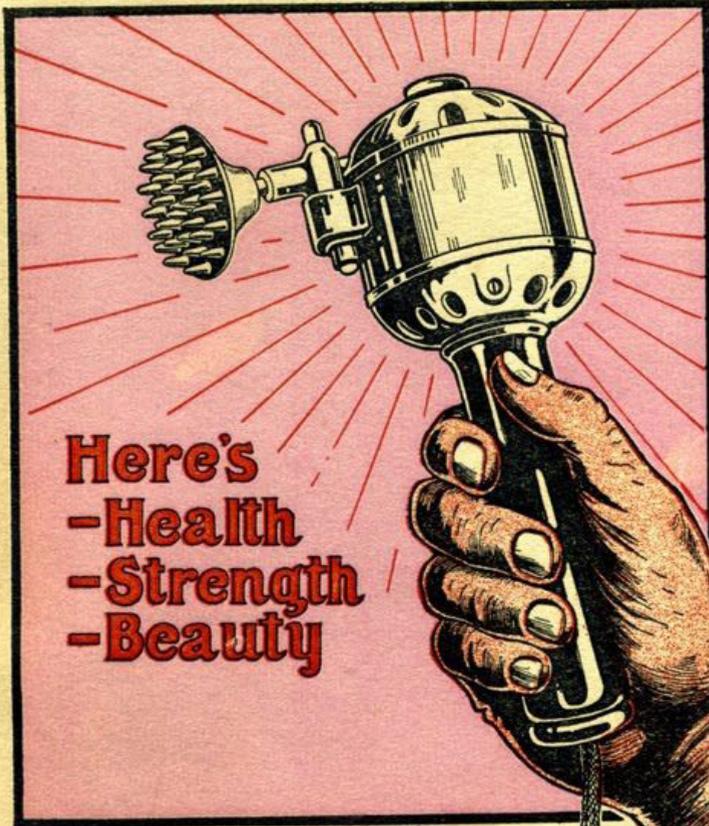
Fig. 8



Fig. 6 — “Dr. John Butlers Electro Massage machine.”. US 1904



Fig. 7 —The Arnold Massage Vibrator, 1909
Fig. 8 —Cover of the Arnold Massage Vibrator
booklet. Arnold Massage Vibrator Company,
US, 1914,



Here's
-Health
-Strength
-Beauty

ARNOLD MASSAGE VIBRATOR

Inside the booklet from 1914, there is a collection of explanations and images. In one of the pages, it assures to be helpful for “under-development”, because it was considered unnatural for women to be imperfectly developed. By activating the circulation the Arnold vibrator would enforce a better breast and body development to

reach the evidence of perfect womanhood. In the image, a woman applies the vibration in her uncovered chest. The perfect development announced in the booklet is related to a cannonade construction of a beautiful and erotic female body, desirable and mentally healthy. The booklet states; the largest cause of nerve sensitivity which causes unhappy conditions is the lack of physical female development.



Fig. 9 —The Arnold Massage Vibrator booklet, pp. 31. Arnold Massage Vibrator Company, US, 1914,

Those objects and advertisements worked as persuasive apparatus thought which create new aesthetical imaginaries and discourses of obligation. The must to have a vibratory tool and consequently, to fit in the categorization of the female beauty operated as methods to dissect and manage bodies and behaviors from an economic strategy. It was another form of Biopower strategy, in this case through the commercial system instead of the medical. Because of the mentioned decrease in social influence from health institutions, the economic discourses would take over the establishment of the healthy body. They would directly relate the conception of health with beauty, in a discourse that would endorse and normalize the aesthetical constraint that objectified the female subject.

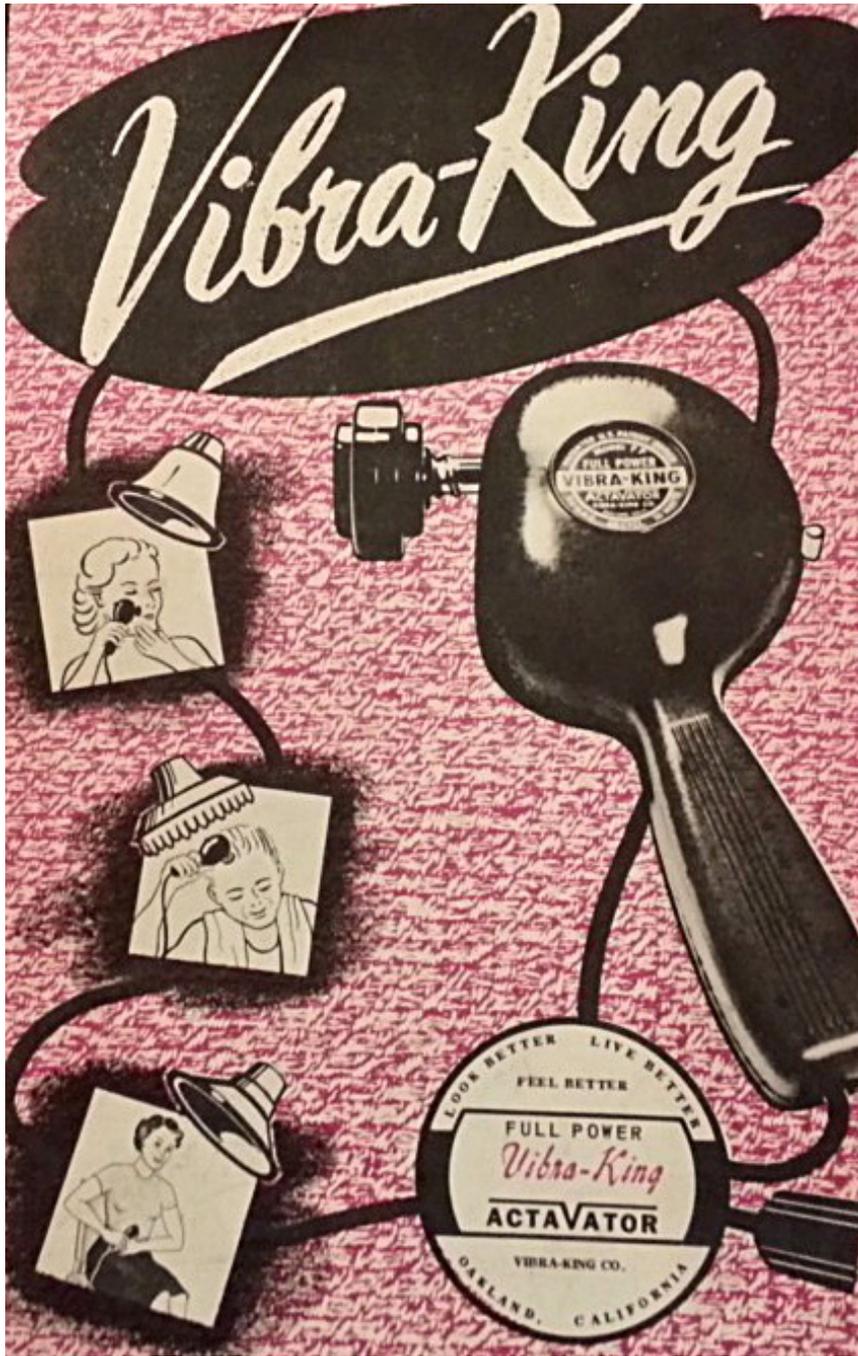
Fig. 10 In 1922 the Vibra King was launched, even if it followed the same principle, it represented a physical radical change. The principal body and the handle were unified in the only piece, taking a much more ergonomic shape. It was made of hard plastic, which would lower the price and effort of the production. The VibraKing was colored in a texturized dark red that together with the shape reminds us of luxury objects from the time. The case of the VibraKing, illustrates how the vibrators and other home appliances took aerodynamic shapes and stronger colors, responding to a collective image that evoked the styling of trains or planes as maximum representations of contemporaneity. Transforming home appliances into *almost erotic, emotionally appealing commodities*¹¹.

Fig. 11 In the cover of the booklet form the VibraKing, there are three female figures in a texturized pink background, the first uses the vibrator on her face, the second on her hair and the last one on her lower stomach.



Fig. 10 —The VibraKing, 1922

Fig. 11 —Cover of the VibraKing Booklet, 1950's



If we read the images to advertise the vibratory tools, it is visible how little by little the medical paradigm disappeared. Words like disease or hysteria were replaced by concepts as beauty, health or strength, to refer to the same technology and objects.

The positioning of the vibratory devices in advertised bodies also shifted along the time. In the firsts years, all the images placed the vibrator in the head as a heritage from the nerve disease treatment. Smoothly the device was transported from the head to the face and neck, and soon, to the chest. It is important to point out that the vibrator never abandoned publically the accepted view of the female body. It wouldn't discover the parts normally covered by clothes.

The paradigm of classification changed in the 20's. Hysteria wasn't a category in which to belong to anymore. The aesthetical ideal of women was a new normalization of a group of subjects under slogans like "Look Better, Live Better"¹². The governability of the femininity shifted from the medical to the economic system, being the parameters aesthetics and erotics. The advertisements were still using discourses of truth generated in the medical field, as the example of the perfect development of a body mentioned in the Arnold Vibratory booklet.

The following collection of sentences taken from different vibrator advertisement between 1900 and 1930 makes explicit which kind of beauty was intended with the vibratory tools and advertisements. The female beauty cannon can be drawn by assembling all the elements together: "Reduce the wrinkles, improve blood circulation, make the complexion clear and bright, give to your face a healthful glow, keep the skin from sagging, reduce flesh, fill up hollows, cease weariness, relieve tensions and muscle spasm, reduce crow's feet, give fullness and

color to the cheeks, produce the rare beauty of a perfect health, tone up all the facial nerves and tissues and, make you learn the real joy of living.”

Biopower operated into the domesticity, rather the medical field and clinic space. As the feminist theoretician Susan Bordo¹³ argues, the definition and shaping of the body is a focal point of relations of power¹⁴. The construction of the feminine identity was implanted with persistence, imposition, and self-control. A specific conception of beauty was imperative for women’s bodies. The reproduction of normative feminine practices would train the female body in docility and obedience to cultural demands¹⁵, in this way, women would soon apply self-regulation and self-correction to the patterns of an oppressive norm of femininity.

The control of the vibratory tools and its usage was, in the 20’s, under the regency of a new capitalist system which was, as the medical, ruled by men and intended to men. But as a difference, it included the treated body as the last component of the structure. Allowing the patients to treat themselves and with that, eliminating the contact of the medical hand with the body. In this case, the designer would be the commercial system, and the user and the body would be the women.

Power for you¹⁶

As mentioned before, the use of role models as actresses and celebrities from the public sphere started to become a common technique in the advertising system. Soon, the images portraying celebrities took an odor of eroticism and sexuality. The representation of the female figure was still connotated as a sexual subject, like the hysterical patients from the Salpêtrière Hospital presented by Didi-Huberman¹⁷. During the first decades of the twentieth century, the erotic spectacle was fed by public figures rather than clinic cases.

The imaginary of the sexual female was closer to society, implanting in it a role model, an erotic figure to follow, copy and desire. It seems the beginning of an interrupted process that publicly would culminate in the 60's, the sexualization of the female body¹⁸.

Fig. 12 It is the case of the portrait of the actress Colleen Moore from 1927, in which she uses a Star-Rite Electric Massage Vibrator. Her frontal look at the camera, the inclination of her head and neck, and the vibration applied on her face, shape a configuration of an erotic image. It offers a more sexual signification of the vibratory object. If we understand the vibratory tool as an object that would satisfy her sexual desire, by placing it in her face, she recalls the absence of the male organ as a substitution of the vibratory object. As the hysterical patients recalled in their attacks the physical lack of an imaginary lover. Despite being different subjects, both Angelina and Colleen were female figures erotized from a masculine perspective. They would publicly use the vibratory tool for the pleasure of the others rather than their own.



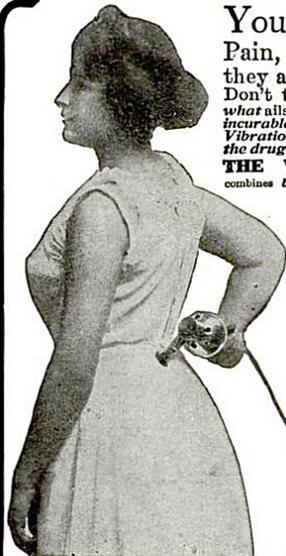
Fig. 12 — Actress Colleen Moore Using a Star-Rite Electric Massage Vibrator, Hollywood, California, Mid to Late 1920s.

In some vibrator advertisements, there is a translation of an early idea in medical vibrators: to convert pieces of furniture into vibratory devices using an electrical massager. In the advertisement for the “White Cross vibrator” published in 1913 in the *New York Tribune*, it was shown how to transform a normal chair into a vibratory chair, *Vibrating Chair Free*. It explains how to hack furniture to make it a tool for health, beauty — and why not, pleasure— rather than a common chair. It suggested that the user becomes the designer of their own tool. That idea, re-directs the conception of the chair, or any other piece of furniture capable of transforming into a vibratory element. And indeed, created a bigger conception of the vibrator, not being just a tool itself, but a possibility to transform a big range of objects into vibratory versions of the same.

The Vibratory furniture moved from the clinical space, where it was a tool for punishment and treatment, to the home space, where it was an accepted tool for health and beauty. It is known that in the hospital, the vibratory chair was intended to cure the hysterical attacks by condemning but calming the sick sexual desire of the patients. How could the same technology be transported into the domestic landscape? The process of resignification relies upon the shift of conception of the vibratory object, from punishing to beauty promotor. Both the medical and commercial system used biopower strategies to shape female behavior, image, and physicality. But the social acceptance and endorsement of the beauty process allowed the vibratory object to enter in the home space.

The new configuration of the domestic space was a place of discipline, as in the case of the onanist, the home becomes a spatial control

Vibrate Your Body And Make it Well



VIBRATION FOR THE RACKING BACKACHE OF WOMEN

You have no *right* to be sick. Pain, suffering and disease are unnatural, they are *wrong*. It is your *duty* to be well. Don't try to *stand* pain—*CURE IT*. No matter what *alls* you—even if others have told you that your case was incurable—*DON'T GIVE UP HOPE*. The great natural forces, *Vibration and Electricity*, are curing more people today *than all the drugs and doctors in the world put together*.

THE WHITE CROSS ELECTRIC VIBRATOR combines *both* of these great natural curative agents. It gives you your choice of *Vibration, Faradic and Galvanic Electricity*, either separately or in combination, just as you wish. It relieves pain *instantly*, and its *cures are permanent*.

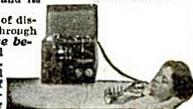
The *White Cross Electric Vibrator* cures the *cause* of disease. It sends the rich, red blood leaping and coursing through your veins and arteries *straight to where the disease begins*. It tones up your nerves and muscles and every vital organ. It makes you *fairly singe with the joy of living*. *Don't neglect the FIRST symptoms*. If you feel "run down," out of condition," if you just feel "out of sorts" generally, *something is wrong*. The most serious diseases creep upon you unawares. The *White Cross Electric Vibrator* fills your body *so full of vigorous, robust health* that pain and disease cannot find a foothold.

FREE BOOK "Health and Beauty"

SEND TODAY for the magnificent free book "Health and Beauty." This valuable work tells you all about the human body in health and disease *in terms so plain, so clear, that anyone can understand*. It tells you how you can get well and keep well, no matter *what* your trouble is. This book was not written for surgeons and physicians, but for you. Every page, every line, is thrillingly interesting. Besides, this book tells you all about the wonderful *White Cross Electric Vibrator*—what it has done for thousands of others and what it will do for you. It tells you about *the very special offers* which we are making, *for just a short time*, on this wonder-working instrument, and how you can get a *White Cross Electric Vibrator* on a *genuine free trial*. Your name and address brings this intensely interesting book by return mail. Sign the coupon and mail it to us at once.



Curing Stomach Trouble with Vibration.



Combined Electric Bath and Vibratory Treatment.



Making the Hair Beautiful with Vibration.



CURES THESE DISEASES AND MANY OTHERS

- | | |
|-------------|------------------|
| Headache | Nervous Debility |
| Catarrh | Bright's Disease |
| Insomnia | Heart Trouble |
| Toothache | Deafness |
| Indigestion | Stomach Trouble |
| Rheumatism | Scalp Disease |
| Neuralgia | Constipation |
| Earache | Lumbago |

All these and dozens of other chronic and acute diseases instantly relieved and permanently cured by Vibration and Electricity. Get our wonderful free book, "Health and Beauty," THEN you will know.



Vibrating Chair Free

With the *White Cross Electric Vibrator*, you can transform any ordinary household chair into a *Vibrating Chair*, equal in every respect to those used in the big hospitals and sanitariums. You can give yourself the same treatments, including the famous *Swedish Movement* treatments, that specialists and sanitariums charge \$2.00 to \$3.00 apiece for. This is only one of the many marvelous things that can be done with the *White Cross Electric Vibrator* exclusively.

Send Coupon Today For Free Book

DON'T DELAY A MINUTE. Whether you are sick or well, you should send for this book *anyway*. You cannot tell when you *may* need it and need it *badly*. When you do there will be no time to send for it. Learn *today* what vibration will do for you—for all your loved ones. Learn all about its wonderful health-giving powers. Learn how you can save all doctor bills and cure yourself right at home without expense.

SEND NO MONEY. Just your name and address on the coupon. *But write today.*

LINDSTROM, SMITH CO.
253 LaSalle Street
Dept. 1022 CHICAGO



Sign and Mail the Coupon Today

LINDSTROM, SMITH CO.,
253 LaSalle St.,
Dept. 1022 CHICAGO
Without obligations on me, please send free, prepaid, your book "Health and Beauty," on treatment of disease by Vibration and Electricity. Also free trial offer.

Name.....
Address.....
.....

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Fig. 13 — Vibrate Your body and make it well. The "White Cross electric Vibrator." Popular Mechanics Advertising Section, Chicago, 1913.

mechanism. The housewife was confined in that space, which drew her limits but at the same time provoked a new space of freedom within the repression. A space that was filled with a collection of new machines and aids that created a landscape of vibratory possibilities.

The vibratory chair advertisement could act as a clue to invite women to manipulate and hack the composers of the home space to make them become vibrators. Transforming that domestic landscape into a possible area of freedom, in where to experiment with their repressed sexuality. Considering again Gibson affordances theory as a way to understand chances for actions to recur, it is possible to speculate about a new space of freedom for women. Being able to discover, in that new vibratory landscape, the truth about their own sex within the secrecy that would keep it safe.

The open possibility to purchase a vibratory device also opened up to new possibilities of usage and signification. In the 20's the first pornographic films were produced to be shown in the entrance of the brothels, as entrainment for the costumes. In 2002 Michael Rilhac found a collection of over 300 erotic movies made between 1905 and 1930 in France. He called the collection *The Good Old Naughty Days* (original title: *Polissons et galipettes*). Within the collection, there is a film called *Massage*, from 1930, in which a male character is massaged by two nurses in the back and the penis with a common vibrator from the 30's.

Fig.
14-19

To conclude, it can be stated that the sexual clues were there. The initiatory revolutions produced hints in the 20's that evoke a clear sexual and erotic use of the electric vibratory objects. Recalling Gibson¹⁹ one more time, and analyzing the clues gathered above,

seems more than possible that women in the 20's were aware of the sexual affordances of the common vibratory objects. As Foucault's other Victorians, who took the forbidden pleasure under the realm of the permission²⁰, the housewife could have brought the pleasure inside their self-governed home space.¹

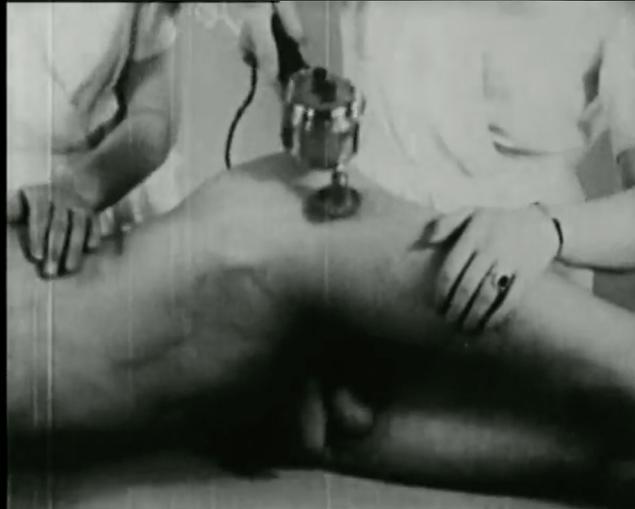
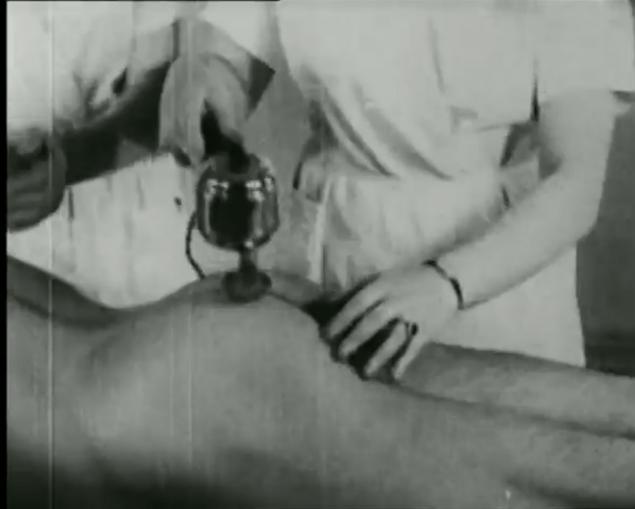
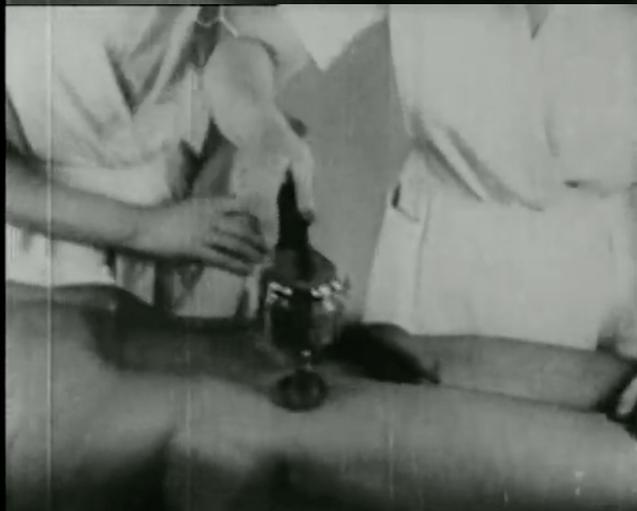


Fig. 14-19 — Images from the erotic film *Massage*, France, 1930's



A close-up photograph of a hand holding a white vibrator. The vibrator has a textured, brush-like head and a white cord. The background is a solid, vibrant red. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

CHAPTER 3

Oh joy, sex toy



CHAPTER 3

Oh joy, sex toy¹

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Redesign the vibrator

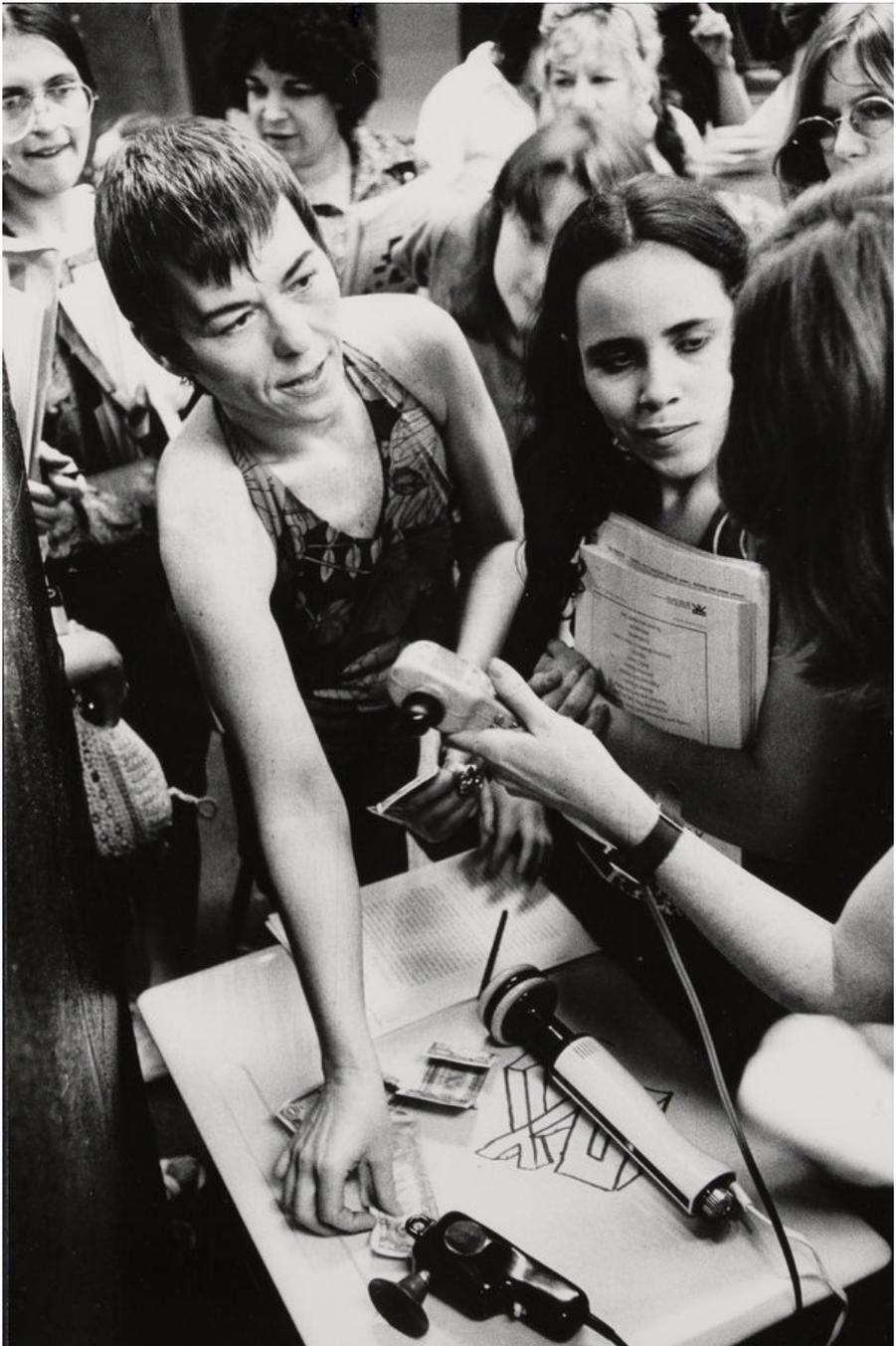
Female desire and sexuality were part of the most combated topics by the sexual revolution of the 60's in the US. Within the major revolutions, the sex-positive movement² emerged: a social and philosophical movement that embraced the sexuality in its larger form and perspectives. In the US the movement took many shapes. For instance, Betty Dodson³, an artistic formed feminist, being a pioneer in the field and actively engaged in the movement, organized and effectuated a range of activities about female sex, pleasure, desire, and vibration. For the very first time since the invention of vibrators in 1883, a woman told other women, in public and visible spaces, to use vibratory objects for self-masturbation. Signifying the vibratory object as a sexual object. In her talks, Dodson showed different vibrators

Fig.
1-3

available in the market as examples of masturbatory tools. In the images, she uses the Panasonic Panabrator, as well as some vibrators that followed the structure of the first one by Granville: Texturized attachments to plug in a vibratory body with a handle.

Fig. 1 — Betty Dodson at a sexuality conference,
New York, 9th June 1973





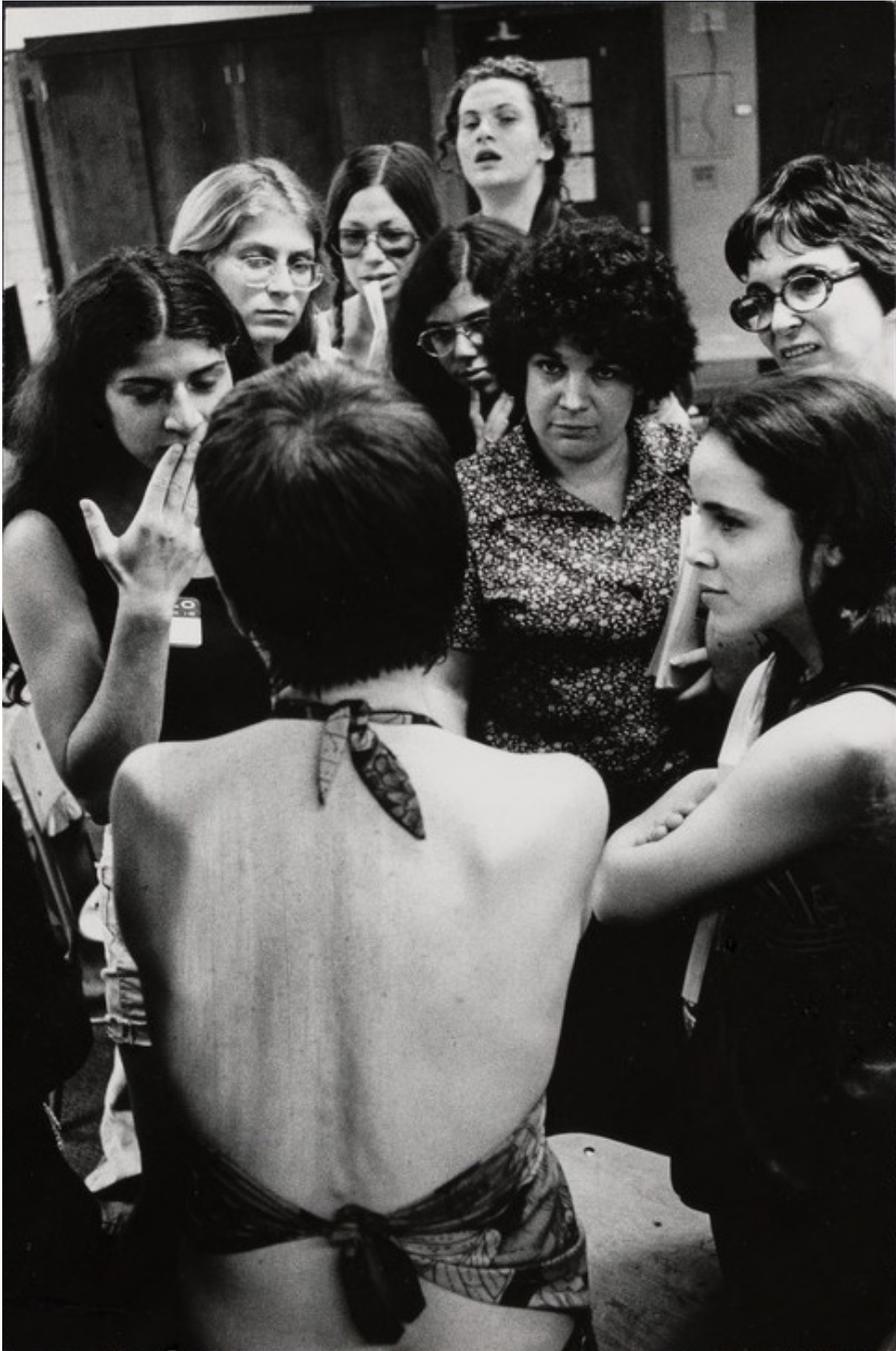


Fig. 2-3 — Betty Dodson at a sexuality conference, New York, 9th June 1973

Up to the 50's vibrators were still sold as muscle massagers, pain removers, or sports appliances, affordable for everyone in common appliances stores in the US. Even if fluctuant⁴, the production of vibratory objects never completely stopped. It is possible to follow the leftovers of a large industry, that was propelled again in the US post-crisis. Not by chance vibratory devices revived in parallel to the rise of the sexual revolution. They were launched as a cause or effect of it, linking the vibration directly to the liberation. Vibrators were reformulated physically and material wise, opening possibilities for new shapes and uses.

Looking at the devices available in the 60's, four different kinds can be sorted: The first one is what could be viewed as the logical evolution of the very first Vibratory machine by Mortimer Granville. It had evolved already in the 20's. In the 60's it presented new shapes and colors, but always following the same principle; It is the case of the Wahl Hand-E massager, produced in 1940 by the company Wahl. It consists of a small body that includes the handle within a simple and geometric shape made of white plastic.

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Fig. 4

The second kind is a special and unique model, unlike any other type of vibrator, that was only produced by a brand: The Niagara vibrator. It is a metal stylish and dynamic full piece that gathers two cylinders unified in a single piece. The small cylinder grows from the large one concentrically, being much thinner and half-length than the other. This second cylinder would function as the plug for the attachments, that in this case, were hooked to the vibratory body through a ring that would fit on the cylinder. Unavoidably, the small cylinder has a visual connection with the shape of a phallus, which suggests a possible

Fig. 5



Fig. 4 — Wahl Hand- E Massage Vibartor, 1940

internal stimulation. The Niagara vibrator was advertised by Playboy magazine. In the image we can see a woman lying on a table and the owner of Playboy standing next to it, holding the Niagara vibrator in his hand, pointing her face with it. Standing next to him, three other well-dressed and looking women observe the scene.

Fig. 6

At the same time that women sexuality was being liberated from the silence of the *repressive hypothesis*, the sexual revolution also meant the open erotization of the female body's. The culmination of the erotic spectacle. The images of the patients from the Salpêtrière Hospital, or the later vibratory advertisement with the actress Colleen Moore in the 20's, were examples of the public process of female body sexualization for a masculine audience.

Fig. 5 — Niagara Vibrator, 1950

Fig. 6 — Hugh Hefner testing *Playboy's* first official vibrator, 1958.





The appearance of the phallic shaped cordless vibrator from the 70's is significant, as it was the most erotized vibrator until the moment. Most of the previous vibrators proposed external stimulation of female genitalia. The cordless vibrator suggests an internal sexual stimulation, which allowed the discovering of new pleasurable parts of the body, as the G spot. Simultaneously, it portrayed the presence of masculine genitalia as an image for the male pleasure and fantasy.

Fig. 7

The advertisement in *Guy Magazine* in 1970⁵ includes an image of a female figure looking at the camera and laying down in underwear while using the vibrator in her stomach, as well as the text “[...] *Vibrating beauty wand will deliver deep penetrating relief to your body never before experienced.[...]*” “seven inches long”. Like in the case of

Colleen advertisement, the vibratory tool represents the absence of male sexual organ, as a recall of it for the masculine gaze. Female sexuality could not be liberated without being subjugated to male pleasure.

With the sexual revolution, the master shifted from control by repression to control by stimulation⁶. That regime by stimulation would be much less aggressive than the repressive one, and would allow space for freedom and experimenting, even accepting a moderated room for rebellions. Because in the regime of stimulation the self-regulation and control are indeed in the individuals rather than in an outer structure.

During the 20's the vibrator acted as a device for the biopower mechanism, through which reach a normative body and complexity. Beauty conception of the female body became a social imperative. As the American writer Andrea Dworkin stated, "Standards of beauty describe in precise terms the relationship that an individual will have with her own body⁷." Nevertheless, according to Foucault, those standards were not set by mechanisms of power anymore, because "modern" power is not orchestrated from a repressive position. It is a social construction based on self-regulation in order to prevail relations of dominance and subordination⁸. Relations that were already assumed and integrated into the individual subjects of the Western societies.

In the 60's, the construction of femininity shifted from beauty to eroticism and sexiness. "Get undressed -but be slim, good-looking, tanned!"⁹. Foucault assumes the sexual revolution created and acceptance and production of sexual bodies. The vibratory tool acted as a tool for both, female sexual liberation and, erotization of women body for the pleasure of the others.

New
CORDLESS
BODY

VIBRATOR

NOW

ONLY
\$5.00
FULL
PRICE

BATTERIES
NOT INCLUDED



FANTASTICALLY EXCITING

FIRM UP YOUR MEASUREMENTS • RELIEVE TENSION
• NEW RELAXATION • THE EXCITING NEW BODY
VIBRATOR IS LIKE HAVING A PERSONAL MASSEUR
IN YOUR HOME. THIS STIMULATING, VIBRATING
BEAUTY WAND WILL DELIVER DEEP PENETRATING
RELIEF TO YOUR BODY NEVER BEFORE EXPERIENCED.
PUT IT TO WORK ON YOUR BODY . . . WAIST, HIPS,
THIGHS, TUMMY, WHEREVER YOU WANT. EXCEL-
LENT FOR FACIAL CARE OR JUST PLAIN RELAXA-
TION. SEVEN INCHES LONG, CAN BE CARRIED AND
USED ANY TIME, ANY PLACE. IT IS OPERATED BY
BATTERIES AND COMPLETELY SAFE. SEND FOR YOUR
PERSONAL BODY MASSAGER TODAY AND ENJOY A
FIRMER HAPPIER BODY. **CUT OUT AND MAIL TODAY!**

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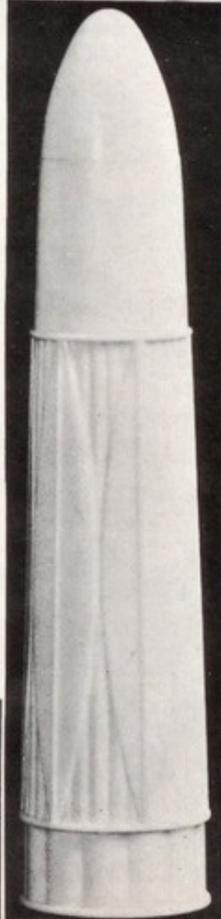


Fig. 7 — "New cordless body Vibrator."
Advertisement in My Guy Magazine, US 1970.

The last kind of vibrator is the wand kind, it was the one used in Betty's Dodson workshops. It was a long device made of plastic with a rubber or silicone head. The most significant example of this kind is the Magic Wand, produced by the Japanese band Hitachi, launched in 1968. The magic wand is 30 cm long and it applied vibration to the body through its rubbered round head. The predecessors followed the same principle being models like the Panasonic Panabrator or the less popular Norelco electric Massager. Most of them were advertised as neck or muscle massagers.



Fig. 8 — Hitachi Magic Wand .

Expanding Ars Erotica

In 1973 Dodson started to give her— now famous— body sex workshops in which she would —and still does— teach other women how to masturbate themselves. Within those two hour workshops, participants would start by physical recognizing and acknowledge. They would look at each other and their own bodies as a technique to provide understanding and acceptance towards their body and sexuality. The act of sharing knowledge would give them tools for emancipation, as a reverse process of the secrecy established since the Victorian era. Later on, during the same workshops, they would stand, sit or lie down in a circle and stimulate externally and internally their genitals together. They would use vibrator sold as muscle massagers and penetrating objects. When they started doing the workshops Dodson used the previously introduced Panasonic Panabrator, and a few years later, she changed it for the Hitachi magic wand. It has been rated as the best sexual tool on different occasions and now occupies a proudly symbolic position of female self-pleasure.

Fig.
9-10

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The Body Sex workshops provided a new perspective on sexual knowledge. Reverting the western system of Foucault's concept *Scientia Sexualis*¹⁰ in which sexual knowledge is only produced and gauged by medical opaque structures of power. Instead, they approached another concept coined by Foucault *ars erotica*¹¹, a procedure that creates knowledge through the experience of it, in which truth is drawn from the pleasure itself. They used the vibration power to research modes of pleasance, within a new space of freedom and invention. The house of Dodson worked as a freeing place in where to investigate women own organs and pleasures.



Fig. 9 – Images from Dodson, Betty, director.
Selfloving - Portrait of a Woman's Sexuality
Seminar. Betty Dodson Ph.D., 2005.

The knowledge served as the code to hack the public unspeakable and invisibility of female sexuality, redesigning the vibratory object and naming it as a sex toy.

Dodsons' workshops are the perfect example of an extended emancipation of female sexuality. Finally, women were the users, the designers and the bodies of vibration technology, the paradigm was radically twisted. In those workshops, the regency of the vibratory objects was fully transferred to women, who owned the knowledge and redesigned the use of the vibratory objects, providing it with intentions and discourses with the will to free other women pleasure. According to Foucault, *ars erotica* keeps its truth as a secret, not for the presence of a repressive system, but for a need to keep the privacy of it in order not to lose its efficiency. The Body Sex workshops' participants spread their truth as emancipating information, becoming a self-governed and alternative system of power. The practices that until then were considered subversives, turned into tolerated non-hidden sexual performances. It is the proof of how the small hints of emancipation witnessed through the years became the public and accepted discourse. It represents the lighting of the confession, the liberation of the vibratory masturbation.

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Some of the women that attended to Dodson workshops took it a step forward, expanding the network and knowledge. They became loud voices to normalize the discourse and bring it further, entering into new structures. Dell Williams¹², a New York citizen assisted once to a Body Sex workshop by Dodson, she discovered in it, how much those workshops were empowering knowledge for women. In 1974, after not succeeding when trying to buy a vibrator in a store department, she

Fig. 11 decided to open the first sex shop directed exclusively to women in the United States. Eve's Garden opened its doors selling different models of massagers as the Magic Wand and the Panasonic Panabrator, as well as books on feminism and sexuality, like the first self-published book by Betty Dodson in 1974 *Liberating Masturbation: A Meditation on Self Love*¹³, a call for action. In her first book, Dodson argues that masturbation was a radical act for women in the 70's, and she defends vibration the most plausible method to reach an orgasm. She shares in it her own experiences as an educational exercise.

In 1975, Joani Blank¹⁴ started her publisher company Down There Press. The same year she published her first book, a *Playbook for women about sex* (1975). It was a sexual self-awareness book for every woman, with "games" and exercises in order to acknowledge one's own body. Later, she published her playbook for men and for kids. Her second publication was *Good Vibrations: the complete guide to vibrations*,¹⁵ a journey analyzing the current vibratory objects from a sexual perspective. In *Good Vibrations* she exposed the history of the vibrator, starting in the Victorian era, pairing that dissertation with warming educational parts. She mentions that many of the vibrators discussed in her book were not designed for sexual uses. Blanck admits that she does not understand why the non-sexual massagers included a warning in which it was specified not to use those tools on sexual practices. Culminating the historical part with the sentence " Interesting, isn't it, that vibrators that lost their respectability when they were shunned by the medical profession are now seen as an important tool for women taking control of and enhancing their sexuality¹⁶".



Fig. 12 — Dell Williams, founder and president of Eve's Garden in her first showroom, New York, 1974

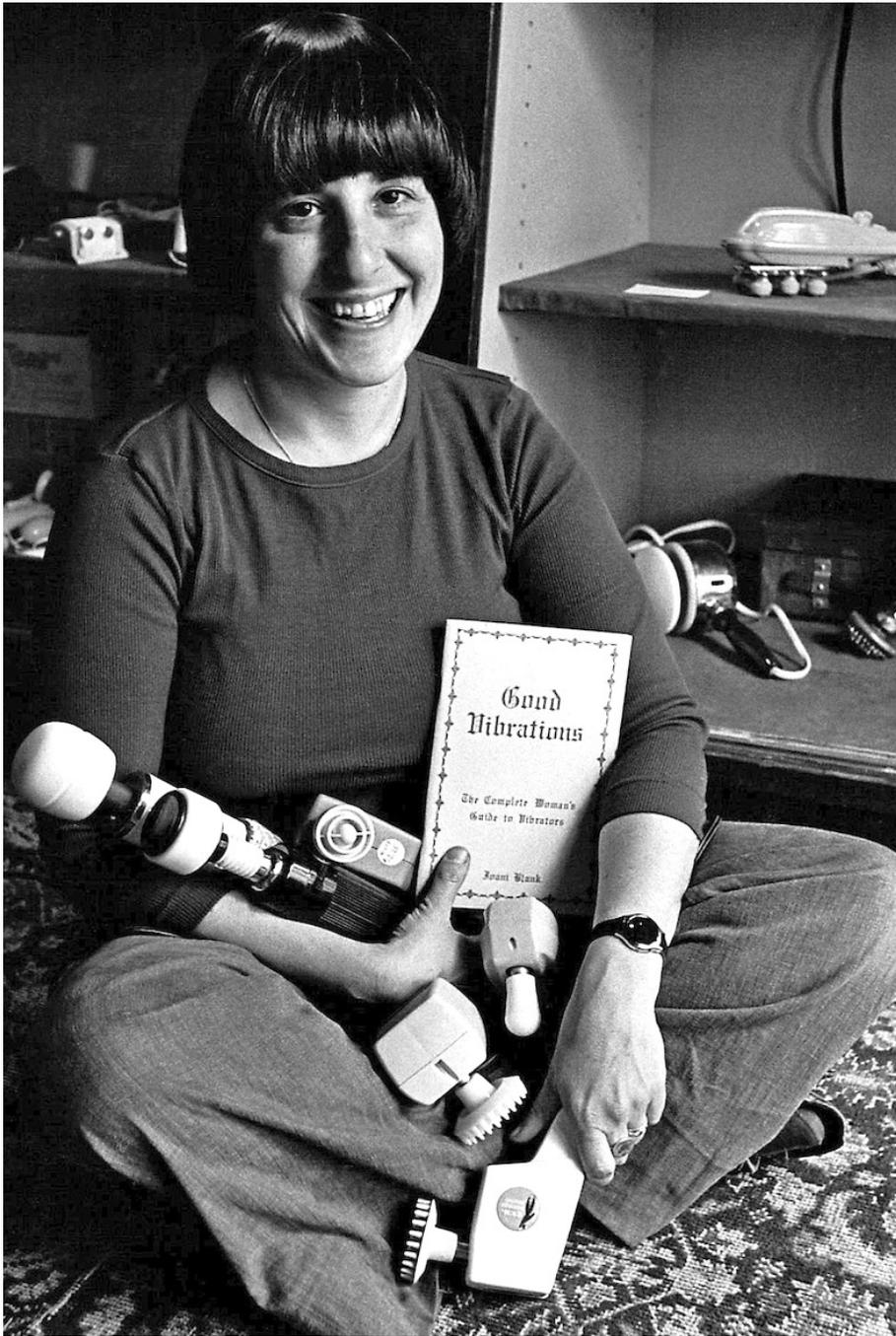


Fig. 13 — Joani Blank, *Good Vibrations*
San Francisco, 1977

Fig. 12 Two years later, Blank opened Good Vibrations, the second American commerce intended for women sexuality, in San Francisco.

Fig. 13 In the next years, new shops for female pleasure opened in the US and in Europe, like the Babeland shop in Seattle in the 90's. Some of the shops didn't sell dildos at the beginning. They tried to give a message for women to explore their bodies, enhancing the clitoris, and working against the myth of the heterosexual intercourse as the unique and best form of sex. Some, like Eve's Garden, wouldn't show pornography, in order not to sponsor an objectified view of female pleasure¹⁷.

Those voices and discourses were a way to expand the knowledge gained through an experimenting method as the *ars erotica*. Voices to sprawl the vibratory affordances in the field of the sexual emancipation.

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In the liberating revolution and the consecutive erotization of the world¹⁸, mass media played an unquestionable role. Especially the audiovisual media in the small screen, which had the ability to produce the appropriate narratives as methods to persuade the audience and convey the convenient message on every occasion. Anew, the vibrators would be there, as a part of the media and the message. In the 6th chapter of the 5th season of series *Sex and the City*¹⁹, Samantha tries to return a wand vibratory massager, the AcuVibe model —still in the market nowadays— to the store because “it failed in the purpose of turning her off”. When she exposes that she wants to return the vibrator, the salesman argues that in their shop they don't sell vibrators, that product is indicated as a neck massager. The scene was a tribute to Dell Willimans when she tried to buy a vibrator in a common

*Fig.
14-17*

store in the US and was ridiculed by the salesman. Sex and the City was an icon covering topics as a female image and sexuality in the small screen. In this scene, Samantha Jones proudly lifted the veil on euphemistically named neck massager, not only to hundreds of people but to their millionaire audience²⁰. As the ultimate expansion of self-governed sexual knowledge.¹

TOYS
in Babeland
Sex Toys, Books & Videos



PUTTING MORE
WOMEN INTO
ORBIT IN A WEEK
THAN NASA HAS
IN A LIFETIME

Pocket Rocket
\$21

94 RIVINGTON
BETWEEN ORCHARD & LUDLOW
MON-SAT 12-10PM • SUN 12-8PM
212-375-1701 • WWW.BABELAND.COM

Fig. 14 — Toys in Babeland advertisement, Seattle, 1995.



Fig. 15-18 — Images of “Critical Condition.” *Sex and the City*, season 5, episode 6, HBO, 25 Aug. 2002.







உணவு உணர்வு

Conclusion

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This research began considering Foucault's suggestion to read history from the perspective of the repressed identities, and these identities' attempts of resistance against structures of power¹. In order to achieve this purpose, it is mandatory to look at the events from different perspectives and understand the multiple layers that conjugate the narrative of history. This includes discourses and knowledge that were considered official by entities at the time, as well as disruptive unauthorized practices.

The vibratory objects were designed in the first instance to control bodies by stimulating them. However, using J. J. Gibson affordance theory², it is possible to understand the multiplicity of affordances implied in the same vibratory objects. In each chapter, I have analyzed how the implication of the agents, their individual abilities and the

specific characteristics of their environment — being cultural or political— can activate these mentioned affordances and significances. The tools for the liberation would be the same that served their own repression, either medical or commercial. The vibratory object was used as a vehicle through which one could move from control to emancipation.

On the other side of the coin, the liberation of female desires and sexuality runs together with the external erotization of their body. The conception of the female sexual being is both emancipative and restrictive because it is always overseen from the perspective of a more powerful gaze.

This work exposes a long process of resistance along the chapters. It starts by showing the female body in an oppressed position and unravels a narrative in which women attain this power over their bodies and spread it through the production of knowledge. This knowledge was created through sexual experiences.

It moves from a narrative of the hysterical to a narrative of sexual revolutionary women, from repression to stimulation.

Nevertheless, the success of that long-term liberation resides in the process of it. In the growing number of small events occurring within the controlled zones, but hidden under disguised spaces of resistance. In each period a form of sexual subversion is suggested based on the possible clues or hints that were found in the environment.

The erotization and the fakeness of the Hysterical spectacle, within the hospital space —in which sex wasn't forbidden — are indications of an awareness of the pleasurable possibilities of the vibratory medical

tools, that were perceived as pleasurable by being used as treatments. At the same time, the sexual repression from the masculine medical structure uses the hysterical body as an erotic stimulus.

In the same way, the vibratory domesticity that is presented in the 20's, and the more advanced erotization of the female image, —which created an indirect oppression on the feminine figure—gave women the possibility to experiment their own sexuality within a controlled space. This controlled space becomes also the liberating space, filled with a new range of vibratory and electric tools.

Finally, the women engaged in the sexual liberation publicly revealed the sexual affordances of the vibratory objects in order to free the vibratory masturbation. At the same time, contemporary women imaginary it is, indeed, the most erotic conception of the female body until the date.

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From a designer perspective, to witness that an object or technology can be both a tool for control and liberation makes Gibson's theory gain full understanding: An object is not full of signification and rules to use it. An object contains a number of possibilities to be used or signified. The activation depends on the user and its context. Therefore, an object is whatever one can make of it. It was the ability and desire of the women of each of the three analyzed periods and the surrounding facts that allowed the vibratory object to be used as a tool for self-sexual pleasure.

Recalling Foucault once more, through the eyes of the feminist theoretician Susan Bordo³, there is a need for a discourse that allows us to signify the subversive potential of the resistance. Sex should not be considered as a denial of power, we should understand sex and

sexuality as tools “to counter the grips of power with the claims of bodies, pleasures, and knowledges, in their multiplicity and possibility of resistance⁴⁷”. Our sexualities, bodies, desires, identities are abilities of our agency. These can serve as a medium to activate the possibilities of the objects. Objects to create subversion against any structure of power. Resistance —sexual or not— remains as an activable affordance of the objects around us.

Notes

Notes

Introduction

¹ Brenot, Philippe., & Coryn, Laetitia. *Sex story: La première histoire de la sexualité en BD*, Les Arènes, 2016.

² “In order to understand what power relations are about, perhaps we should investigate the forms of resistance and attempts made to dissociate these relations. As a starting point, let us take a series of oppositions which have developed over the last few years: opposition to the power of men over women, of parents over children, of psychiatry over the mentally ill, of medicine over the population, of administration over the ways people live.” In: Foucault, Michel. “The Subject and the Power”; *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 8, No. 4. Summer, 1982, pp. 780.

³ Shelley Trower. “Nerve-Vibration’: Therapeutic Technologies in the 1880s

and 1890s.” *Neurology and Modernity*, Editorial Matter, 2010, pp. 148–162.

⁴ Charles Dickens in *Dombey and Son* relates an earthquake and its major capability to destroy with the construction of a railway, which is conceived as one of the biggest signs of modernity. In: Trower, Shelley. “Pathological Motions: Railway Shock, Street Noises, Earthquakes.” *Senses of Vibration: A History of the Pleasure and Pain of Sound*, Continuum, 2012, pp. 94–125.

⁵ Shelley Trower. “‘Nerve-Vibration’: Therapeutic Technologies in the 1880s and 1890s.” *Neurology and Modernity*, Editorial Matter, 2010, pp. 148–162.

⁶ The *repressive hypothesis* supposes that in the 17th century, since the rise of power of the bourgeoisie in the Western world, all the sexual activity and desire had been banned. As a result, sex is confined in the private space and kept inside the marriage. The repressive hypothesis would use systems of confession, to create truth and classification of the population. Using systems of power that would provide the ability to label society in controllable groups of people. Idea developed in: Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. Vol. 1, Pantheon Books, 1978

⁷ James, Gibson Jerome. “The Theory of Affordances.” *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*, Psychology Press, 1986, pp. 127–146.

⁸ The term coined by James Jack Gibson. An American psychologist in the field of visual perceptions. His theory was questioned and introduced in the design field by Donald Norman in his book *The Psychology of Everyday Things* (1988). After that, it has been used and discussed in different occasions from the design perspective.

⁹ Mason, Diane. *The Secret Vice Masturbation in Victorian Fiction and Medical Culture*. Manchester University Press, 2014.

¹⁰ Didi-Huberman, Georges, and Hartz, Alisa. *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*. The MIT Press, 2005.

¹¹ Enns, Anthony, and Shelley Trower. *Vibratory Modernism*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

¹² Maines, Rachel P. *The Technology of Orgasm: Hysteria, the Vibrator, and Women's Sexual Satisfaction*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

¹³ Foucault, Michel. "The Subject and the Power"; *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 8, No. 4, Summer, 1982.

CHAPTER 1

¹ Shelley Trower is a researcher in literature and culture from the 19th and 20th. University of Roehampton, London.

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² Trower, Shelley. "'Nerve-Vibration': Therapeutic Technologies in the 1880s and 1890s." *Neurology and Modernity*, Editorial Matter, 2010, pp. 150.

³ Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. Vol. 1, Pantheon Books, 1978, pp. 54.

⁴ Laqueur, Thomas W. *Solitary Sex: a Cultural History of Masturbation*. Zone Books, 2004, pp.13.

⁵ Foucault, Michel. "Nine. 5 MARCH 1975." *Abnormal: Lectures at the College De France 1974 - 1975*, Verso, 2003, pp. 231–261.

⁶ Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books, 1995.

⁷ Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. Vol. 1, Pantheon

Books, 1978 pp. 4

⁸ Foucault, Michel. "Nine. 5 MARCH 1975." *Abnormal: Lectures at the College De France 1974 - 1975*, Verso, 2003, pp. 231–261.

⁹ The first chastity belt ever shown was in the military book *Bellfortis* in 1405. It was made of iron and used on the women in the front. There were also chastity belts used for the wives of jealous husbands in the 16th and 17th century. Before the 17th century most of them were made of iron, later on, there were more models in leather and lighter materials. They were also used as a tool of fear and threat during the 17th century, nevertheless, they were activated again in the 19th century.

¹⁰ Foster, Clarence W. *Body Guard*. US 879,534. United States Patent and Trademark Office, 18 feb. 1908, New York.

¹¹ Confession is a term used in crimes and legality issues, Foucault uses it to talk about sexuality because, at this moment, Sexuality is treated almost as a crime. It is something that one needs to confess. "In any case, next to the testing rituals, next to the testimony of witnesses, and the learned methods of observation and demonstration, the confession became one of the West's most highly valued techniques for producing truth." Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. Vol. 1, Pantheon Books, 1978 pp. 59.

¹² Marquis de Sade was a French aristocrat and philosopher who became notorious for acts of sexual cruelty in his writings as well as in his own life.

¹³ The political and moral ideals of each period influenced in the diagnosis of hysteria; During the middle age, hysteria was related to witches and treated with exorcism, because of an increasing Catholic influence, and the popularisation of the figure of the devil. In the Renaissance, the previous theories on hysteria were questioned, the mental state of the patients began

to be considered as an important fact. Doctor Thomas Wills, in the 17th century, stated that hysteria was a mental disease related to the brain and the nervous system. Among other differences, that change in the conception of hysteria, and introduced the possibility of other hysterical patients, it was not exclusively related to women and their sexuality anymore. During that same century, the famous physician Thomas Sydenham believed that hysteria was the cause of one-sixth of all human maladies. In: Maines, Rachel P. *The Technology of Orgasm: Hysteria, the Vibrator, and Women's Sexual Satisfaction*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

¹⁴ Sewing machines and bicycles were thought by many nineteenth century physicians to be the cause or medium of female masturbation. In: Maines, Rachel P. *The Technology of Orgasm: Hysteria, the Vibrator, and Women's Sexual Satisfaction*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. pp. 57

¹⁵ Maines, Rachel P. *The Technology of Orgasm: Hysteria, the Vibrator, and Women's Sexual Satisfaction*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. pp. 8

¹⁶ Charcot's "Great hysterical attack" in: Didi-Huberman, Georges, translated by Hartz, Alisa. *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*. The MIT Press, 2005. pp. 115

¹⁷ Hysterical Paroxysm was the way to say Female Orgasm, believed to be the cure of hysteria.

¹⁸ De Pergamon, Galen. *The Locis Affectis*. S. Karger, 1976. bk 6 2.39

¹⁹ Macaura, Gerald Joseph. "Vibrators" for massage or like Treatment. UK 13,932. 7 Sep. 1905, London

²⁰ The visual image of the hysterical in the XIX century, in the Parisian center Salpêtrière, is been analyzed by Didi-Huberman, who states that the

Photography was in the ideal position to crystallize the link between the fantasy of hysteria and the fantasy of knowledge. To give to the medical system the credit of reality that they needed, to justify practices, treatments, and professionalism. Photographies were considered an unquestionable representation of the real world, consequently, the images from the sanitarium warranted both the invention of hysteria and the medical practice. Augustine, a patient from Salpêtrière, was openly pretending to have hysterical attacks for the purpose of the spectacle. Among other circumstances, she used to pose in front of a camera to recreate the popular images of the hysterical patients in the Salpêtrière of Paris, but as Hubberman denotes, those pictures couldn't be taken during hysterical episodes. At the time, photographies needed a set and up to 5 minutes to become a successful image. Consequently, it seems difficult to combine the idea of the hysterical attack and a picture that needs a period of 5 static minutes. In: Didi-Huberman, Georges, and Hartz, Alisa. *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*. The MIT Press, 2005.

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²¹ Ibid.

²² James, Gibson Jerome. "The Theory of Affordances." *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*, Psychology Press, 1986, pp. 127–146.

²³ Maines, Rachel P. *The Technology of Orgasm: Hysteria, the Vibrator, and Women's Sexual Satisfaction*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

²⁴ The next fragment of the nerve-Vibration book by Granville shows his will to prove that he was not a charlatan, and states his view on the usage of the vibratory tool far from any conception of sexuality. "*I should explain here that, with a view to eliminating possible sources of error in the study of these phenomena, I have never yet percussed a female patient (with a vibrator), and have not founded any of my conclusions on the treatment of hysterical males. This is*

a matter of mu h moment in my judgment, and I am, therefore, careful to place the fact on record. I have avoided and shall continue to avoid, the treatment of women by percussion, simply because I do not want to be hoodwinked, and help to mislead others, by the vagaries of the hysterical state or the characteristic phenomena of mimetic disease” In: Granville, J. Mortimer. Nerve Vibration & Excitation. Columbia University - Medical Library, 1883. pp 57

²⁵ The charlatan was a figure from the XIX c. A person that used medical language and tools to treat patients without being a certificate doctor, and of course, was paid for it. This phenomenon is clearly connected to the economy and the origin of a capitalist system.

CHAPTER 2

¹ Concept borrowed from: McLuhan, Marshall. *The Mechanical Brides: Folklore of Industrial Man*. The Vanguard Press, 1951.

² Philips, R. Randal. *The servantless house*, Countrylife Ltd, 1920.

³ The vibrator the fifth electric appliance to arrive in the home—after the sewing machine, the fan, the teakettle and the toaster.

⁴ McLuhan, Marshall. *The Mechanical Brides: Folklore of Industrial Man*. The Vanguard Press, 1951. pp. V.

⁵ Lupton, Ellen. *Mechanical Brides: Women and Machines from Home to Office*. Cooper-Hewitt, National Museum of Design, Smithsonian Institution, 1993, pp7

⁶ Vol 2 N° 5. *Tales and Topics of Stage and Screen*. June 1920.

⁷ It is the case of hysteria, after 2500 of diagnosis and acceptance of the disease paradigm, the first and more important female mental disorder of all

eras, officially stopped being diagnosed in 1952.

⁸ Du toucher, la femme debout in: Maygrier, Jacques-Pierre, and Chazal, Antoine. *Nouvelles Démonstrations Daccouchements*. L. Pariente, 1988 [1822].

⁹ The right to touch a body must be taken into account. Before 1900 the only spaces where a female body could be touched was the bedroom, by a husband, or in the medical space, where a doctor had authority to examine and stimulate bodies without any prejudice, under the solemnity of his practice. When the costumes started to be able to treat themselves, the rules changed, the women were not only allowed but pushed to touch herself under the name of the self-care. Nevertheless, notice that in all the advertisements and documents on vibrations, the apparatus stays at home and it is to be used only between the family members, the vibrator acts as an extension of the human that enables to touch other bodies indirectly.

¹⁰ It appears for the first time in a publication of The new york times on may 26th of 1908.

¹¹ Lupton, Ellen. *Mechanical Brides: Women and Machines from Home to Office*. Cooper-Hewitt, National Museum of Design, Smithsonian Institution, 1993.

¹² Arnold's Vibrator booklet, 1908.

¹³ Susan Bordo is a feminist theoretician who applied the biopower conception of Foucault to feminist theory.

¹⁴ Susan, Bordo, and Ladelle McWhorter. "Feminism, Foucault and the Politics of the Body." *Bodies and Pleasures Foucault and the Politics of Sexual Normalization*, Indiana University Press, 1999, pp. 179–202.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Slogan of a White Cross Electric Vibrator. Published in New-York tribune. (New York [N.Y.]) 1866-1924, January 05, 1913, Image 48.

¹⁷ Didi-Huberman, Georges, and Hartz, Alisa. *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*. The MIT Press, 2005.

¹⁸ The 20's represented the beginning of liberating boom that collided with the crisis in the 29 and the 2WW just after. Many liberating movements and revolutions started to be announced in the 20's but they couldn't be developed. The 60's were the first moment when the situation allowed the necessary amount of freedom and good conditions, for the revolution to happen.

¹⁹ James, Gibson Jerome. "The Theory of Affordances." *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*, Psychology Press, 1986, pp. 127–146.

²⁰ Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. Vol. 1, Pantheon Books, 1978. pp. 4.

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CHAPTER 3

¹ Concept borrowed from: Moen, Erika, and Matthew Nolan. *Oh Joy Sex Toy*. Erika Moen Comics & Illustrations, LLC, Helioscope Studio, 2016.

² The term was coined by Wilhem Riech, one of the most relevant writers on the sexual revolution of the 60's.

³ Betty Dodson: artist, author, and PhD sexologist has been one of the principal voices for women's sexual pleasure and health for over three decades. Ref: Betty Dodson & Carlin Ross, dodsonandross.com/. Accessed 9 Oct. 2018.

⁴ A decrease in the marketing and production of the vibrator is noticed

from the end of the 20's until the mid- 40's. The historian Rachel Maines stated that it was an effect of the use of vibratory devices in Stag Films, mentioning a particular film called *Widow's delight*. According to her, that fact would create a social rejection towards the object for its clear sexual connotation. Nevertheless, since the sexual structures in the 20's were very initiative, it seems more plausible that the production stopped due to the economic and social imbalance starting with the great depression in 1929. As a consequence, the production of many articles lowered, especially those that were not fundamentally necessities. In the 40's the US enjoyed a slow increasing economy, which could provoke a reinsertion of the vibratory object into the industrial production.

⁵ Advertisement for New Cordless Vibrator. *My guy magazine*, April 1970 pp. 63

⁶ Ruthenford, Paul. *A World Made Sexy: Freud to Madonna*. University of Toronto Press, 2007.

⁷ Dworkin, Andrea. *Woman Hating: a Radical Look at Sexuality*. Dutton, 1976. pp 113.

⁸ Modern Power is a concept by Michel Foucault. According to him, in modern power one is the vigilant and discipline of himself. There is no need to a control system because the control resides in each individual. Used in: Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. Vol. 1, Pantheon Books, 1978 pp. 137.

⁹ Foucault, Michel. *Body/Power*, 57-8.

¹⁰ *Scientia Sexualis* is the western manner to generate medical truth in sex field, based on the confession and the secrecy fo the system of power. In: Foucault, Michel. "Scientia Sexualis." *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*,

vol. 1, Pantheon Books, 1978, pp. 51–76.

¹¹ *Ars erotica*, is a way to create knowledge about sexuality through the experimentation of it, it is common in the oriental societies. In: Foucault, Michel. “Scientia Sexualis.” *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, vol. 1, Pantheon Books, 1978, pp. 51–76.

¹² Dell Williams: A former actress, advertising executive and Army Wac. Williams was for four decades a nationally known advocate of women’s liberation, sexuality and sexual health.

¹³ Dodson, Betty, and Betty Dodson. *Liberating Masturbation: a Meditation on Self Love*, Betty Dodson, 1974.

¹⁴ Joani Blank: American entrepreneur, writer, sex educator, publisher and pioneer in the field of sexuality.

¹⁵ Blank, Joani. *Good Vibrations: The Complete Guide to Vibrators*, Down There Press, 1982.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp 5.

¹⁷ Comella, Lynn. *Vibrator Nation: How Feminist Sex-Toy Stores Changed the Business of Pleasure*. Duke University Press, 2017.

¹⁸ Ruthenford, Paul. *A World Made Sexy: Freud to Madonna*. University of Toronto Press, 2007.

¹⁹ Junge, Alexa. “Critical Condition.” *Sex and the City*, season 5, episode 6, HBO, 25 Aug. 2002.

²⁰ 7.38 milion of spectators in TV - ref. Downey, Kevin (September 5, 2002).

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¹ Foucault, Michel. *The Subject and the Power*, *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 8, No. 4, Summer, 1982, pp. 780.

² James, Gibson Jerome. "The Theory of Affordances." *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*, Psychology Press, 1986, pp. 127–146.

³ Bordo, Susan, et al. "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity: a Feminist Appropriation of Foucault." *Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*, Rutgers University Press, 1992, pp. 13–33.

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Image Credits

Image Credits

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Fig.0 - Eisenstaedt, Alfred “Slenderizing Roller Massager” *The LIFE Picture Collection*. Getty Images

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Fig.0 - “Tapotement Massage.” In: Kleen, Emil A. G. , *Massage And Medical Gymnastics*, J. & A. Churchill, 1921

Fig.1 - Illustration by Laetitia Coryn. Brenot, Philippe., & Coryn, Laetitia. *Sex story: La première histoire de la sexualité en BD*. Les Arènes, 2016.

CHAPTER 1

Fig.0 – Advertisiement of Dr. Macaura’s Blood Circulator. Late nineteenth century, London.

Fig.1 – Tissot, Samuel Auguste André David. *Jeune Fille*. in *Dissertation physique sure les maladies produites par la masturbation*. Lausanne, 1836.

Fig.2 – Von Eichstadt, Kyeser. Sketch of a chastity belt, in *Bellifortis*, 1405

Fig.3 – Foster, Clearence W. *Body Guard*. US 879,534. United Stated Patent and Trademark Office, 18 feb. 1908, New York.

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Fig.5 – Illustration from the Dutch publication of the novel, *Nouvelle Justine De Sade*. Image courtesy of : 100 Erotic Illustrations of Marquis De Sade. Goliath, 2018.

Fig.6 – Londe, Albert. “Hysteria Attack in Humans.” Salpêtrière, Paris. Published in: *Neue Geschichte Der Fotografie*. Könemann, Köln 1998.

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Fig.7 – “Mechanical Massager.” Dr. Macaura’s blood circulator, made by British Appliances Manufacturing Co., Leeds, English, 1890-1910. *Science Museum Group Collection*, collection.sciencemuseum.org.uk.

Fig.8 – “Vibration of the ‘Internal Organs’ with the Macaura’s Blood Circulator.” *Collect Medical Antiques*, collectmedicalantiques.com

Fig.9 – Régnard, photograph of Augustine (*Attitudes Passionelles: Hallucinations de l’ouïe*,” *Iconographie*, vol. II.) Salpêtrière, Paris, 1878

Fig.10 – Régnard, photograph of Augustine (*Attitudes passionnelles: Extase*”), *Iconographie*, vol. II. Salpêtrière, Paris, 1878

Fig. 11 – The very thing for Ladies, Harness’ Electric Corsets. Advertisement

of The Medical Battery Co. London, 1890's.

Fig.12 - Illustration of the Percuteur by Mortimer Granville, produced by Weiss & Sons. In: Granville, J. Mortimer. *Nerve Vibration & Excitation*. Columbia University - Medical Library, 1883

Fig.13 - Illustration of the vibratodes. In: Granville, J. Mortimer. *Nerve Vibration & Excitation*. Columbia University - Medical Library, 1883

Fig.14 - The Percuteur in use. In: Granville, J. Mortimer. *Nerve Vibration & Excitation*. Columbia University - Medical Library, 1883.

Fig.15 - Percuteur by Granville, J. Mortimer; Collection of the Bakker Museum, Mineapolis, USA, ANY

Fig.16 - Charcot's vibrating chair. Image from *Nouvelle iconographie de la Salpêtrière*, Vol. V. Salpêtrière, Paris, 1892.

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CHAPTER 2

Fig.0 - Advertisement for "Sanofix" electric hand vibrator. Berlin: Electricitätsgesellschaft "Sanitas", [1913]

Fig.1 - "A new household necessity". *The American Vibrator Company*, New York, 1906

Fig.2 - Advertisement of the Rite Star Electric Massage Vibrator. "The Tatler Magazine." *The Tatler Magazine*, 1920, US

Fig.3 - Advertisement Dr. Swift, *The wonderful Healer*, 1887, California

Fig.4 - "Life your life Healthily", Advertisement of the horse exercise device by *Vigor & Co.* London, 1900's.

Fig.5 - "Horse exercise at home". Advertisement of the horse exercise device by *Vigor & Co.* London, 1900's.

Fig.6 - "Dr. John Butlers Electro Massage machine." *The Sears catalog.* US 1904

Fig.7 - "The Arnold Vibrator". *Vintage Vibrator Museum* image courtesy of Babeland, LLC. <http://www.constanceanderic.com>

Fig. 8- Cover Arnold Vibrator Booklet, Arnold Massage Vibrator Company, US, 1914

Fig. 9 - Arnold Vibrator Booklet page 31, Arnold Massage Vibrator Company, US, 1914

Fig.10 - "VibraKing" *Vintage Vibrator Museum* image courtesy of Babeland, LLC. <http://www.constanceanderic.com>

Fig.11 -VibraKing booklet Cover (model Full Power Vibra-King Actavator Model FP). Oakland, CA, 1950's.

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Fig.12- *Actress Colleen Moore Using a Star-Rite Electric Massage Vibrator, Hollywood, California, Mid to Late 1920s.* Getty Images, www.gettyimages.ch. 1927

Fig.13 - "Vibrate Your body and make it well. The White Cross electric Vibrator." *Popular Mechanics Advertisement Section*, Chicago, 1913, pp. 153.

Fig.14 - 19 "Massage." *The Good Old Naughty Days* [Polissons Et Galipettes], Michael Rilhac, 2002 [1930]

CHAPTER 3

Fig.0 - Lane, Bettye , “Betty Dodson at a sexuality conference,” *Catching the Wave*. New York, 9th June 1973 <http://catchingthewave.library.harvard.edu/items/show/2658>.

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Fig. 4 - “Whal Hand-E Vibrator” *Vintage Vibrator Museum* image courtesy of Babeland, LLC. <http://www.constanceanderic.com>

Fig.5 - “Niagara Vibrator” *Vintage Vibrator Museum* image courtesy of Babeland, LLC. <http://www.constanceanderic.com>

Fig.6 - Art Shay, “Hugh Hefner testing *Playboy’s* first official vibrator.” 1958, Morrison Hotel Gallery Prints Los Angeles

Fig.7 - “New cordless body Vibrator.” *My Guy Magazine*, US 1970.

Fig.8 - “Hitachi Magic Wand” <http://hitachimagicwand.es>

Fig.9 -10- Imges from Dodson, Betty, director. *Selfloving - Portrait of a Woman’s Sexuality Seminar*. Betty Dodson Ph.D., 2005.

Fig.11 - “Dell Williams, founder and president of Eve’s Garden in her first showroom”. *Images from the Rare Book and Manuscript Collections*, New York, 1974. <https://digital.library.cornell.edu/catalog/ss:550343>

Fig.12 - “Joani Blank”, San Francisco, 1977. Image courtesy of Joani Blank.

Fig. 13 - Toys in Babeland. Advertisement of Babeland Shop, Seattle, US, 1995

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Fig.0 - “Magic Wand, Then Sleep by Gustave Courbet.” *The Magic Wand Throughout Art History*, Tumblr, 3 June 2016, magicwandarthistory.tumblr.com.

