

PORNOTERRORISM: ANTISOCIAL DYKES IN THE SPANISH TRANSFEMINIST MOVEMENT

PORNOTERRORISMO: BOLLERAS ANTISOCIALES EN EL MOVIMIENTO TRANSFEMINISTA ESPAÑOL

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Abstract

This article examines *Pornoterrorismo* (2011), written by Spanish transfeminist poet and performer Diana J. Torres. In this book, the author mixes autobiographical details with personal reflections that have motivated her work and includes a selection of *pornoterrorista* poetry. Through a close reading of the narrative and poetic voice, this essay shows how *Pornoterrorismo* constructs a transfeminist discourse of radical negativity based on the discursive figure of the *dyke* as a fractured, monstrous subject that ultimately expands the realm of queer negativity. First, I focus on how Torres explores the symbolic potential of dyke sexual practices throughout her narrative in order to challenge some of the underlying assumptions in the original formulations of the antisocial thesis in queer theory originally elaborated by Lee Edelman and Leo Bersani. I will show how the dyke practices that Torres stages and that she describes in detail reveal the gender bias that marks the original theorization of the antisocial turn in queer theory. Second, I propose *queer terrorism* as a radical antisocial politics of transfeminist negativity. Here, I argue that there is an affective connection between Torres's performance with the material effects of terrorism that would be,

precisely, that of provoking terror in a heteronormative society. Through the affective violence that is given off through her autobiographical account until the adoption of her artistic name, as well as a detailed analysis of her poem «Hijxs de puta» [Kids of Bitches], I will show how queer terrorism shapes the *pornoterrorista* answer to the attacks of a heteronormative society. Ultimately, this article aims to contribute to the study and delimitation of a transfeminist literary corpus written by its protagonists—texts that share a legitimization of life experience with a broadening, adaptation, or reinterpretation of feminist queer theory, situated in the contemporary Spanish context.

Keywords: Diana J. Torres; *pornoterrorismo*; dyke body; transfeminism; antisocial turn; queer theory.

Resumen

En este artículo analizo la obra *Pornoterrorismo* (2011), escrita por la poeta y performer transfeminista Diana J. Torres. En este libro, la autora mezcla detalles autobiográficos con reflexiones personales que han motivado su trabajo e incluye una selección de poesía pornoterrorista. A través de una lectura detallada de la voz poética y la narrativa, este ensayo demuestra cómo *Pornoterrorismo* construye un discurso transfeminista de negatividad radical basado en la figura de la *bollera* como un sujeto fragmentado y monstruoso que, en última instancia, expande el ámbito de la negatividad *queer*. En primer lugar, me centro en cómo Torres explora el potencial simbólico de las prácticas sexuales bolleras a través de su narrativa para poner en cuestión algunos de los supuestos subyacentes en las formulaciones originales del giro antisocial en la teoría *queer* elaboradas por Lee Edelman y Leo Bersani. Demostraré cómo las prácticas bolleras que Torres pone en escena y que describe con gran detalle revelan el sesgo de género que marca la teorización del giro antisocial en la teoría *queer*. En segundo lugar, propongo el *terrorismo queer* como una política radical antisocial de negatividad transfeminista. Aquí, arguyo que existe una conexión afectiva entre la performance de Torres y los efectos materiales del terrorismo que serían, precisamente, la de provocar el terror en una sociedad heteronormativa. A través de la violencia afectiva que se desprende de su relato autobiográfico hasta la adopción de su nombre artístico, así como del análisis detallado de su poema «Hijxs de puta», voy a demostrar cómo el terrorismo queer da forma a la respuesta pornoterrorista ante los ataques de la sociedad heteronormativa. En última instancia, este artículo pretende contribuir al estudio y delimitación de un corpus literario transfeminista escrito por sus protagonistas—textos que comparten una legitimación de la experiencia vital con una ampliación, adaptación o reinterpretación de la teoría feminista *queer*, situados en el contexto español contemporáneo.

Palabras clave: Diana J. Torres; *pornoterrorismo*; cuerpo bollero; transfeminismo; giro antisocial; teoría queer.

A key work in the Spanish transfeminist movement, *Pornoterrorismo* (2011/2014), by Diana Junyent Torres, is a text that blurs the limits between essay and autobiography where the author tells her personal story until she becomes the performance artist known as Diana Pornoterrorista. *Pornoterrorismo* puts forward an original critical discourse based on a mix of autobiography, poetry, and personal reflections. The term *pornoterrorismo*, born from the fusion of the words *porn* and *terrorism*, refers to an expression of violent sexuality, in the sense of an explosive, visceral, and scandalous breaking of expectations on stage or in her poetry. Even though the subversive elements of her work in terms of sex, gender, and sexuality, especially in her performances, have already been analyzed from a wide variety of critical perspectives¹, this has not been the case about the insights that her critical discourse provides into queer theory. In this article, I argue that by exploring the symbolic potential of violence and dyke sexual practices, Torres's *Pornoterrorismo* expands the realm of queer negativity. Drawing on feminist queer theory and concentrating on *Pornoterrorismo*'s tone, narrative voice, and imagery, I will challenge some of the underlaying assumptions in the original formulations of the antisocial thesis in queer theory and propose *queer terrorism* as a radical antisocial politics of transfeminist negativity. This article aims to shed new light on the written work of transfeminist activists in Spain from the perspective of queer theory and literary criticism.

Writer, poet, and performer, Torres has been one of the most visible protagonists in transfeminist activism in Spain. She was a part of the postporn movement of Barcelona, which involved a group of friends, artists, and/or activists that, for the first time in Spain, elaborated their own postpornographic production during the early 2000s. Transfeminismo, inasmuch

1. Aguado (2019), Aliaga (2017), Egaña (2018), and Mateo del Pino (2021) have framed Torres's performative work as postpornography; Medel-Bao (2021) has conceptualized it as resistance to the biopolitical regime of heterosexuality; and Ribeiro Pátaro (2018) argues that Torres subverts the ways in which sexualities are constructed. Subversion is also important for Romero Baamonde's (2019) analysis of *pornoterrorista* performances as exceeding the conventional scenic space, and Caballes (2020) makes a similar claim by elaborating on Torres's use of violence on scene. Lastly, Laguian (2018) shows how Torres subverts conventions of the poetic genre.

as it is connected to the anglophone transfeminist and queer activism, is a word and a social movement with political connotations and cultural manifestations of its own. Spanish transfeminism is a twenty-first century social movement and heir to the Spanish queer activism of the 1990s. Yet it does not merely perpetuate its struggles: it updates them and, at the same time, makes a geopolitical turn. Younger Spanish activists favor the term *transfeminismo* rather than *queer* for two reasons: first, the prefix *trans* makes the movement trans-inclusive and intersectional (in Spanish sometimes referred to as transversal), and *feminism* shows they share this movement's historical resistance against heteropatriarchy (Araneta & Fernández, 2013, 2016; Solá, 2013). Second, transfeminist activists argue that a Spanish word resonates more strongly within Spanish-speaking populations, where people who do not speak English often do not know what *queer* means or even how to pronounce it. This demonstrates not only that the word *queer* feels too distant in Spanish transfeminist circles, but that these groups reclaim local queer feminist genealogies while at the same time generating their own queer meanings, unique to the cultural context in which they exist.

In this context, Torres and her written work are relevant for various reasons: *Pornoterrorismo* marks her first big break as an author, since it is the first book in a series of titles under Torres's authorship, completed by *Coño potens: manual sobre su poder, su próstata y sus fluidos* (2015) and *Vomitorium* (2017). This makes Torres, who has the largest number of publications among her comrades, a key figure in transfeminist discourse. In addition, her work has reached an audience that, though with interests still circumscribed to feminism —either from activism or the academy—, is beyond transfeminist circles and has crossed borders, given that her work has been translated to French and Italian, and has been edited in Mexico. Over the last ten years, she has performed and given workshops and talks in Europe, Latin America, and the US. Lastly, her connection with the post-porn movement has made her known in the avant-garde artistic circuits in Spain, making her work more visible in some media and allowing its circulation beyond the very concentrated circles of transfeminist activism of the early 2000s.

Torres's text focuses on her exploration of *pornoterrorismo* as an artistic practice that is based on performance and poetic reading, where the artist performs dyke practices such as vaginal fisting and squirting. Torres performs on a stage where she projects videos of highly violent acts, such as slaughters, accidents, or natural or human disasters, mixed with pornographic and postpornographic scenes. In addition, the artist—or a helper on occasion—recites her poems live or overlaps audio with them recorded. Besides describing the *pornoterrorista* phenomenon, the book recounts her artistic precedents and offers guidelines of *pornoterrorista* actions. Above all, this text reflects on her personal, artistic, and political philosophy; her opinions of the systematic rules that regulate gender, sex, and sexuality; and includes poems and autobiographical notes. Torres elaborates her narration with a familiar, accessible language for a non-academic audience.

In this article, first, I will show that the dyke practices that Torres stages and that she describes in detail reveal the gender bias that marks the original theorization of the antisocial turn in queer theory, in the manner that two of its most relevant academic figures, Edelman and Bersani, have elaborated it. The antisocial turn in queer theory refers to the idea that the forms of socialization as we know them are organized by heterosexual ideology and reproductive futurity, symbolized by the discursive figure of the Child; queerness, structurally, would be excluded from social life. Edelman established the definitive formulation of this theory in *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (2004), arguing that queer subjects should assume the negativity of homophobic discourses that postulate the queer subject as antisocial, and reject the ideologies of progress and projection to the future that permeate all the sociopolitical spectrum. Love historicizes the appearance of *No Future* as a moment in which the gay man is losing the position of the queer subject. According to Love, Edelman proposes queer negativity, or the rejection of heterosexual futurity, as an ethical answer to homonormativity and homonationalism (quoted in Kahan, 2018, p. 812). Edelman pushes this theory to propose that the queer subject identifies with the death drive, as a limit of social intelligibility, and that they completely reject the politics of hope and the future. The problem is that in some of the more well-known formulations of the antisocial theory, like that of

Bersani (1995/1996, 1987/2009), predecessor and one of the fundamental pillars for Edelman's theory, a specifically gay male anal penetration has been the only basis to identify queerness as the death drive. Torres's dyke practices constitute a new point of departure for the antisocial thesis in queer theory.

Second, I will argue that the violence against heteropatriarchy that permeates *Pornoterrorismo* opens the way for *queer terrorism*, a form of transfeminist negativity that expands what Halberstam calls «antisocial politics» in queer theory (2011, p. 108). Torres's queer terrorism is above all of artistic nature, it belongs in the symbolic realm. Despite this, one can argue that the negative effects that emanate from the *pornoterrorista* actions are related to a terrorism that targets heteropatriarchy. Therefore, I argue that there is an affective connection between Torres's performance with the material effects of terrorism that would be, precisely, that of provoking terror in a heteronormative society. Through the affective violence that is given off through her autobiographical account until the adoption of her artistic name, as well as a detailed analysis of her poem [Kids of Bitches] «Hijxs de puta», I will show how queer terrorism shapes the *pornoterrorista* answer to the attacks of a heteronormative society.

While the field of Hispanic LGBTQ Studies has expanded since the 1990s, most of the efforts devoted to analyzing the production of queer theory in Spain have traditionally dealt with academic circuits. As Pérez (2010) puts it:

[P]ara poder valorar las aportaciones queer dentro del estado español deberíamos examinar no solo las publicaciones sino también y, sobre todo, las prácticas que diferentes grupos activistas vienen desarrollando desde principios de los noventa, y que son herederos de propuestas activistas de los setenta y ochenta, ahora rearticuladas bajo el prisma de lo *queer*.

[In order to assess queer contributions within the Spanish state, we should not just examine the publications but also, and above all, the practices that different activist groups have been carrying out since the early 1990s, which stem from 1970s and 1980s activist endeavors, now rearticulated through the prism of queerness] (p. 146)

In this sense, this article aims to contribute to the study and delimitation of a transfeminist literary corpus written by its protagonists —texts that share

a legitimization of life experience with a broadening, adaptation, or reinterpretation of feminist queer theory, situated in the contemporary Spanish context².

1. THE «PORN» IN *PORNOTERRORISMO*: DEATH DRIVE IN DYKE PRACTICES

In his classic essay «Is the Rectum a Grave?» Bersani (1987/2009) writes about the antisocial qualities of sex between gay men. Written during the AIDS crisis, Bersani's essay attempts to defend the value of sex without trying to redeem it, in a moment when conservative narratives demonized it and the progressive ones tried to sanitize it, praising it as a form of true diversity yet at the same time ignoring the homophobic discourses that flooded the media and public opinion. Bersani especially relies on Freud to accomplish his argument. Following this, Bersani argues that within the phallogocentric frame, sex has been interpreted as a relational practice of domination (in homosexual or heterosexual sex) in which the person that receives the penetration, the submissive person, is «humiliated» and their ego, «shattered» (pp. 24-25). He departs from a problematic analogy where the homosexual passive man is read as a woman (and more specifically, as a prostitute, because of her symbolic legacy of sexual voracity and locus of infections/diseases), given that both are penetrated (p. 18)³. Bersani follows Foucault to argue that, since sex establishes a relationship between subjects, a hierarchy of power is implied and, because of this, the subject that penetrates (generally the man/active one, because of his physical attributes —the penis—) remains

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2. *Pornoterrorismo* serves as a case study of a literary corpus that arises in Spain since the translation and publication of *King Kong Theory* (2007) by the French writer and director Despentes, just a year after its publication in France, and not published in the US until 2010. Much like the influential *King Kong*, these texts combine the production of queer theory with autobiographical elements of their authors and a very personal style. They use accessible language for a non-academic audience and deal with diverse themes concerning gender, sex, and sexuality from a queer feminist perspective. The corpus includes *Manifiesto Puta* (2009) by Espejo, *Devenir perra* (2009a) and *Un zulo propio* (2009b) by Ziga, *El posporno era eso* (2010) by Llopis, *Autopsia de una langosta* (2010) by Torres Sbarbati, and *Pornoterrorismo* (2011) by Torres.
 3. Cvetkovich (2003, p. 301, Footnote 30) points out that Tyler and de Lauretis have denounced the misogyny that is inherent in this comparison by Bersani.

on top of the penetrated (the woman/the feminized man). The symbolic superiority of the dominating subject comes from repressing their desire to be shattered, to receive pleasure, which the woman and the feminized man do not do. This repression and fear of pleasure or *jouissance* experienced by the submission/feminine position upholds the misogynous and homophobic attitudes of heteropatriarchy, according to Bersani. Therefore, identifying with this homophobic vision of sex would be the radical gesture of homosexual men, who shall assume their desire as a fulfillment of the death drive and self-shattering by desiring those who want them dead. Furthermore, with the arrival of the AIDS crisis, the anus is figuratively converted into a tomb, and Bersani affirms that homosexuals should not try to claim anal sex as an expression of diversity but rather assume it as an antisocial, negative practice. Here, in the acceptance of the death drive of homosexual desire, would lie the potential of queer negativity.

The problem with Bersani's argument, and it could be said that it had already happened with Hocquenghem (1974/2009) and is to some extent later replicated by Preciado (2009), is that making relationships between homosexual men the point of departure only emphasizes the symbolic transgression of anal penetration, while any other sexual practices are omitted. According to Cvetkovich, Bersani always has a male subject in mind when he talks about the «humiliation» or «annihilation» of the ego, in a way that ignores the fact that the gender divide is important for the symbolic value of power hierarchies in sexual relations (2003, p. 61). Cvetkovich, for example, takes up Bersani's ideas precisely to question the division between domination and submission from the lesbian experience, focusing on dialectics in sex between women that do not exclude negativity (pp. 62-66). One of the most suggestive explanations that Cvetkovich makes is that the high symbolic charge of anal penetration reveals that culture performs a decisive role to consider it an experience of self-shattering (p. 301, Footnote 27). This idea allows me to question the centrality of anal penetration in self-shattering. In other words, it puts forward the possibility that self-shattering may be achieved through other transgressive practices, that is, highly symbolic sexual practices that threaten the phallogocentric frame.

What must be emphasized of Torres's text, taking advantage of Cvetkovich's explanation about the necessary symbolic load to experience

self-shattering, is how one can read the destruction of the feminine subject through the practices of squirting and vaginal fisting as practices that are, in the words of the author, «especialmente marginadas por su alto nivel de subversión» [especially marginalized for their high level of subversion] (p. 35). This affirmation by Torres serves to reveal, paraphrasing Cvetkovich, the decisive role of the crossroads of the body, mind, and culture in the construction of the sexual experience (p. 301, Footnote 27). It also serves to underline that Bersani takes the woman into account either as a prostitute or as a passive heterosexual woman, but not as a lesbian/dyke. In fact, Bersani's aversion to the inclusion of lesbians can be traced specifically to his discussion about Wittig's (1978/1980, p. 110) affirmation that «lesbians are not women» in *Homos* (1995/1996), which we will see next. If sex between homosexual men and the symbolically *more* transgressive act of anal penetration have been conceived as the starting point in the antisocial turn and an emblem of antirelationality, the practices that Diana Pornoterrorista performs on scene accomplish the same effect: they are capable of disintegrating the subject and experiencing *jouissance*, showing how the gender divide had hidden, once again, the lesbian experience in the phallogocentric myth of origin of the antisocial turn in queer theory.

The characterization of the sexual practices that Torres stages in her performances as dyke practices parts from the joint influence of Wittig (1978/1980) and Preciado (2005). When Wittig affirms that «lesbians are not women» (p. 110), she aims to show that the labels *man* and *woman*, or the gender categories and the sexual difference that upholds them, are always-already heterosexual given that they arose from this frame. A lesbian cannot be a woman since she does not have sexual intercourse with a man: she must be something else. This affirmation allows Wittig to expose compulsory heterosexuality as that which defines the Woman, destroying the possibility that a lesbian can be considered one and forcing us to open new categories. Radical in her approach, Wittig goes beyond questioning the notion of gender, and refers to the body as socially constructed. Both Bersani (1995/1996, p. 45) and Preciado (2005, p. 126) picked up a now well-known anecdote in this regard: in a conference in Vassar College, someone

in the audience asked Wittig if she had a vagina, and she responded «no»⁴. Precisely Bersani's problem with Wittig lies in this polemic affirmation: he cannot understand that she denies sexual difference given that his theoretical framework is constructed upon the identity of the gay man. Bersani's identitarian drifting is incompatible with a queer proposal like Wittig's, whom he does not hesitate to sarcastically re-inscribe as a woman when he, not at all naively, asks himself that if lesbians are not women, «what are they, then?» (p. 43).

In «Devenir bollo-lobo» [Becoming Dyke-Wolf], Preciado (2005) reads Wittig's affirmation and lesbian sex, once it is no longer sex between women, as the deterritorialization of the straight body. He argues that Wittig constructs the lesbian body not out of repetition or performative imitation *à la* Butler, but as monstrous transformation. Therefore, dyke monstrosity arises when questioning the sex-gender system and placing oneself not in its margins, but in a position completely foreign to it and its ontological and corporal categories. Preciado comes out in defense of the Wittigian transgression to prevent us from claiming gay and lesbian identities because, he argues, these identities can normalize a hierarchical order where homosexuality becomes as oppressive as heterosexuality, but in this case departing from cisgendered bodies (pp. 128-31). This contention explains, for example, why Bersani does not have a problem dismissing Wittig's proposal as radical, to then theorize using a psychoanalytical framework with the powerful phallus in its predominant place: a place that, as we know, the penis has always occupied (Preciado, 2001, p. 66). By reinstalling a phallogocentric frame that Bersani insists on not problematizing, he once again leaves female sexuality out of the equation, which in this framework can only be symbolized as a lack.

Following the Wittigian logic, then, we will better understand the multiple reiterations of Torres proclaiming herself a *monster* in *Pornoterrorismo*. The vaginas of lesbians are not vaginas, because penises do not penetrate them: dildos penetrate them, fists penetrate them; and, in moments of sexual excitement, they climax/ejaculate in an exaggerated, scandalous way—ways

4. This rhetorical move potentially debunks trans exclusionary ideas not just in heterosexism but also in certain feminist sectors (the so-called trans-exclusionary radical feminism, TERF) that have tried to define the *woman* based on their genitals.

that are sick and abject. Torres's transfeminist stance aims to establish an alliance between queer and trans* subjects: it is not about defending the vagina as essential to *woman* or *lesbian* identities; rather, Torres's texts and dramatic sexual practices deterritorialize the body of the cis, heterosexual woman that Wittig distinguished herself from as well. Therefore, it is possible to refer to the (non)vagina of the (non)woman, in a way that includes dykes and trans* women: in other words, she that is not considered a cis, heterosexual woman, from whom Wittig's lesbian differentiates herself too. In this regard, Torres herself states that: «[y]a casi nunca digo que soy lesbiana, sería por otra parte, faltar a la verdad. Ni siquiera sé si soy 'mujer' (por lo visto, y según sus normas, atributo clave para poder ser bollo) y la rigidez del binarismo de los géneros me asfixia sobremanera» [now I almost never say that I am a lesbian, it would be on the other hand, straying from the truth. I do not even know if I am a 'woman' (apparently, and according to their rules, a key characteristic to be able to be a dyke) and the rigidity of gender binarism suffocates me greatly] (p. 29).

The rejection of the labels *woman* and *lesbian*, just like the stagnation of heterosexual gender categories, make Torres identify as a *bollera* [dyke] repeatedly throughout the text, a term understood as queer resistance before the assimilationist identity politics that try to erase the differences in favor of other norms. Investing oneself with the dyke identity is to identify with an insult: «Yo me llamo marimacho, bollera, desviada, pervertida, delincuente, blasfema, fea, enferma» [I call myself butch, dyke, deviant, perverted, delinquent, blasphemous, ugly, sick] (p. 19); it is to assume the homophobic discourse of hate and to not deny monstrosity, but to construct existence from there.

At the same time, since dykes do not have vaginas, we can consider that a connection is established with the death drive of the antisocial turn, given that denying the existence of the vagina is, necessarily, rejecting heterosexual futurity. Like the anus, the (non)vagina is a deserted cavity, that in which no seed grows, which does not expel children but segregates fluids — blood, mucous, it climaxes like «un jodido géiser» [a fucking geyser] (Torres 2011/2014, p. 35); a cavity whose symbolic potential of transgression does

not deserve to be simply ignored in favor of the anus, like Bersani does⁵. The (non)vagina, therefore, can also be a tomb: that of the medical discourses that pathologize it, that of the dyke invisibility in the phallogentric heterosexist frame, that of the woman and lesbian homonormative identities, and that of heterosexual reproduction and its future. The two sexual practices that Torres dramatizes and describes in *Pornoterrorismo* are squirting and vaginal fisting. Both of them make clear the transgression of the sex-gender system and the symbolic potential of these dyke practices to identify oneself with the death drive but, this time, outside the phallogentric frame.

The first dyke practice that Torres describes in *Pornoterrorismo* is squirting, a name for the ejaculation of the feminine prostate during orgasm or moments of intense pleasure. The existence of this scarcely researched practice has even been put into question or directly pathologized. The same medical-scientific researchers treat this phenomenon as *urinary incontinence* (loss of urine), despite the ample evidence in literature even since the seventeenth century and other –minor– scientific studies that show the similarities of the feminine and masculine secretion during ejaculation (Korda & Goldstein, 2009, p. 391). One of the reasons for medicine to pathologize squirting is that the feminine prostate oversteps the limit of the sex-gender system, highlighting this practice's queer potential. In other words, this practice allows us to blur the lines that would sharply separate the heteronormative notions of *man* and *woman*, given that traditionally only men have been recognized as having the capacity to ejaculate. Feminist sexologist Quesada (2010, para. 5) underscores such potential when she states that the feminine prostate «es una zona residual. Durante la gestación, todas las personas somos niñas y, a partir de ahí, seguimos desarrollándonos como tales o como niños. Pensamos que los sexos son muy diferentes, pero las diferencias son mínimas» [is a residual zone. During gestation, all people

5. Even though the current reality of assisted reproduction would refute this affirmation that the dyke's (non)vaginas cannot harbor an inseminated embryo, I build this hypothesis based on the overwhelming weight of history, given that a relatively short time ago assisted reproduction did not exist, and these scientific advances are not or have not been within reach for a broad majority of dykes on a global scale. As Edelman would argue, the notions of reproduction and futurity until the twentieth century have been predominantly heterosexual.

are female and, from there, we continue developing as such or as males. We think that the sexes are very different, but the differences are minimal]. The transfeminist circle of Barcelona —and especially Torres, whose book *Coño potens* (2015) is dedicated to this topic— has made great efforts to put this issue on the table, denouncing the lack of information on the subject and divulging their research through blogs, talks, and workshops. These forms of feminist dissemination do not only show the lack of information that there has been until now about female ejaculation but also dispute the pathologizing discourse of medicine that tries to keep a clear separation between genders according to sex. The spectacular nature of female ejaculation that Torres (2011/2014) compares with a «géiser» [geyser] (p. 35), a «tsunami» (p. 37), or a «orgasm por aspersion» [spraying orgasm] (p. 38) to finish convincing the reader that «de pis nada, nena, te corres a chorros, montas un escándalo en la cama, riegas a tu amante como a un geranio» [nothing of piss, babe, you cum buckets, you make a scene in the bed, you water your lover like a geranium] (p. 38), breaks with any notion of traditional feminine sexuality, confirming that her body is not that of a *woman* but rather the scandalous climax turns her, again, into a being unaffiliated with this label. Therefore, we can state that the body of the (non)woman is that which can ejaculate spectacularly without being the body of a male/cis-man, breaking the rigid binarism of the sex-gender system: «Una corrida femenina ya no es solo un acto de placer que se desborda más o menos espectacularmente. Se trata de un acto terrorista» [A feminine climax is no longer just an act of pleasure that overflows more or less spectacularly. It is a terrorist act] (p. 37); a practice, then, that threatens the sex-gender system.

With regards to fisting, Torres explains that it is a sexual practice tied to BDSM (bondage and discipline, dominance and submission, sadism and masochism). She contends that masculine homosexual anal fisting is widely represented, not only culturally in the mainstream pornographic circuits but even in medicine (pp. 45-46, p. 48, Footnote 44). Torres, who refers to vaginal fisting as «lésbico para ser más concreta» [lesbian to be more specific] (p. 47), gives an account of the invisibility that surrounds these dyke practices to contest, on one hand, the homophobic idea that «lo que necesitan [las lesbianas] es un buen pollazo» [what they [the lesbians] need is a good dick] and, on the other hand, the «bollo-femi-nistoides» [dyke-femi-nistoid]

or conservative lesbian position that «entre dos mujeres no puede haber ningún elemento penetrador» [there can be no penetrating element between two women] (p. 48). The main cause of the marginalization of this practice, Torres argues, is that it distances the (non)vagina from reproduction or masculine phallic penetration: «Estos hijos de puta piensan que ese lugar por donde cupieron sus estúpidas cabecitas cuando sus madres les parieron es del todo inofensivo, un agujero dulce, amaestable, suyo. ¡Pues ya no más!» [These sons of bitches think that this place where their stupid little heads fit when their mothers birthed them is entirely inoffensive, a sweet hole, trainable, theirs. Well, no more!] (p. 43).

Vaginal fisting is a dyke practice in that it displaces the centrality of the phallus and the feminine ideal of maternity. In the heterosexual frame, anal penetration would equate to being homosexual, and reproduction is *the* defining characteristic of women. However, the penetration of the vagina with a fist inevitably destroys the possibility to project oneself toward the future. This experience would turn out to be, according to Torres, as pleasing as it is painful: «El orgasmo que se experimenta con un *fisting* supera con muchas creces al que pueda provocar cualquier otra cosa. Es un orgasmo que nace del cuerpo, que estalla dentro como una galaxia, realmente se ven las estrellas, todas las jodidas constelaciones frente a ti» [The orgasm that one experiences with fisting far exceeds that which can be provoked by any other thing. It is an orgasm that is born in the body, that explodes inward like a galaxy, you really see stars, all of the fucking constellations in front of you] (p. 48). The orgasm caused by vaginal fisting makes the subject explode from inside, shattering through *jouissance*. This experience of pleasure turns the dyke body into a force that opposes any existing form of social life, that destroys heteronormative futurity and suffers as much as it rejoices; that assumes its negativity, finally, outside of the phallogentric frame, where the equivalence between the phallus and the penis was never questioned.

2. PORNOTERRORISTA VIOLENCE: QUEER TERRORISM

Torres's *pornoterrorista* performance starts with the adoption of her artistic name. The fusion of porn and terrorism is of a perverse appeal for the author. In the «Manifiesto pornoterrorista» [Pornoterrorista Manifesto], published

for the first time in her blog in 2007, Torres (2011/2014) describes the fusion between both terms as a «bello cadáver» [beautiful corpse] that makes «que se [le] mojen las bragas» [her panties wet] (p. 50). The image of death as a sexual fantasy, or the attraction towards death, is the sediment that lies beneath Torres's artistic work. Her performances generate an excess of representations of violence, death, and sex. They mix the projection of videos of daily television violence, like «niñxs desmembradxs tiradx en el suelo de cualquier calle de Bagdad, gente que llora y que sufre, gente que se mata entre sí, coches descuajeringados en la carretera, desastres 'naturales'» [dis-membered children strewn on the ground of any street in Baghdad, people crying and suffering, people killing each other, mangled cars on the road, «natural» disasters] (p. 74), with others of «*fisting anal...*, *bondage y tortura eléctrica...*, *dildos, buenas folladas, corridas y Belladonna*» [anal fisting..., bondage and electric torture..., dildos, good fucks, cum, and Belladonna] (p. 76), and all of this audiovisual collage is superimposed on a stage where the artist recites her poetry, she is fisted with the help of collaborators, she ejaculates spectacularly, or she makes cuts or perforations on her body.

As we can see, the terrorism that Torres stands for is different from the definitions proposed by national and international security organizations⁶. However, if there is anything on which the terrorism experts seem to agree it is in the slippery and multidimensional aspects of this concept, which makes it difficult to define. The difficulty to define the concept emerges, according to Herman, from the dilemma of «whether terrorism constitutes 'a real, distinctive form of political violence characterized by epistemologically identifiable objective features' or if terrorism is really 'terrorism,' i.e.,

6. To give us an idea of this issue, Herman (2018) emphasizes that if in its beginnings in the eighteenth-century terrorism was considered applied violence by the party in power in France, at the end of that same century its significance had been distorted to come to refer to any mode of violence of greater or lesser magnitude. These brusque semantic turns would be replicated over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries without coming to any solidification, as is clearly exemplified by the fact that international organisms like the League of Nations and subsequently the United Nations could not officially adopt a joint definition. At present in the United States, the discrepancy comes to the point that the State Department, the House of Representatives, the FBI, the Department of Defense, and the CIA employ different definitions of terrorism (Herman, 2018, pp. 1-2).

‘a social construct rather than a brute fact» (p. 3). Given that it seems the definition of the concept swings between the two extremes of a concrete and material meaning, and an empty signifier without essential ontological meaning, some critics have proposed to abandon it as an empirical, analytical category (Herman, 2018, p. 3). It is precisely this ontological imprecision that will allow me to read Torres’s intention of identifying herself as a queer terrorist, given that her terrorist actions move in a realm of the symbolic and representation, in the artistic realm. But more crucially, Torres’s terrorism is intrinsically queer: the target of this violence is heteronormative society, which she ultimately aims to destroy.

Different queer theorists have drawn connections between terrorism and queerness (Puar, 2007/2017; Schotten, 2018). While a State may attribute deviant notions of gender and sexuality to terrorists, these authors argue, it is because their goal is to alienate the terrorists from their own —homosexual or heterosexual— citizens or to justify their own settler project. However, I believe these conceptualizations need to be qualified if we are to grasp Torres’s queer terrorism. In other words, instead of asking «what is queer about the terrorist,» as Puar does, we also need to focus on the question: «what is terrorist about the queer?» (Puar, 2007/2017, p. xxxi). What violence can the queer subject exert on heteropatriarchy? Torres’s goal is to instill queer terror in society by exacerbating cisheteronormative fears and, to do so, she *queers* terrorism by shifting the violence inherent to homophobia, misogyny, and transphobia from the oppressed to the oppressor. Torres first identifies the mechanisms through which cisheteronormative society marginalizes queer subjects and then, plays upon those fears through her poetry and performances. The capitalization of terrorism’s violence carried out by Torres is, therefore, of political nature, which leads me to inscribe her work as a manifestation of transfeminist negativity.

In *The Queer Art of Failure*, Halberstam (2011) borrows Cvetkovich’s (2003) notion of the archive of feelings, to explain his theory of the existence of two archives of queer feelings: one, the camp archive, extracted from the homosexual canon, a «repertoire of formalized and often formulaic responses» to heterosexuality. The gay male archive or camp archive — identifiable, according to Halberstam, in Edelman’s work— would be characterized by responses like «fatigue, ennui, boredom, indifference, ironic

distancing, indirectness, arch dismissal, insincerity and camp» (pp. 109-10). Halberstam considers this combination of affective responses somewhat limited. Thus, he broadened it with a second queer archive, anarchic and uncontrolled, more related with the death drive. This represents, according to Halberstam, a «truly political negativity» that also has to be recognized as strictly queer, and as one that spans darker territories, with practices that are socially considered undesirable or rejected like «to be loud, unruly, impolite, to breed resentment, to bash back, to speak up and out, to disrupt, *assassinate, shock, and annihilate*:» forms where «not only self-shattering ... but other-shattering occurs» (p. 110, emphasis added). Queer terrorism, then, can be considered as a form of transfeminist negativity that expands the archive of antisocial feminism for it actively promotes and capitalizes on exerting symbolic violence against heteropatriarchy.

2.1. A queer terrorist's autobiography

Torres's autobiographical account demonstrates that her desire to exert violence against heteronormative society is not unmotivated. Even though her childhood can be considered as very similar to any prototypical, middle-class Spanish family, the descriptions of her first sexual incursions make clear that her family was rather liberal or at least unconcerned when it comes to Torres's sexual expressions as a child. According to Torres's account, the education she received from her family can be excluded from conventional heteronormative socialization because her parents did not censor behaviors like masturbation or children's sexual games at home (p. 20). The censorship of these behaviors comes through her first incursions in institutions like the school or the healthcare system, as well as in daily interactions with other immediate environments. The first confrontation with the heteronormative social reality, narrated in the form of a fall, left a deep scar on Torres's subjectivity:

Me precipité desde muy alto y me rompí muchas cosas. Nunca me he roto un hueso pero la radiografía de mi alma mostraría muchas fisuras. Incluso hay pedazos de mí que nunca llegaré a recuperar, la caída se encargó de pulverizarlos: mi pureza, mi inocencia, mi amor desmesurado al prójimo, mi generosidad indiscriminada. Mi interior es un jarrón roto que he pegado

torpemente equivocando algunos fragmentos. Un jarrón feo, pero más sólido que su original.

[I fell from really high and I broke a lot of things. I have never broken a bone but the radiography of my soul would show a lot of fractures. There are even parts of me that I will never get to recover, the fall made sure to pulverize them: my purity, my innocence, my disproportionate love for my fellow human being, my indiscriminate generosity. My insides are a broken vase that I awkwardly glued together mistaking some fragments. An ugly vase, but more solid than its original.] (p. 16)

It is interesting that the description that she makes of her fall in the world revolves around the semantic field of destruction, through images like «broken» things, «fractures,» or «pulverize.» Such a move serves to dramatize the depth of the experiences that marked her. The emphasis on the verticality, as on the blow that finally stops the fall and the resulting fracture, marks this event as the origin of her altered subjectivity: the beginning of a series of marginalizing experiences that will deepen as she increasingly became aware of her own sexuality as always-already abject.

Choosing the image of rupture is indicative that there is some type of trauma, which can be easily connected to Cvetkovich's elaboration on the concept (2003)⁷. Trauma, according to Cvetkovich, «serves as a site for exploring the convergence of affect and sexuality as categories of analysis for queer theory» (p. 48), where gay and lesbian studies and queer theory have a lot to offer given that she states, following Judith Butler, that «abjection's role in the formation of both individual and collective identity places trauma at the origins of subject formation» (p. 46). What Torres does by describing her fall is to produce a poetic image of her «queer becoming»: trauma and abjection are central to her subjectivity formation, described as broken and, afterward, reconstructed in pieces, imperfect. In this case, the trauma caused by a fall, as if it were the image of a fallen angel, thrown out of heaven and paradise, and cut off from the supposed Western morality. The resonance of

7. Separating the notion of trauma from pathologization, Cvetkovich argues that it can be understood as a social and cultural discourse that aims to break the separation of the public and private spheres, providing a way to explore the psychological consequences of historical, social, and political events (p. 18).

this image helps us identify her life experience as an Other, but also with the resistance or resilience of knowing herself to be incomprehensible.

Despite the trauma and abjection that Torres experienced as a queer child due to the marginalization of heteronormative society, the radicalization of her performances and her commitment to queer violence found at the core of *pornoterrorismo* stem from another point found further ahead in her autobiography. Torres's investigation on the fusion of porn and terrorism began in 2001, after the attacks that took place in New York changed what was understood as terrorism in the West until then. In Madrid, a few days after the 9/11 events⁸, a group of artists called «Sex Shock Value»⁹ —among which was Torres— coined the word *pornoterrorismo* to designate the erotic gore performances that took place in nightclubs in the capital and that mixed monstrous makeup, spectacles of blood, guts, simulations of fornication, and BDSM games (pp. 67-69). This would be the seed of Torres's subsequent activity in Barcelona, already as a lone wolf *pornoterrorista*, in which she would mix post-pornography, imagery of violence, and live sex.

What motivated her first *pornoterrorista* performance in Barcelona, which took place in the self-managed artistic space of La Escocesa in 2007, was a fundraiser event in support of her friend Patricia Heras, who had been arrested by the police during the so-called 4-F (p. 70, p. 72). 4-F refers to the controversial arrest of Heras and three other people, a scandal that broke out after the release of a documentary called *Ciutat morta* (Artigas & Ortega, 2013), which showed the police manipulation of evidence that took four innocent people to jail after the alleged attack of a policeman during the evacuation of an illegal party in a squatter house in Barcelona, on February 4th, 2006. Patricia Heras, who was Torres's first partner, ended up committing suicide in April 2011 while on parole. Torres sheds with great detail

8. Torres confirms this as follows: «El concepto de 'pornoterrorismo' (aunque no como lo concibo ahora) surgió en uno de nuestros shows, el último, que así se titulaba y que estrenamos apenas unas semanas después del 11-S» (The concept of *pornoterrorismo* (although not like I understand it now) arose in one of our shows, the last one, that was given this title and we premiered it barely a few weeks after 9/11) (p. 69).

9. In reference to the director and artist John Waters' work, *Shock Value* (1995). Its main thesis is that the entertainment industry has bad taste, and that one must have good taste to be able to appreciate it (p. 2).

everything that occurred the night Heras was arrested along with their fatal consequences, from which, she says:

Mis poemas y mis acciones escénicas se radicalizaron. Vivir en una ciudad donde cosas tan terribles pueden suceder con total normalidad hace que una... esté constantemente maquinando pequeñas venganzas... acumulando una rabia muy difícil de aplacar por vías no sangrientas. A mi poesía... le incluí este ingrediente rabioso que mezclado con mis múltiples perversiones quise llamar poesía pornoterrorista.

[My poems and my dramatic actions became radicalized. Living in a city where such terrible things can happen with total normalcy makes one... be constantly plotting little acts of vengeance... accumulating an anger that is very difficult to appease through bloodless means. To my poetry... I added this angry ingredient that mixed with my multiple perversions I decided to call *pornoterrorista* poetry.] (p. 73)

In order to understand the radical violence that stems from *pornoterrorismo* and assess how her performance and her poetry may add to queer negativity, it is necessary that we take into account the violence, pain, resentment, suffering, and mourning that Torres and her friends experienced throughout these events. This is essential to understand not only Torres's commitment to queer terrorism, but also the political trajectory of transfeminism in twenty-first century Barcelona¹⁰.

2.2. PORNOTERRORISTA POETRY

Queer terrorism materializes in Torres's poetry, which mixes, like her artistic name, metaphors of sex and death. The body is the starting point; a body that, as we have seen, is conceived as monstrous within the heteronormative sex-gender-sexuality system: «el enemigo» [the enemy], according to the logic of exclusion and opposition that Torres mobilizes in her text. The radical affective elements that the author adds, like hate and anger, are aimed to destroy it:

10. The monumentality and the trauma of the 4-F events can be traced to this day in the work of several transfeminist activists and other social actors, such as Ziga (2009a), Heras (2014), Huidobro et al. (2016), Garcés (2018), and Morales (2018), among others.

Imprimamos en [nuestro cuerpo] lo bélico. Nuestras corridas son armas, son chorros de ácido corrosivo, nuestros orificios lúbricos y dilatados son barricadas o trampas de arenas movedizas, nuestros penes de carne o de plástico son misiles, nuestros dedos son balas, nuestras lenguas metralletas, nuestras tetas son granadas de mano, toda la extensión de nuestra piel es un sembrado de minas.

[Let's print on [our body] what is warlike. Our orgasms are weapons, they are streams of corrosive acid, our lubricated and dilated orifices are barricades and quicksand traps, our carnal or plastic penises are missiles, our fingers are bullets, our tongues machine guns, our tits are hand grenades, the whole expanse of our skin is a minefield]. (p. 119)

This arsenal of the queer body does not have the goal of creating an alternative utopic world nor constructing an alternate story of redemption. Instead, it follows a nihilistic line of vengeance and destruction of the world as we know it. The poem «Hijxs de puta» [Kids of Bitches] is the one that best captures these feelings of hate, anger, and destruction that the *pornoterrorista* poetry channels. Taking refuge in the dichotomy you/I, the poetic voice constructs the battle scene and describes the fronts from the perspective of those who feel attacked; an enemy that, furthermore, is constructed in a binary way (masculine –*hijos*– in the first half of the poem, and feminine –*hijas*– in the second):

Sois unos hijos de puta,
vosotros que me miráis
desde esas celdas de castigo,
desde esos puestos de trabajo,
desde esos alquileres de mierda,
sois unos hijos de puta.
[You all are some sons of bitches,
you all that look at me
from those cells of punishment
from those places of work,
from those shitty rents,
you all are some sons of bitches.]
(p. 163)

The life of that plural «you» is characterized by an acceptance of the social capitalist order (the job, the rent – in a way, reproductive futurity) that is presented as a jail. The act of looking is what initiates the differentiation

between you/I, marking the *pornoterrorista* as an Other. The repetition of the insult «hijos de puta» [sons of bitches] at the beginning and at the end of the stanza, and that she uses two more times to refer to herself and her lovers, underscores the resentment that impregnates the poem. It is interesting that the title of the poem is precisely an insult whose weight lies in the stigmatization of prostitutes; however, given the absence of intention to redeem anyone in this poem, it cannot be read as a true contradiction. The poetic voice does not fight against this nor any form of marginalization. Instead, it assumes the gaze that marks her as an Other like that which defines her queer becoming: «Me he convertido en un monstruo y vengo aquí / para convencerlos de mi inmundicia» [I have become a monster and I come here / to convince you all of my filth]. From her position, she affirms that she does not feel neither «lástima» [shame], «piedad» [pity], «amor» [love], nor «consuelo» [solace] for others; only «una pizca de odio y otra de deseo» [a pinch of hate and another of desire]. This trace of desire does not become hope, given that sex is not a redemptive element: «Que os odie no quiere decir que no pueda follaros» [That I hate you doesn't mean I can't fuck you] (p. 163). From this queer positioning we discover the desolate scene that her poetry paints:

El cambio climático me importa una mierda,
 las matanzas, el hambre, las especies en peligro de
 extinción,
 toda injusticia que no me salpique,
 toda maldad que no lleve mi nombre,
 me resbala.
 [I don't give a shit about climate change,
 the killings, the hunger, the endangered species,
 all the injustice that doesn't splash me
 all the wickedness that doesn't bear my name,
 I don't give a fuck.] (p. 163)

Even though she recognizes and names the social and ecological injustice that surrounds her, the *pornoterrorista* refuses to participate in a discourse in which the queer figure has come to be like a salvation for the others or reconstruct any form of social tie. The *pornoterrorista*, with her body turned into a weapon of destruction, refuses any form of social or emotional connection with her surroundings and becomes an antisocial element that

serves to draw the limits of the social world as we know it. Without feeling neither the necessity or the ethical or moral obligation to create something new, she identifies herself with the impulse of destruction that drives her: «Perdí el miedo al vacío y a la muerte / y no quiero que ninguna hija de puta me rescate» [I lost the fear of emptiness and death / and I don't want any son of a bitch to rescue me] (p. 164). Torres makes her queer subject antisocial, at times solipsistic and dismissive of the future yet definitely political: this is the ultimate manifestation of queer terrorism. And even though, as Halberstam recognizes, the easiest position for queer theorists would be to ignore or reject this archive of radical negativity, this is made impossible for a queer artist that openly invokes it since the moment she decided to identify herself as a *pornoterrorista*¹¹.

3. CONCLUSION

In her text, Torres elaborates a critical discourse based on the concept of *pornoterrorismo* that pushes the limits of queer negativity in its bid for symbolically perpetrating violence against heteropatriarchy. *Pornoterrorismo*, as a manifestation of political art, is developed by a subject whose queer becoming is narrated through the image of a fractured self. Departing from an autobiographical account where the subject is marginalized and labeled as an Other, Torres reveals her intention and means to destroy such a system. She achieves this through dyke practices, in particular squirting and vaginal fisting, which become key elements in order to resist reproductive futurity: squirting blurs the limits of the sex-gender system, while vaginal fisting displaces the centrality of the phallus/penis and disintegrates the ideal of feminine maternity. Finally, the *pornoterrorista* poetry lays bare an apocalyptic scenario that results from the conception of sexuality as an arm to be wielded in a war against heteropatriarchy, where the queer subject refuses any existing form of sociality. The radical negative affects upon

11. Aguado, who recently published *Sexualidades disidentes: Un acercamiento filmico desde la prostitución y la pornografía*, manifestly ignores and, in my view, misunderstands the potential of queer negativity in Torres's work when he affirms that her actions and artistic proposals do not [dwell on destructive nihilism]: «regodearse en el nihilismo destructivo» (2019, p. 257).

which *pornoterrorismo* rests constitute a reminder of the violence exerted on queer bodies, and also a despaired response that offers no hope for the future to come.

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