

## Take these tits

*Breast ironing* is a horrifying practice still in use in some regions of Africa, for example in Cameroon. Adult women in the family tool up with red hot old irons, spatulas, stones and shells to destroy the breasts of young girls. It is used to reduce their sexual appeal to keep them from rape and early pregnancy and save the honor of the group. In some regions, as in the Douala area, it happens to more than half the girls, but if you are lucky they will settle for a tight bandage (*binding*).

In the West, binding is the step before *top surgery*, surgical removal of the breasts: the trans association Mermaids has distributed free binders in quantity (possibly accompanied by rubber penises to simulate the swelling of male genitalia). Honor is not involved here; something else is at stake.

Search top surgery and you'll see hundreds of shirtless teenage girls, shaved hair, triumphant smiles and the typical double scar, stitched or tattooed nipples on their new flat-as-a-board chests. You will also see doctors displaying jars of sanitized formaldehyde breast tissue: one Miami surgeon boasts of cutting off 40 pairs of breasts a week, or more accurately, "erasing boobs."

Actor Elliot Page formerly Ellen is the queen of no-tits, her torso perfected by a remarkable 6-pack probably made of silicone.

Most top surgeries are performed in the United States, where breast removal is big business and children's hospitals perform mastectomies on girls as young as 13. No minimum age is necessary, explains Los Angeles pediatrician Johanna Olson-Kennedy, because if a patient regrets it she can always "get breasts later."

According to a recent study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, 48,019 Americans, including minors, underwent "Gender Affirmation Surgery" (GAS) between 2016 and 2019. In 6 out of 10 cases, these are top surgeries (56.6 percent, especially among the youngest: 7.7 percent of those operated on are between 12 and 18 years old, and double mastectomy leads the ranking in this age group). This is followed by genital reconstruction (35.1 percent) and facial and cosmetic procedures (13.9 percent). Genital GAS primarily involves adult patients, but 11 percent of these definitive surgeries were performed on girls aged 12 to 18 years, thus also on minors.

Most national legislation no longer calls for "major" surgery to recognize gender identity, and the practice is somewhat on the decline. Males keep their jewels, and FtM (female-born) trans women also keep their uterus and ovaries so as not to deprive themselves of the possibility of bearing children, naming themselves "fathers" at the time of childbirth: to call themselves mothers would mess up their plans and bring them back to that "burning house"-the maternal destiny-from which they hastily fled.

Another study from Vanderbilt University notes that in 2019 alone, 489 U.S. girls between the ages of 12 and 17 (average age 16) underwent top surgery. "Transgender hysteria is much higher in 2023," notes The National Review commenting on the news, "which means the number of minors going under the knife is likely to be much higher. A frightening number of children are being surgically transitioned (...) when studies show that gender confusion in children and adolescents is often transient and detransition is on the rise."

Yet, The National Review concludes, instead of "curbing transgender surgeries and puberty blocking in minors as much of Western Europe is doing, the study's authors want more doctors performing these procedures, and this at a time when there is a shortage of doctors in general across the country."

According to research firm Global Market Insights, the sex reassignment surgery industry made \$623 million in 2022 and given "the increasing prevalence of gender dysphoria," the outlook is to reach \$2 billion by 2032. That's just for surgery, then there's the induced business: cosmetic surgeries, lifelong drugs, insurance, and so on. Global Market Insights is confidently counting on the "introduction of new government policies" and gives the example of the trans law in Spain, a model for the photocopy law recently passed in Germany.

Business is not everything, but the market hardly lies, intercepting current desires to make them off-the-shelf products. What is the desire here?

In an article in the Guardian, no-titty D'Lane Compton says that "the weight that has been removed from me with top surgery goes well beyond the 4½ pounds of my breasts." And that at work "it's like I have a new superpower: the first time I say no I get heard. I rarely have to ask for anything twice. The language in the e-mails I get is more deferential than before. Since I have made a visible transition there is less struggle. My interactions are no longer as difficult. Things have become easier at work. I am making more money. I ask myself, is this *male privilege*?" "I wasn't so clear that I wanted to be a boy," testifies one detransitioner, "I just know I didn't want to be a girl."

We all know what it is: you sprout boobs and suddenly here you are forcibly slipped into the genealogy of mothers, a tumultuous transition you don't govern. The illusion of participating in the evil privilege fades along with your infant body. You try desperately to go back, or at least to move forward in another way. Judith Halberstam (*Female Masculinity*) says it well: "In female adolescence, the crisis of having to grow up as a girl in a male-dominated society manifests itself." One has to be female to understand.

We, the boomers and neighbors, have made do with equality, emancipation, symbolic androgyny: a kind of political dysphoria.

Anorexics carry on the work: here they act directly on the body, which disembodies itself, loses its feminine forms, tries to resist nature's betrayal and backtrack by remaining neutral and non-maternal.

The heartbreaking happiness of the titless female soldiers is the last figure in the self-misogynistic phenomenology. Here male loyalty comes to perfection. They love women but don't try to call them lesbians: they are straight males, lesbian disgusts them. So many of them were anorexic before hormones and surgery, the double scar they earned on the battlefield where the female-maternal body got the worst of it.

It's the same battleground with as many of the transhuman perils: surrogate wombs, PMA, extracorporeal pregnancies, creation of pseudo-ovocytes from stem cells. An ongoing update of expulsion-abjection techniques and domination of the mother's body. The no-tits militate here. Desperate parents try to stall and invoke psychological therapies, but the probable road to salvation is all political. It is bringing being a woman-and therefore being able to be a mother-back to the center of human civilization, where it was meant to be if things had not gone wrong. It is gratitude for the one who brought you into the world. It is "the maternal model of good authority" (Marcel Gauchet). It is discovering, accepting and affirming "the unspeakable good fortune of being born a woman" (Luisa Muraro), that female privilege which the queer front significantly polemicizes.

This is what the world needs, not just girls. It needs to be said, and laughed at, and laughed at.

MARINA TERRAGNI