

The reading

No need to gasp, breath loud, say anything.

One must be committed to radical aesthetics to accept radical politics—and this sense of commitment produces relatively closed communities united by an identical project, by an identical vision, by an identical historical goal. The way of radical art and politics does not take us from closed premodern communities to open societies and markets. Rather, it takes us from relatively open societies to closed communities based on common commitments.

She kept reading while her fingers were getting wet, wondering whether it was just her or all women like to read whilst they masturbate.

Rather, it takes us from relatively open societies to closed communities based on common commitments.

She had to read it again. She got distracted. It was because of that shiver along her tights, or perhaps for her mind running wild on the social implications of masturbation. To be honest, as a student she often had to read the same sentence again and again as her thoughts were getting stuck in something else.

She had never spoken with anyone about masturbation. But she had the feeling that men's self-eroticism was somehow more accepted. Socially accepted. Was masturbation the ultimate feminist statement? Bullshit.

She'd rather have kept reading.

The Communist community was in many ways much more radically modern in its rejection of the past than the countries of the West. And this community was closed not because of the stability of its traditions but because of the radicality of its projects. And that means: the post-Communist subject travels the same route as described by the dominating discourse of cultural studies—but he or she travels this route in the opposite direction, not from the past to the future, but from the future to the past; from the end of history, from posthistorical, postapocalyptic time, back to historical time. Post-Communist life is life lived backward, a movement against the flow of time.

She had to stop reading again to concentrate on her body. Her legs were getting warmer. She could feel her clitoris becoming harder and a delicate line of pleasure going down to her feet and inside her stomach. Self-eroticism was a way to explore her physicality the most honestly possible. You don't really know what is going on down there when a man is on you.

She had to reply to an email. Just some work shit. Her hand was still there, lazily rubbing her hair.

Back on radical philosophy.

A good example of the mirror effect—the East reflecting Western expectations of “otherness” and confirming them by artificially simulating its cultural identity—is the reshaping of Moscow's architecture that took place almost immediately after the demise of the Soviet Union.

It started pulsing and the pleasure went down to her toes. There was a weird satisfaction in reading Marxist art theory whilst masturbating. Was it normal? What is normal? God, this preoccupation about social acceptability is a cancer.

It didn't really matter whether she could fuck with a man quite often or not. Self-eroticism was a way to express a personal rebellion towards male gaze – or just any sexualised gaze – on women. Her mind went to Sanja Iveković masturbating on her balcony in 1979 during president Tito's parade and her political use of her body. That artist was sick.

Another email to reply.

She read once that most of the children experience self-eroticism without realising it. Digging back into her recollections she saw herself keeping a finger inside a couple of times whilst she was reading Roald Dahl, as a ten years old girl with no clue of sex. And enjoying it. Reading. Why did she have to multitask at all times? Is it again that horrendous sense of guilt related to pure pleasure – pleasure not even justified by a contact with another human being?

Perhaps reading was just for the pleasure of mind. She didn't really need any erotic fantasy. The mere idea of being sexually excited without the urgency to show it to anyone involved in the practice was quite pleasant. She could easily get distracted without feeling guilty. She could think about her shit whilst she was aroused.

The first time she touched her body with a deliberate intention of self excitement was just one week before. Prior that day, she would have occasionally touched her genitals, but carefully avoided to get herself sexually excited.

Guilt.

Refuse.

Repulsion.

She kept exploring her body, understanding its texture.

All the images in history of art depicting female self-eroticism she could think of were representations of male fantasies. She suddenly remembered some drawings by a female artist she saw at the Freud Museum months before.

Well. Another male theorist talking shit about people's impulses.

Was the sense of guilt a common feeling shared by women through social conditioning, stereotypes and conservative thinking? Masturbation was still a moral taboo.

Sense of shame.

Female masturbation seemed not to even exist in public consciousness. Women don't physically need it. No. No. They should not.

They can avoid orgasm.

They should.

Should.

Should.

The words kept pulsing in her head in sync with her vagina's pulsations.

She texted her boyfriend back.

And pushed three fingers up.

Radical political projects have almost no chance today of being accepted by the public because they do not correlate with the dominant aesthetic sensibility.

It wasn't about masturbation in itself in the end. It was about women's right to pleasure for the sake of it, with no guilt, no hiding, no sexy underwear, no demureness. It was about the social image of women sexual and mental independence.

Sex, abortion, genitals, pubic hair, armpit hair, legs hair, hair in general felt all old-fashioned at once.

She felt dizzy. And continued. Reading.