



Performing the techno-self: Paul B. Preciado's *Testo Junkie* as a twenty-first century feminist narrative

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journals.sagepub.com/home/frc**Leah E. Wilson**

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Abstract

This article examines Paul B. Preciado's *Testo Junkie* as portraying the need for a postpornographic trans* feminism that contests homonormative queer and feminist responses to LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual) individuals in neoliberal French and Francophone societies during the rise of far-right anti-gender movements. Interrogating Preciado's autotheory text, which questions what gendered performance entails in the pharmacopornographic era, allows for a consideration of the author's bodily subjectivity and how he represents material-discursive practices to theorise his techno-identity. The article argues that Preciado highlights his sexual and gendered performance to assert a trans* identity that rebels against classification. Unveiling the multiplicity of gendered and sexual experiences that counter Western hegemonic binary categorisations, Preciado shows readers that through his material representation, he controls his own subjectivity to centre possibility with postpornographic feminist performance, expanding what it means to be a feminist subject in the twenty-first century.

Keywords

autotheory, identity, performance, postpornography, queer, trans, transnational feminism

Since Paul B. Preciado's initial involvement and collaboration with Sam Bourcier's Zoo seminars in 1999 and the publication of his *Countersexual Manifesto* in 2000,¹ his work has significantly influenced French queer theory and global postpornographic feminism in the twenty-first century (Lavigne, 2014: 65; Preciado, 2018b: 12–13; Stüttgen, 2009: 11).² Preciado, a Spanish trans* feminist philosopher who primarily lives in Paris, is prominently known for his theories of gender and sexual politics (MIT Press, 2020). Inspired by American queer theorists and sex-positive feminist movements, Preciado's generation of French feminists, such as Bourcier, Virginie Despentes, Émilie Jouvét, and Wendy Delorme, incorporate American sex-positive theories of

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performativity and sexuality to develop a French queer theory, which, as Bourcier notes, designed “‘In your face” and affirmative postidentitarian queer identities’, such as ‘les trans, les pédés, les gouines’, and used the ‘deployment of sex, genders, hyper-reflexivity and hyperconstructivism as subcultural skills in identity making’ to react to French universalism and reject notions of a white, male, heterosexual identity as the ideal French identity (Bourcier, 2011: 97; Despentès, 2009; Preciado, 2018b: 13; Schaal, 2012: 115; Jouvét, 2011). The French adaption of queer established new cultural productions and participated in the expansion of postpornographic feminism. Attending to bodily performance and pornographic aesthetics, postpornographic feminism denaturalises heteronormativity and heterosexual practices to destabilise gender and sexual identity categories (Bourcier, 2005: 378–379; Stüttgen, 2009: 10). Preciado’s (2013) autotheoretical ‘body-text’, *Testo Junkie*, uses his embodiment to generate a theory of subjectivity and builds from the postpornographic ‘countersexual’ practices and concepts of his *Countersexual Manifesto* to document the fashioning of his own technogender subjectivity through bootlegged testosterone (p. 11).³ Focusing on his bodily performance as a sexual subject, Preciado performs his techno-self while charting the development of our current pharmacopornographic era and offers a twenty-first century narrative of subjectivity.

In *Testo Junkie*, Preciado illustrates the crafting and performance of his non-binary, fluid, and prosthetic gender by documenting his body as a sexual subject. Inventing his own identity and disidentifying with Western categorisations of binary gender, Preciado (2013) proposes ways to subvert the pharmacopornographic regime by highlighting the creation of his ‘technogender’, or the way his gendered subjectivity is produced through mediatic, techno, and medical techniques to craft his gender expression (pp. 110, 128). Featuring Preciado’s application of his technogender through prosthetics like testosterone and dildos, *Testo Junkie* demonstrates how identity is organised into marketable categories that are particularly discriminating against people, such as Preciado, who do not (or do not desire) to experience their gender and/or sexuality along the male/female, heterosexual/homosexual binaries. Thus, Preciado’s work anticipates trans* gender subjectivity, explained by Jack Halberstam in his 2018 work, *Trans*: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender Variability*, in which trans* is a fluid identity that refuses to ‘situate transition in relation to a destination, a final form, a specific shape, or an established configuration of desire and identity . . . and makes trans* people the authors of their own categorizations’ (p. 4). The text also envisions feminisms, such as xenofeminism, coined by the collective Laboria Cuboniks and outlined in Helen Hester’s (2018) *Xenofeminism*, which calls for the ‘recognition of innumerable genders’ and stresses the importance of sharing medical knowledge and technology so that women, trans*, and other marginalised people can make their own subjectivities (p. 2). Indeed, Preciado and his self-experiment are referenced in both works, and, as I will argue, *Testo Junkie* reveals how our techno-subjectivities have manifested and ushers in ways to undermine these new forms of pharmacopornographic regulation in the twenty-first century (Halberstam, 2018: 29–30; Hester, 2018: 85–88). Understanding how technogender is created in the pharmacopornographic era leads to possibilities of rejecting Western discursive categorisations and forms of control in a late-capitalist global economy that thrives on the production of identity categories.

As references in Halberstam’s *Trans** and Hester’s *Xenofeminism* attest, Preciado’s trans* feminism has increasingly shaped Anglophone scholars in the 2010s. Indeed, with *Testo Junkie*’s 2013 translation into English, Preciado’s postpornographic conceptions of gender and sexuality reach wider audiences, allowing more possibilities for subversion and necessitating scholarly attention. I draw from scholars who critique *Testo Junkie* in English such as Elliot Evans, who explains Preciado’s discussion of technogender as a documentation of a feminist archive that calls for feminist theory that can be embodied, and Margaret G. Frohlich, who argues that Preciado’s text centres disidentification to problematise the association of visibility with gender and sexuality

(Evans, 2018: 288–290; Frohlich, 2010: 123). I extend Frohlich’s study of how Preciado troubles identity assumptions by disrupting the subject/object binary and Evans’s study of Preciado’s feminism to argue that Preciado’s attention to the body as a subject/object offers ways to resist the depoliticisation of feminist and queer movements which are urgently needed during a rise of far-right extremism and anti-gender movements in twenty-first century Europe (Perreau, 2016: 1–2; Stambolis-Ruhstorfer and Tricou, 2018: 81–84). Moreover, I contend that an analysis in English further supports Preciado’s (trans*)national influence on Anglophone feminist movements, which exemplifies the significance of Francophone-Anglophone transnational feminisms in our globalised world.

In this article, I examine Preciado’s text as portraying the need for a postpornographic trans* feminism that contests homonormative queer and feminist responses to LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual) individuals in neoliberal French society. I then explain Preciado’s concepts of technogender and the pharmacopornographic era to preface how his body-text and formation of a techno-self emerge within a postpornographic context. Next, I interrogate Preciado’s body-text that questions what gendered performance entails in the pharmacopornographic era by considering his bodily subjectivity and how he represents material-discursive practices to theorise his techno-identity. I argue that Preciado highlights his sexual and gendered performance to assert a trans* identity that rebels against classification. Unveiling the multiplicity of gendered and sexual experiences that counter Western hegemonic binary categorisations, Preciado shows readers that through his material representation he controls his own subjectivity to centre possibility with postpornographic feminist performance, expanding what it means to be a feminist subject in the twenty-first century.

Resisting far-right anti-gender movements with postpornographic trans* feminism

Preciado presents his body-text as a necessary feminist revolution that challenges the pharmacopornographic era and Western liberal feminisms. Throughout his body-text, Preciado (2013) critiques the ways in which liberal feminisms ignore the pharmacopornographic regime’s construction and reinforcement of gender differences to promote theories of social constructionism that ignore the body’s materiality (pp. 106, 231). His position as a testosterone-bootlegger predicates that he confronts this type of feminism and begins a revolution, as he writes, ‘I have no other alternative but to revise my classics, to subject those theories to the shock that was provoked in me by the practice of taking testosterone’ (Preciado, 2013: 22). Amending his theories to include notions of bodies as constructed material-discursive phenomena that defy easy categorisation, Preciado proposes a vision of feminism that counters homonormative feminist and queer movements that demobilise radical feminist and queer politics.

Conversations regarding homonormativity often focus on an American context; however, Francesca Ammaturo (2014) notes that homonormativity has also emerged in Europe to dilute more radical politics through a neoliberal push towards marriage equality (pp. 176–177).⁴ Bourcier (2018) perceives this advent as well, lamenting that gays and lesbians have chosen to integrate into marriage ‘en échange d’un effacement de leurs expériences et de leurs spécificités’, signalling how marriage equality symbolises the LGBTQIA+ political turn towards erasing the potentiality of queer lives to exist outside of heteronormative institutions and life markers (p. 658). Likewise, Maxime Cervulle (2008) observes homonormative moves in French gay activism, remarking that foundational groups such as FHAR (Front homosexuel d’action révolutionnaire) had, beginning in the 1970s, centred on a ‘universal homosexuality’ that ‘rests obviously on Enlightenment rhetoric, a kind of normalization project in and of itself inasmuch as it erases the differences among

homosexuals' (p. 174). Normalising LGBTQIA+ sexualities, the push for inclusion into institutions like marriage and the erasure of differences other than that of a common minoritised sexuality temper queer and feminist politics into single-issue activisms and reinforce dominant Western conceptions of identity (Cohen, 1997: 441; Spade, 2015: 86–89). Preciado's body-text, as an experiment in disturbing these rigid categories, contests state-sanctioned, homonormative feminist and queer politics.

Yet, far-right anti-gender groups, such as *La Manif Pour Tous*, have an increasing presence in France, protesting issues such as same-sex marriage and adoption for same-sex couples since the 2010s, and conservative and Catholic groups have reacted against feminist and queer movements more generally in this period, conveying the significance of securing basic rights and equality for marginalised LGBTQIA+ communities and women (Perreau, 2016: 11; Stambolis-Ruhstorfer and Tricou, 2018: 79–82). Indeed, although marriage for all was legalised in France in 2013, other barriers remain, particularly for single women and lesbians as well as trans* people, as the former only received legal access to Medically Assisted Procreation (MAP) in January 2020 under the provision that MAP is not financed by social security, and the latter must have their gender declared before a judge who reviews 'sufficient evidence' before legally allowing a person to change their gender status (Perreau, 2016: 5; Rouquette, 2020).⁵ Although anti-gender movements have appeared throughout Europe and spring from the notion of an invasive 'gender ideology', signified by feminist and LGBTQIA+ visibility, Bruno Perreau deliberates that French anti-gender movements emerge from the context of a France that still has 'a mode of thought based on a reification of the difference between the sexes' which 'continues to function as a political totem in France' (Paternotte and Kuhar, 2018: 2; Perreau, 2016: 2, 6). In his book, Perreau investigates how anti-gender movements are motivated by the belief that queer theory and feminism come from the United States, and thus the movements against queer and feminist activisms ostensibly maintain French identity and citizenship. While Perreau's work disproves this assumption by illustrating how entangled American and French gender theories are, his claims nevertheless exhibit how far-right politics in France preserve the notion of sexual difference to uphold the seemingly universal French identity that foreigners appear to threaten (Perreau, 2016: 9–11). Indeed, the Front national/Rassemblement national's (FN/RN) Marine Le Pen appealed to French LGBTQIA+ communities in 2015 by emphasising French universal identity, and over 30% of married lesbians and gays voted for the FN/RN, which is aligned with groups such as *La Manif Pour Tous* (Rivas, 2016: 187–188). Preciado's body-text, which melds American and French feminisms to portray a material-discursive, postpornographic trans* feminism, upsets gender binaries and proves that Western discursive identity categories are fictions to unsettle assumptions about a universal French identity that homonationalist politics endorse. Disidentification, Preciado establishes, provides a valuable framework to critique false assumptions that French identity is under attack by queers, feminists, and immigrants. Destabilising his own identity through the performance of his technogender and exemplifying that the genders of others are also fabrications, Preciado suggests the possibilities any one individual has to disidentify with their assumed gendered and sexual categories, muddying the perceived naturalness of sexual difference that drives anti-gender movements.

Technogender in the pharmacopornographic era

Preciado's text, which documents his testosterone use as he begins his relationship with French writer Virginie Despentes, catalogues the genealogy of our current pharmacopornographic era that emerges from bio, medical, pharmaceutical, pornographic, and media technologies to regulate and produce idealised genders. The pharmacopornographic period, Preciado (2013) explains, is an era of a 'new kind of hot, psychotropic, punk capitalism' that refers to the 'processes of biomolecular

(pharmaco) and semiotic-technical (pornographic) government of sexual subjectivity – of which “the Pill” and *Playboy* are two paradigmatic offspring’ (pp. 33–34). The development of the pharmacopornographic era depends upon the economic model of the pornography trade. As Preciado (2013) explains, most Internet industries have evolved to follow the ‘masturbatory logic of pornographic consumption’, leading him to claim that the ‘raw materials of today’s production process are excitation, erection, ejaculation, and pleasure and feelings of self-satisfaction, omnipotent control, and total destruction’ (p. 39). In the pharmacopornographic era, the driving force of manufacturing and consumption is *potentia gaudendi* or ‘orgasmic force’ that is ‘the (real or virtual) strength of a body’s (total) excitation’ which has no gender: ‘it is neither male nor female, neither human nor animal . . . and creates no boundary between heterosexuality and homosexuality or between object and subject’ (Preciado, 2013: 41–42). The pharmacopornographic regime implodes boundaries between the object and subject and Preciado reveals that, by regulating *potentia gaudendi*, this era produces ‘technogender’, in which all genders, cis and trans*, are manufactured through mediatic, techno, and medical interventions. Using his body as an experiment to exemplify how technogender is generated, we see how Preciado forms his subjectivity through attention to his material body’s transition. Highlighting his body in his solitary recordings as well as in his sexual interactions with Despentés, Preciado exposes how the pharmacopornographic era engenders sexuality as well as how a postpornographic sexuality refuses Western categorisations and the hegemony of heteronormative sexuality.

Building upon the postpornographic construction of a resistant identity which denaturalises Western discursive categories, Preciado’s chronicling of his own technogender’s design illuminates how gender and sexuality are embodied in the twenty-first century (Evans, 2018: 289–290). Describing the way ‘photographic, biotechnological, surgical, pharmacological, cinematographic, or cybernetic techniques come to construct the materiality of the sexes performatively’, Preciado (2013) explains that gendered subjectivity is tied to state categorisations and administrations of gender, sexuality, and race, and depend upon visual signifiers (pp. 102, 110, 128). Significantly, through the neoliberal ideals of individuality and privatisation, this era privatises certain body parts (such as the nose) but maintains that one’s gender is public domain, proven through the classification of rhinoplasty as a cosmetic surgery and phalloplasty as a gender-affirmative operation (Preciado, 2013: 116). Detailing the emergence of the pharmacopornographic and divulging how this era employs drugs and technology to fabricate idealised technogenders, Preciado indicates how capitalist Western societies regulate the creation of genders and sexualities to exploit each living body. His consumption of testosterone and documentation of unauthorised hormone administration disclose how Western nations such as France, Spain, and the United States regulate genders not just of trans* individuals who must be diagnosed as mentally ill to receive hormone therapy, but also of cisgender women who use hormonal birth control and cisgender men who take Viagra (Preciado, 2013: 52–54). Exposing the privatisation of certain body parts and medical practices and the public regulation of gender production, Preciado uncovers how the neoliberal state governs gender as a means of surveillance and control. Bootlegging testosterone to avoid state diagnosis and administration of gender, he moulds an identity that is self-regulated and transitory, offering ways of conceiving identity in this new unbridled period.

The techno-self in autotheoretical performance: documenting the material-discursive body

Transnational feminist scholars such as Rosi Braidotti and Chandra Talpade Mohanty advance that the late-capitalist commodification system works as a ‘difference engine’ that quickly forms and absorbs identities (Braidotti, 2011: 17; Mohanty, 2017: 416). As a reaction to the absorption and

commodification of identities, theorists such as Halberstam (2018) posit that queer and trans* identities can avoid commodification by insisting on multiplicity and instability (pp. 135–136). We see the becoming, shifting, and transitory subject formed through discursive, social constructions but ultimately bound to material bodies. As Karen Barad (2008) writes, ‘Discursive practices and material phenomena do not stand in a relationship of externality to one another; rather, the material and the discursive are mutually implicated in the dynamics of intra-activity’ (p. 140). This entanglement is important to address because it is through this intertwining of subjects/objects and discursive/material practices that Barad (2008) concludes that all bodies come to matter as ‘material-discursive phenomena’ (p. 141). Whereas Sophie A. Jones (2018) positions Preciado’s work as multi-genre rather than blended genre, I am particularly interested in the intermingled, autotheoretical aspect of the body-text (p. 2). Examining his subjectivity which contests easy categorisation in his body-essay, we gain a greater understanding of how Preciado articulates his techno-self as both subject and object, as an agent that can act and is acted upon. Using a genre-blurring narrative that incorporates theory and memoir to explain his positionality as a subject whose identity changes by the way it is acted upon on the material level – such as Preciado’s application of testosterone – the author features not only the agency he has over his subjectivity but also how his body-experiment spawns uncertainty and possibility.

Preciado’s autotheory reflects the agency and lack of control he has over his body in how it is pieced together through citations, theoretical reflections, and memoir and inscribes itself within feminist cultural production that represents identities and experiences that are not otherwise considered. As Lauren Fournier (2018) explains, in autotheory, readers experience ‘modes of production that do not easily fit in to preexisting categories of genre or feminism, in a manner not unlike earlier feminist practices that experimented with the creation of new modes of writing and theorizing’ (p. 646). Autotheory writers, such as Preciado, utilise their embodiment to generate philosophy, and Preciado particularly underscores his bodily representation as both subject and object (Fournier, 2018: 646). In *Testo Junkie*, the reader is exposed to a trans* body that fashions subjectivity by obscuring state administration of gender and challenges categories of man/woman or subject/object, posing generative conceptions of identity. Preciado (2013) establishes his text as an autotheory of his transitioning body as he introduces the work, explaining his text as ‘A body-essay . . . If things must be pushed to the extreme, this is a somato-political fiction, a theory of the self, or self-theory’ (p. 11). In his narrative, Preciado conceptualises his identity in a way that, Frohlich (2010) explains, ‘counters the traditional subjective/objective binary and reflects feminist concerns regarding the political value of personal experience in structures of knowledge’ (p. 124). Demonstrating his body’s materiality through his physical (and mental) changes, Preciado invents understandings of the feminist subject that unsettle binary thinking and categorisation.

Preciado begins his body-essay by documenting the ways he objectifies himself through recording private performances and uploading videos of his bootlegged testosterone application to the Internet to share gender insubordination with others. For the camera in a performance dedicated to his recently deceased friend, writer Guillaume Dustan, he shaves his head and with the sheared hair makes a moustache before applying testosterone gel bought on the Internet. He then straps on a dildo and penetrates himself for the camera. Preciado (2013) puts this film away as a private document, but through the performance, we see how he reduces himself to his material body and uses that body as a postpornographic artform which exhibits his technogender (pp. 17–19). Emphasising how he objectifies his body through the application of his gender, Preciado discusses uploading videos of his performance to the web, where ‘transgender, mutating bodies all over the planet are exchanging techniques and know-how. On this audiovisual network, my face is immaterial . . . Only the strict relationship between my body and the substance is a cult object, an object of surveillance’ (Preciado, 2013: 21). However, it is through the objectification of his

material body that we understand how he designs and claims his own subjectivity. As Frohlich (2010) elucidates, Preciado's portrayal of 'manipulating visual apparatuses, framing [his] body and identity is part of a driving motive of the text: the destabilization of imposed limits on subjectivity and the turning of the previously objectified into subjects of their own representation' (p. 130). Underlining his body and identity as objects of consumption, Preciado makes his own depiction of his subjectivity, stressing the way he controls his objectification by rendering himself on camera and in how he constructs his body and persona through the addition of testosterone, dildos, and moustache. Thus, Preciado displays how he crafts his technogender beyond the state's control and claims his own representation through the intra-action between his material body and his discursive performance. Managing his representation and using his body as an experiment, Preciado (2013) shows readers the emergence of political possibility through autotheory, as he writes, 'As a body – and this is the only important thing about being a subject-body, a technoliving system – I'm the platform that makes possible the materialization of political imagination' (p. 139). Preciado continues exploring the opportunities controlling one's representation allows in the postpornographic documentation of his sexual relationship with Despentés.

Performing techno-sexuality: embodying theory with postpornographic documentation

As he enters a sexual relationship with Despentés, readers see how testosterone and Preciado's performance of his techno-self cross boundaries between male/female and subject/object to create a subjectivity that is undecided and plural. We see this particularly in the account of his first sexual experience with 'VD' as he imagines the possibilities of his body and identity. Preciado (2013) reflects as he watches her,

I take turns imagining myself with and without a cock and the two images keep following each other like a game on a seesaw. But I know that the moment I get undressed, she'll see only one of these bodies. Being reduced to one fixed image frightens me. I keep my clothes on a few minutes more, so I can enjoy the double option a little longer. When I get undressed, she won't know whether or not I have an erection. For me, an erection is an obvious fact, to the same extent in a body without a cock as in a body with one. (p. 88)

From his reflection, readers see how Preciado conceptualises his identity and thrives in the possibility of multitude that configuring his techno-self as a subject/object allows. We also understand how Preciado conceives his identity despite his body's material reality – it does not matter if he does not have an erection, he imagines his body with one and behaves as if he has one. He reiterates the magnitude of asserting multiplicity as he reflects on his identity after they have sex, writing, 'I personify a dyke-transgender condition made up of numerous biocodes, certain of which are normative and other spaces of resistance and still others potential places for the invention of subjectivity' (Preciado, 2013: 93). Controlling his representation in how he applies his gender and in how he performs his subjectivity through his autotheory text, Preciado styles a multifarious identity, refusing to occupy any one space permanently or destining towards any ideal, normative gender, thus assuring readers that he commands his material representation as a subject/object and determines his own subjectivity to centre trans* possibility (Halberstam, 2018: 4; Hester, 2018: 86).⁶ The author displays the disruption of heteronormative notions of sexuality through postpornographic aesthetics in additional sexual scenes that serve as performance art.

Preciado describes his sexual escapades in vivid passages that mimic sexual performances pieces to accentuate the postpornographic role in constructing his techno-self. Importantly, his postpornographic performance disturbs dominant heteronormative categorisations and encourages

political imagination. Despentes (2009), in her documentary *Mutantes*, explains that postpornographic aesthetics denaturalise the hetero-male gaze and project 'deviant' sexualities that incorporate dildos, fisting, and prostheses that are generally excluded from mainstream heterosexual pornography. Caricaturing established pornographic scripts, postpornography envisions new sexualities rather than reproducing (hetero)normative understandings of gendered and sexual behaviour that depend on gender and sexual norms, privilege the male gaze, and utilise racist stereotypes (Bourcier, 2005: 378–379). From the beginning of the work, Preciado depicts his material body as a site that incorporates sexual technologies to fashion his techno-self: a subject-body aided by objects (such as dildos) and chemical prostheses (such as testosterone) to form a subjectivity that blurs the boundaries of subject/object. Once he begins taking testosterone and enters his sexual relationship with Despentes, he showcases their bodies, his hormones, and his use of sexual prostheses, elucidating how his gendered embodiment connects with his postpornographic sexuality.

Documenting his sexual encounters, Preciado develops a performative event that creates his sexuality and suggests ways of conceiving sexuality as a material-discursive subject that unsettles gender, racial, and sexual categorisations. He describes one of his sexual encounters with VD, in which he dons a specially purchased 'chocolate' dildo called 'Jimi' (after Hendrix), and writes how he presents himself like a 'prosthetic being: a body with its two little breasts, an 8^{1/2}-inch silicone cock' (Preciado, 2013: 328–329). Wearing Jimi, Preciado (2013) impersonates Jimi Hendrix, assisted by the dildo and the song 'Foxy Lady' playing in the background, boastfully asking, if he can 'borrow [Jimi's] cock to plow my blond's ass . . . I bet that mine is bigger and better at getting hard' (p. 328). In this scene, Preciado uses the dildo to parody the eroticisation of Black male sexuality often seen in heterosexual pornography to convey racist narratives of sexuality in which a sexually prolific Black male has sex with a white woman (Jones, 2018: 7).⁷ Utilising the dildo, Preciado (2013) reflects that he 'exist[s] in the organic-inorganic continuity offered by this sex' and that, in the process, VD becomes 'a mutant virgin crossing the synthetic line of evolution to meet the chief of the clan of the boy-girls' (p. 331). Although Jones argues that Preciado, by incorporating this pornographic scene, reproduces the 'racist and sexist tropes of the genre', and this criticism is warranted, I propose that Jones's analysis disregards Preciado's focus on identity deconstruction, his history of postpornographic performance, and his postpornographic feminism which, as Despentes and Bourcier (2018) note, unmasks the constructions of racist and sexist stereotypes within pornography as Western-founded, patriarchal fictions (p. 12).

Presenting his sexuality as an experience of hybrid gender with his white body and Black techno-penis, Preciado harkens his techno-performance to the claims of nineteenth-century sexologists, who compared 'mulatto' people to those of an 'intermediate gender'. Inspired by the scientific explanations of 'the invert', sexologists like Edward Carpenter explained that intermediate gendered people were understood to be in-between male and female (Somerville, 2000: 29–33). Drawing from these outdated understandings of gender and race, Preciado features and then subverts Western conceptions of gender, sexuality, and race promoted by nineteenth-century sexologists that influence present-day binary classifications. Constructing his fluid techno-self that resists classification and underscores his utilisation of chemical and physical prostheses, Preciado exhibits Western discursive categorisations as fabrications: genders, sexualities, races, and bodies are constructed both materially, as seen with testosterone and the dildo, and socially, in how his body is interpreted as a 'boy-girl' imitation of Hendrix. Preciado highlights the instability of his techno-self that parodies and subverts heteronormative roles to form sexuality that spotlights possibility.

Preciado employs this explicit scene to reflect on his techno-self and the way this sex, paired with testosterone, the dildo, and the erotic setting, forms an empowering subjectivity. He writes of his sexual relationship with VD after performing as a Hendrix-Preciado boy-girl:

Yes, this is my space . . . I'm her trannie, her monster. I'm not afraid of not being a cis-male . . . This is the power of love . . . The power of knowing that she'd do anything at all to have me between her thighs. (Preciado, 2013: 331–332)

Sharing this scene, Preciado expresses his embodiment through sex and makes his own space as he connects his material body, desire, and identity, illustrating how it heightens his sense of authority. Demonstrating how his empowerment relates to his existence between genders and the production of technosexual performance, Preciado further embodies a postpornographic trans* feminism.

Emphasising sexual performance, Preciado's body-text reflects what Annie Sprinkle observes in her writings about her (sexual) performance art.⁸ As she explains, 'I discovered that through performance art I could create my own future. If I performed who I wanted to become, I would become it. I could also help shape the future of the world' (Sprinkle, 1997: 169). Indeed, for Preciado, writing is the performative act, and using his body-essay as a sexual performance piece, he shares the space he builds through the self-administration of his gender and the performance of his sexuality (Tucker, 2013). Moreover, sharing these experiences through his autotheoretical text, Preciado constructs a space where others can also identify with him, understand their gender embodiment and sexuality, and importantly, how the pharmacopornographic regime yields it. As Evans (2018) asserts, Preciado presents 'a textual incitement for his readers to perform bodily acts, deploying the material body in its own resignification in short, Preciado asks his readers to perform, to *embody* radical theory' (p. 290, emphasis in original). Likewise, Hester (2018) explains that Preciado exemplifies the role of a self-help 'lay-healer' who 'frames auto-experimental engagements with embodiment as part of a tradition of radical amateurism' (p. 89). Embodying radical theory and encouraging radical amateurism, Preciado underlines the performance of his techno-self and emboldens readers to disrupt this twenty-first-century hegemonic system. Thus, Preciado advances new future possibilities outside the state regulation of gender. The importance of political imagination is particularly critical to address in a period of far-right extremism in France and the world-at-large; moreover, crafting a trans* feminism that opposes homonormative moves to demobilise radical feminist and queer movements is imperative.

Conclusion

Accentuating his performance of gender and sexuality as the intra-action of material-discursive phenomena, Preciado offers a postpornographic trans* feminism and exposes how Western hegemonic categorisations are regulated in the pharmacopornographic era. These same identity classifications are perpetuated by homonormative queer groups and liberal feminists and fuel anti-gender movements. With a focus on disidentification, Preciado disarms these attacks, but this necessitates an adherence to a radical trans* feminism that resists single-issue, identity-based politics. Presenting his techno-self as an autotheoretical, postpornographic performance, Preciado provides examples of how identities are produced in this period. While Preciado (2013) admits that he will eventually have to submit to the state's administration of gender, he nevertheless reveals the way our subjectivities are regulated and proposes possibilities for imagining differently (p. 257). Preciado has already undoubtedly shaped queer and postpornographic feminisms in France and Europe. His English-language text makes subversive tools available to American and Anglophone feminists, proving the continued entanglement of American and French feminisms in the twenty-first century.

Notes

1. To maintain consistency between Preciado's publications, I refer to *Countersexual Manifesto* in its English translation. *Manifeste contra-sexuel* was published in French in 2000 and was translated into English in 2018.

2. Zoo was Sam Bourcier's seminar at the Sorbonne that Preciado attended in the late 1990s and which 'conveyed a real fascination with a "different world" where all norms could be eliminated by the collective act of speaking out and creating subcultures' (Perreau, 2016: 86).
3. In *Countersexual Manifesto*, Preciado posits a 'countersexual society' that denaturalises (hetero)sexuality. Preciado (2018a) details countersexual practices, which involve identifying the anus as the universal site of pleasure and the use of the dildo as a sexual technology that democratises (counter)sexuality (pp. 32–40). As Julie Lavigne (2014) notes, it has significantly influenced postpornographers in Europe (p. 65).
4. Lisa Duggan coined the term 'homonormativity' in 2004. American scholars widely use the term to address the way in which radical queer and feminist movements are debilitated in the neoliberal era.
5. The French Senate passed Emmanuel Macron's bioethics reform in January 2020. However, the Senate did not approve the measure allowing social security to cover MAP, effectively limiting access to women who can afford it. The reform generated mass protests (Rouquette, 2020). In addition, the French government planned to adopt the bioethics reform in the summer of 2020. Yet, the vote to implement it has been delayed due to COVID-19, making the reform's application date uncertain (*Libération*, 2020).
6. While my article focuses on the mobility of identities that resist normative conceptions of gender, scholars, such as Aren Z. Aizura (2018), have recently questioned trans-studies' preoccupation with mobility, noting that this discussion privileges Western discourse and conceptions of identity (pp. 8–10). Still others, like Andrea Long Chu and Emmett Harsin Drager (2019), point out that many trans* subjects desire normativity and that this desire is often ignored by trans* scholars, particularly Preciado (pp. 107–108).
7. With the 2008 release of *Jimi Hendrix: The Sex Tape* concurring with the writing and publishing of *Testo yonqui*, the original Spanish edition of the text, Preciado seems to nod particularly to this production of Black male sexuality depicted in the film, where Hendrix is filmed having sex with two white women. Rumours of the film's existence began in 2007, and it was made available online in 2008 (Cruz, 2011: 67–69).
8. As Bourcier and Lavigne note, Annie Sprinkle's performances are considered some of the first post-pornographic demonstrations and influenced postpornographic artists (Bourcier, 2005: 378; Lavigne, 2014: 64).

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