

System/Système D: Improvising Digital Scholarship

Lewis Ruth Sherman, McMaster University

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IN QUEER(Y): RECONCEPTUALIZING THE TRANS 'SELF' IN AN ERA OF BIOPOLITICS

Presented by Ethan Jackson (he/him)

Wilfrid Laurier University

MA Communication Studies

Temporalities of trans subjectivity as seen in “transition videos” of western binary affirming trans people – trans men/trans women:

Situating theories and transition videos

Networks and entanglements (publics and counterpublics), corporeality and virtual meanings

Temporalities, transitioning, biomedical power

Neoliberal subjectivity, trans time, digital meanings

J.J. Halberstam *In a Queer Time and Place*

- Queer refers to nonnormative logics and activity in space and time.
- Queer time is about the engaged temporality that disrupts, resists or disidentifies with hegemonic western timeframes and production machinations.
- Queer space is the new understandings of how to make sense of the materiality that is evoked and inscribed for the consumption of collective narratives, imaginations, and networks.
- Queer temporalities/spaces operate as grids of intelligibility by which users who observe and who interact their humanness digitally construct their questioned identity and their asserted identity online in ways that corporeally deems impossible.
 - *Digital embodiment breaks bounds and connects others through spacetime matter.*
- I also draw from (trans)gender and queer theorists such as Judith Butler, Kate Bornstein, Elizabeth Grosz, E.L. McCallum & Mikko Tuhkanen, Elizabeth Freeman, Leslie Feinberg, Eve Sedgwick, Talia Mae Bettcher and so on.

Katherine Hayles *Writing Machines*

- Writing the body is a metaphor for linguistic communications and transgressions of technologies from corporeal to incorporeal bounds/uses.
- Identity is forged out of ongoing relations of fragmented materials that make up the logics of self projection through series of intensities, entanglements, and discursive patterns.
- There are “communication circuits” which can structure the patterns of behaviours users.
 - *I apply her use to transition videos which counterpublic interlocutors digest, become informed, add to the discourses and bodies of knowledges of/for transgender experience, and above all, participate in countercultural schemes of celebrating the trans person’s story.*
- I also draw from linguistics and posthuman theories from J.J. Halberstam, Donna Haraway, Cary Wolfe, Rosi Braidotti, Elizabeth Grosz, Susan Stryker, José Muñoz, Ursula Le Guin and so on.

Transition videos and “writing the body” digitally

- I am examining transition videos as seen on YouTube as uploaded trans discourses and artefacts of trans intelligibility.
- Transition videos are documented moments in time archiving aesthetic and embodied achievements related to anatomical shifts in corporeality of the trans body.
- These networks are spectacles on the web (“net spectacles”) that transcend corporeal to virtual self-reporting and self-understanding within a communicated audience of other users.
- Writing the trans body is done through texts, sounds, images, and performances of “trans moments” such as: getting HRT, time documented HRT changes, access to surgeries, healing from surgeries, bodily changes, speech acts, and performances of the body.
- These videos show the *dramatic* shift from one embodied gender to the other – the dichotomous man/woman; male/female; becoming/unbecoming; life/death; this/that.

Let me show you how I trans*formed from

THIS



TO THIS!!



0:00 / 9:23



MALE to FEMALE - TRANSITION INSPIRATION (12 months HRT)

3,996,427 views



22K



6.1K



SHARE



Sona Avedian

Published on Jan 29, 2014

SUBSCRIBE 12K

Follow/like me on FB and TWITTER (

<https://www.facebook.com/SonaAvedian>

or <https://twitter.com/SonaAvedian>) ***SUBSCRIBE***



Male to Female - Transgender Transition Timeline

5,301,444 views

78K 4.9K SHARE



Maya
Published on Oct 14, 2015

SUBSCRIBE 168K





Itsbambii Male to female- Transgender Transition Timeline (1 year since Transition!) | Itsbambii

1,447,236 views

35K 1.8K SHARE



itsbambii Playhouse ✓
Published on Jul 23, 2017

SUBSCRIBE 1.1M



transition timeline (ftm) - but DANCE version

1,330,974 views



73K



1K



SHARE



beckdrop

Published on Jul 13, 2017

SUBSCRIBE 39K

Publics and counterpublics

- *“Counterpublics are “counter” to the extent that they try to supply different ways of imagining stranger-sociability and its reflexivity; as publics, they remain oriented to stranger-circulation in a way that is not just strategic, but also constitutive of membership and its affects. As it happens, an understanding of queerness has been developing in recent decades that is suited to just this necessity; a culture is developing in which intimate relations and the sexual body can in fact be understood as projects for transformation among strangers.”* (Michael Warner, 2002)
- YouTube as a platform enables users to view, like or dislike, comment, share, and subscribe to videos posted. One example of many sites that build networks and entanglements for publics and counterpublics that produce social capital through hypervisibility, mentorship, leadership, and experience.
- I also draw off of Nancy Fraser, Mikhail Bahktin, and Jürgen Habermas.

↑
2



Canadian Biodegradable Toothbrush Subscription Club

Promoted by BamBrush
promoted Save Report

↑
1019



Stay strong. Once you've broken you'll learn what you're made of. 16 months hrt.

l.redd.it
Submitted 12 hours ago by BoycottBics
37 Comments Share Save Hide Report

↑
168



Change is good! l.redd.it

Submitted 6 hours ago by kiepy
5 Comments Share Save Hide Report

↑
97



Can't believe I never connected the dots. Looking at old pics is painfully eggy.

l.imgur.com
Submitted 6 hours ago by AmIAGirlThrowaway
2 Comments Share Save Hide Report

↑
89



7 months apart. Almost 8 months HRT l.redd.it

Submitted 6 hours ago by JennaStunned trans
3 Comments Share Save Hide Report

↑
59



pre-transition to 1.5 years, jesus I looked unhappy back then. l.redd.it

Submitted 6 hours ago by Sarabad
2 Comments Share Save Hide Report

↑
•



-12 Months - +11 Months no makeup, starting to see some facial changes :) l.redd.it

Submitted an hour ago by Zoe-xD 21 MTF
1 Comment Share Save Hide Report

search



username

password

remember me reset password

login

SUBSCRIBE

42,514 readers 302 here now

A place to share transition timelines.

Rules:

- This is a safe space so no hate speech or trolling is allowed.
- If you can't say anything nice don't say anything at all.
- Mark NSFW pics NSFW, only posters 18 and older can post NSFW >images.
- Don't post someone else's pics if they haven't given permission.
- Don't give unsolicited "advice". It is often hurtful and unwanted when not specifically asked for.



PHOTO: YUI MOK/ZUMA PRESS

Trans aesthetics and temporalities

- The transition of one past to the present of trans aesthetic bridges a trans history into focus and maintains idealistic trans values for the future. There is a relationship between identification systems and neoliberal practices of “before” and “after” transition videos which trans people use to imprint their trans history in multimodal ways.
- Domestication of trans ideals as a hegemonic mirror of public normative logics:
 - *Hyper trans masculinity and hyper trans femininity as trans aesthetic desiring norms to (re)structuring the body materially and temporally.*
 - *Metaphorical deaths and commemorations occur from a past – “wrong body/wrong binary theories/beyond the binary theories” – activity of transformation.*
 - *Categorizing of the pain in a past acceptance towards an aesthetic of possibility bound in the fragments of medicalization and institutional regulations in the corporeal.*

Unbelievable Gender Transitions You Won't Believe Show The Same Person

▶ ⏪ 🔊 0:02 / 13:15



My Gender Transition

894,650 views



3.7K



1.5K



SHARE



Tracey 28 ✓

Published on Aug 15, 2017

SUBSCRIBE 164K

“My Gender Transition” video snapshots:

Contextually

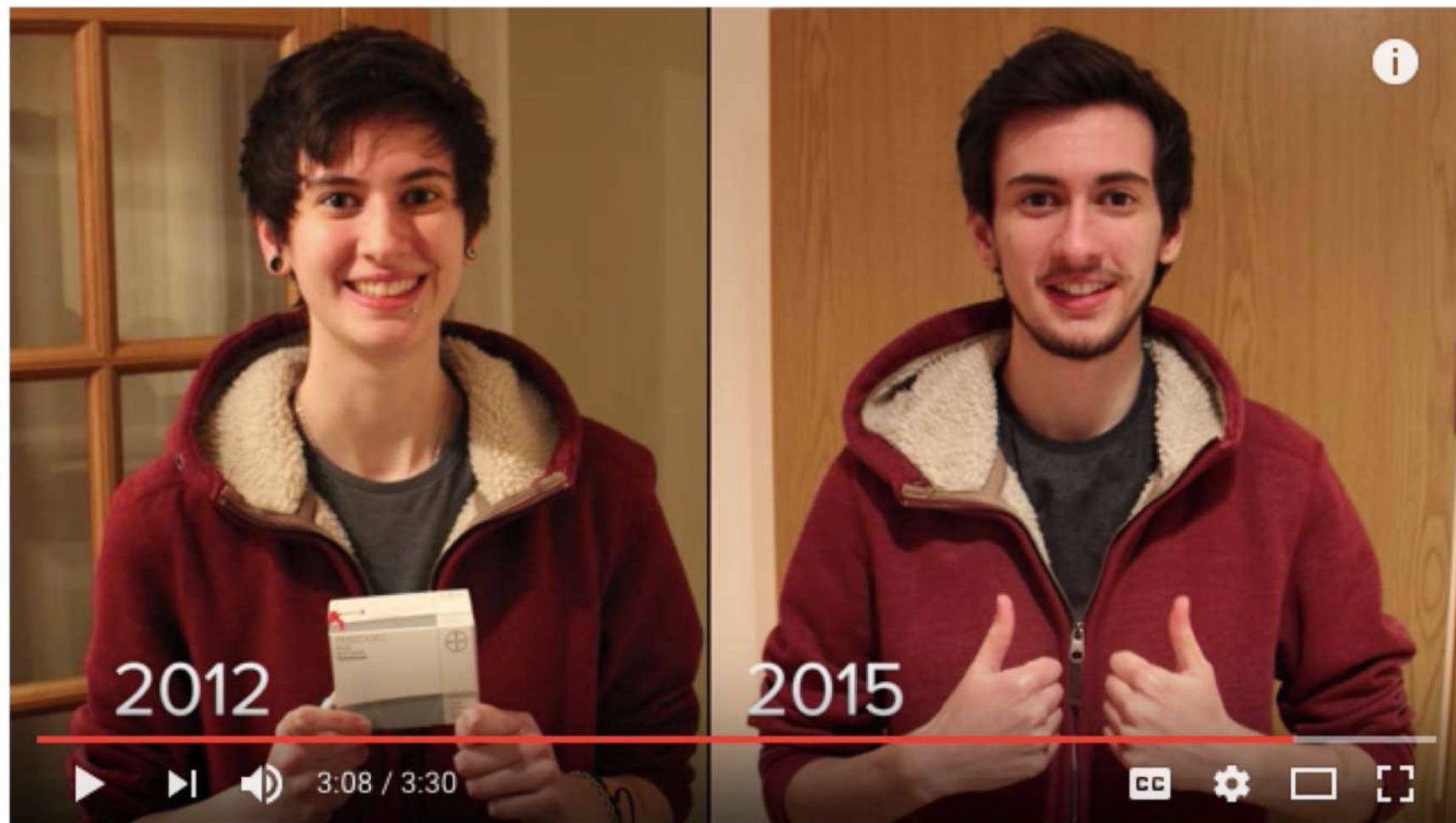
- Lack of situating time between photos
- Lack of what biomedical discursive practices have or will take place
- Left image = before
- Right image = after

Crunching Numbers

- 192 pictures
- 30/192 QT BIPOC
- 163 trans femmes; 1 couple; 28 trans men
- 27/163 BIPOC & 3/28 BIPOC
- Each picture is shown for 4 seconds before transition to another picture

Underlying question:

Is this YouTube video made for “shock” aesthetics as a net spectacle? To whom is this video intended for?



My Gender Transition From Female To Male • Dear BuzzFeed

20,161,170 views

👍 391K

💬 40K

➦ SHARE

☰+

⋮



6 months post-op;
4.5 years HRT



Visibility matters

- Visibility matters: Visibility, support, education, understanding, empathy, counterpublic space that decenters hegemonic gender norms is profoundly important.
- What I argue here is that **there are intertextual abilities where the internet enables trans people to negotiate identity by telling their transformation story through YouTube videos.** What emerges are new materials of ontological and anatomical practices of biopolitical regulations for gender binary affirming trans people.
- YouTube videos disrupt linear time in actuality by virtue of its codifying temporality as data. Three years in three minutes portrays a transition from one to another - this visibility is instrumental and vital in supporting advocacy, representation, and celebration of one's trials and triumphs.
- In what ways does this operate to inform neoliberal biopolitics of particular performances of gender transitions within western culture that renegotiates dependency and body policing within biomedical institutions? **In what ways do transition videos shape or change the ways that transgender lives are *built*?**

Biopolitical logics of individuation and temporal attachments

- When one can document their journey for the consumption of an audience of support and onlookers, by spectacularization of the trans self and the succession of instantaneous data flows, how does this affect and impact the mental health of trans people?
- Biomedical practices are state-sanctioned and operate particular processes for trans people as we access medical care for transition related needs. These biomedical institutions operate under public policy that facilitates populations of somatic forms to regulate bodies through bureaucratic processes.
- To get access to hormone replacement therapy, to find doctors, to gain access to surgeries to transition under the parameters of western biopower, these all have strained waitlists of years. **If three years collapses in on itself within three minutes, video images move the audience through pixels of monuments and fixed points in time which ultimately folds internal workings of time and space between trans moments and trans actualization.**

Towards trans time and disruptions between corporeal and incorporeal

- Unlike queer time that emerges out of unfixed nonnormative logics, trans time is produced within the contexts of participating in archival pieces of social networks where trans artefacts are shared and consumed within neat and tidy narratives.
- Trans time is a timely matter that is paradoxical and in constant conflict with entangled neoliberal subjectivity of individual acts and collective engagements.
- Trans time operates as milestone moments encoding trans people who have gone through the process, who have shown their timeline, who commemorate the past and memorialize the self, offer possibilities of becoming transgender.
- This becoming involves a before/past and after/present of the trans object in video, to which the trans questioner who seeks that same “after/present” becomes fixed in emotional situations entangled as/with pathologizing biomedical processes (gender dysphoria).

Transitioning, visibility, biomedical power – countercultural archives

- Counterpublics build network archives of identity where identity is forged out of ongoing relations of fragmented materials that make up the logics of self-subjectivity within neo-liberal frameworks.
- Digital worlds enable an infrastructure for social activity where public sharing of ideas/beliefs and private inner truths mesh together for marginalized voices, archives, and communities.
- Countercultural archives hold infrastructure for social actors to interact and write their bodies as mirrors of hegemonic gender ideals.
- Inextricable relation between trans time collapsing on itself through its codependencies on trans aesthetics and politics, and biomedical apparatuses and institutional knowledges.
- Visibility matters but in what ways does particular trans aesthetics make invisible other trans identities who do not desire trans moments/timelines?



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