

Mediated Trans Futurities

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English Abstract: For trans and gender non-conforming people a future body is not necessarily a spectacularly enhanced or technically optimized but, above all, a liveable one. Hormones like testosterone and estrogens sometimes materialize the promise of a trans futurity with and for that particular body. At the same time, the bodily effects of these hormones are not foreseeable and, all the more, not predictable, even though video blogs that document gender transitions might give this impression at first glance. The article takes a closer look at the phenomenon of trans vlogging and discusses trans vlogs as participating in practices of imagining and enabling im/possible futures. The interest is the entanglement of media practices of self-documentation, hormonal alterations of bodies, processes of gendering and racialization within these practices and their effect on temporality: Which bodies have a future available at all – as uncertain and precarious as it might be?

Does it get better?

For trans and gender non-conforming people a future body is not necessarily a spectacularly enhanced or technically optimized but, above all, a liveable one.¹ While not all trans people aim to alter their bodies via hormones (and/or surgeries), many do so to improve their quality of life on a very existential level. Altering gendered characteristics of one's body might help to feel more comfortable with it in the future and might enable to imagine a future at all – one that can be lived according to one's gender. Restrictions on having or getting access to gender confirming hormones therefore makes a future unimaginable and in so doing threaten trans lives. Considering the desire for a body that resonates visually, acoustically, and sexually with one's gender, hormones like testosterone and estrogens sometimes materialize the promise of a trans futurity *with* and *for* that particular body. At the same time, the bodily effects of these hormones are not foreseeable and, all the more, not predictable. There is no guarantee that the hormonal effects on the body happen as might be desired – if they occur at all. The hormones propel bodily, and therefore gendered becomings that are not linear, let alone directional or teleological. While on the one hand the injection (or application) of hormones engenders trans futurities – or, as Jack Halberstam puts it: “[t]he transgender

1 Judith Butler: Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly. Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press 2015.

body has emerged as futurity itself,”² – on the other hand it also produces specific precarities: In cis-sexist and heteronormative societies being visible as a trans person, which regularly means inhabiting a body with characteristics that do not (seem to) fit a binary gender system, can be life threatening, too – endangering an individual future.

This holds even more true for black and trans people of color, since the fulfilment of gender expectations is always measured against normative, speak: *white* gendered bodies.³ In his historical study C. Riley Snorton shows how western gender ideals are established in colonial exploitation of medicalized black bodies. With reference to Hortense Spiller he analyzes “sex and gender as racial arrangements wherein the fungibility of captive flesh produced a critical context for understanding sex and gender as mutable and *subject to rearrangement in the arenas of medicine and law*.”⁴ Invested in historical analyses of such medical studies in the 19th century, Snorton reassembles past narratives of trans lives in these heteronormative, colonial settings and aims to imagine other temporalities. He traces temporalities that defy the logics of momentary condolence via public remembrance only after non-white trans people are being murdered.⁵

Based on an understanding of gender as always already entangled with race, “as a tool of colonial domination and the construction of the colonial other,”⁶ and in the context of everyday trans hostility, the promise of a better future through hormone therapy, of a thus somehow biochemically enabled future is not self-explaining. Rather, the prospect of a future is not a taken-for-grantedness, not a simple automatism of linear progression of time – unlike the “It gets better”-mantra by Dan Savage and others, who in a 2010 social media campaign shared their stories of how life as a gay or queer person got easier for them after literally having survived

2 Jack Halberstam: *In a Queer Time and Place. Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*, London, New York 2005, p. 18.

3 I put ‘white’ in italics to denote the construction of the category and at the same time avoid charging it with a gesture of empowerment, cf. Maureen M. Eggers/Grada Kilomba/Peggy Piesche/Susan Arndt: »Konzeptionelle Überlegungen«, in: Maureen M. Eggers/Grada Kilomba/Peggy Piesche et al. (eds.), *Mythen, Masken und Subjekte. Kritische Weißseinsforschung in Deutschland*, Münster: Unrast 2020, pp. 11-13.

4 C. R. Snorton: *Black on both Sides. A Racial History of Trans Identity*, Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press 2017, S. 12, emphasis sh.

5 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 14.

6 Jonah I. Garde: »Provincializing Trans* Modernity. Asterisked Histories and Multiple Horizons in *Der Steinachfilm*«, in: *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 8 (2021), pp. 207-222, here p. 211.

being the target of bullying in high school.⁷ Jasbir Puar and Tavia Nyong'o among others have famously critiqued this project that, despite opening "space for the expression of public anguish and collective mourning,"⁸ completely dismisses the fact that "[I]ots of folks, particularly the gender nonconforming and/or trans, never 'grow out' of the kinds of social reprisals for being physically different."⁹ The "It gets better"-narrative of improvement does not reflect the manifold entanglements of sexuality and desire with other social categories like race, class and ableism. It therefore chimes in with the *white* assimilationist gay rights movement and its blind spot concerning the problematic assumption that 'having rights' in the first place is self-evident.¹⁰ This presumed status as a subject, as citizen, is constitutively entangled with an exclusive, heteronormative understanding of time as enfolding in these narratives of growing up, getting married, founding a family.¹¹

Considering these complex enmeshments of a certain temporality with colonial and heteropatriarchal structures, I understand future not as a temporal realization of modernist progress that enfolds along parameters of technical feasibility, although technological conditions in terms of digital media and endocrinological knowledge are central to my argument.¹² With the plural of futures, I aim to trace different imaginations and realizations of livable space-times that emerge within technological conditions of media and medical practices, and that challenge these normative understandings of time while acknowledging that the perspective of (not certainly) having a future is bound to social hierarchies and exclusions. In this sense, I want to take a closer look at the phenomenon of trans vlogging and discuss trans vlogs as participating in these practices of imagining and enabling im/possible futures. My main interest is the entanglement of media practices of self-documentation, hormonal alterations of bodies, processes of gendering and racialization within these practices and their effect on temporality: Which bodies have a future available at all – as uncertain and precarious as it might be?

7 Cf. It Gets Better Project: It Gets Better: Dan and Terry. YouTube 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lcVvvg2Qlo>, 23.09.2021.

8 Jasbir Puar: In the wake of It Gets Better. The Guardian 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/nov/16/wake-it-gets-better-campaign>, 05.03.2018.

9 Tavia Nyong'o: School Daze. Bully Bloggers 2010, <https://bullybloggers.wordpress.com/2010/09/30/school-daze/>, 23.09.2021.

10 Cf. J. Butler: Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly.

11 Cf. Lee Edelman: No Future. Queer Theory and the Death Drive, Durham, London: Duke University Press 2004.

12 Whereby the endocrinological knowledge production in itself is entangled with european ideas and ideals of modernity, cf. J. I. Garde: Provincializing Trans* Modernity.

Trans vlogging with testosterone

With trans vlogs I refer to videos on YouTube uploaded by trans people who document their hormonal induced gender transition online.¹³ Those videos range from diary-like narrations of recent events or daily-life experiences to explicitly giving advice in navigating administrative and social obstacles in a cis-heteronormative society and to updates on physical or emotional changes due to hormonal treatment.

Gorillashrimp is one of these vloggers.¹⁴ In several update-videos he documents his experiences with taking testosterone. Regularly, he highlights the physical changes that occur over a certain time span, usually a few months or years on testosterone. The chronology of these videos, each titled after these very same time periods, gives the impression that the process of a gender transition - and thus gender itself - is coherent and consistent in itself. It seems, as if the hormone would self-evidently cause bodily changes according to the supposedly always already known gender, and as if a transition proceeds from a unique starting point - regularly the first hormone dose - via an expected course to a specific end. With a closer look at a selected video by gorillashrimp, I would like to challenge this common metaphorical narrative of gender transitioning as a distinct and trouble-free 'journey' on a foreseeable path.¹⁵

It is very common in the trans vlogs to let the narrative of one's gender transition more or less implicitly start with the first dose of hormone replacement therapy. For many trans vloggers this date holds an existential importance which is why they celebrate it as a (second) birthday - the start of a new (state of) life. On his one-year anniversary on testosterone, gorillashrimp records a euphoric inventory of the changes to his body that have occurred up to that point.

The video "3.21.15 - 1 Year on Testosterone - FTM Transition Update - List of Changes Throughout the Past Year"¹⁶ is nearly 19 minutes long and

13 In the following I only relate to trans vlogs about hormonal treatments with testosterone. This focus takes into consideration the specific connotation of testosterone with masculinity and maleness and the stereotypically ascribed attributions of activity, (self-)creation and mastery.

14 I refer to the vloggers by the name of their channels to emphasize the hormonal *and* media effects of the vlogs on the subjectivations of the vloggers as trans.

15 Especially in reference to trans and non-binary visibility on digital media platforms this narrative of gender transition as solely being easy or pleasing finds itself increasingly exaggerated and contorted to fuel hostile allegations of transness being a mere media hype.

16 gorillashrimp: 3.21.15 - 1 Year on Testosterone - FTM Transition Update - List of Changes Throughout the Past Year. YouTube 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThGxWjmVis0>, 05.03.2018.

not cut, thus apparently recorded without interruption. We see a young, able-bodied, *white* man in a black muscle shirt - and, as will be seen later, blue jeans - who sits in an apparently private living room and faces the camera head-on. In a static semi-close-up shot, the viewers see and hear him talk about how his body has changed over the past 12 months. In order not to forget any of these many observations, he has prepared a handwritten list of them. Generally amused and sometimes even euphoric, he comments on the changes he has noticed: The shoulders became broader and, like the rest of his body, more muscular; his neck and jawline are more prominent; his feet have grown; his voice is deeper; the hair on his arms and legs as well as on his belly and chest, is thicker and darker. Also, he has grown a beard and is not menstruating anymore. While reporting this, gorillashrimp does not remain in a sitting position. He stands up and turns his back to the camera, demonstrating the heavily masculine connoted V-shape of his upper body; he flexes his arms so that the veins stand out more clearly; he cards the leg of his trousers to show the hair on his legs; and he brings his face and forearm close to the camera so that the increasing hair growth can be examined there too.

In summary, much of what gorillashrimp had hoped and wished for before he started taking testosterone has indeed occurred. The hormone functions properly in masculinizing the vloggers body. Accordingly, as Laura Horak would argue for trans vlogs in general, this and other videos of gorillashrimp's transition operate along a hormonally induced logic of progress:

[M]ost transition videos operate according to a progressive temporality we might call "hormone time." Time begins with the first shot of testosterone [...] and is measured against that date, even years afterward. [...] While, like all narrative, hormone time simplifies, this insistently affirmative structure is powerfully enabling to trans youth trying to imagine a future.¹⁷

"Hormone time," she continues, "appropriates the 'straight' temporality of progress for radical ends-proving that trans self-determination is not only possible but viable and even joyful."¹⁸ She thus follows the extensive studies on trans vlogs by Tobias Raun, who also emphasizes the vloggers' self-determination in the process of gender transition:

17 Laura Horak: »Trans on YouTube. Intimacy, Visibility, Temporality«, in: *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 1 (2014), pp. 572-585, here p. 579-580.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 581.

Thus, representation and transformation is not something 'done' to the vloggers but is part of an active process of self-determination through the vlog as an important site for *working* on, as well as *producing* and exploring, the self.¹⁹

Both researchers explain the popularity, the individual significance, and the political relevance of trans vlogs with the affirmative documentation of a teleological transition and its self-determined completion. From this perspective, however, the media-specificity of self-documentation in trans vlogs is reduced to a mere instrumentality of the involved media. When Raun states, "the vloggers blend flesh and media, skin and screen, to help them form (new) identities."²⁰ the hormones and the vlogs like the scalpel are simply tools up for a completely intentional usage.

Proceeding from the works of Raun and Horak, I aim to add yet another approach to trans vlogs to grasp their specific media effects on gendered becomings and their politization. If one takes into account a constitutive entanglement and performativity of the interplay between gender and media, it becomes clear that the individual videos, YouTube as a platform, and testosterone together produce media and bodily effects that are at least partially beyond the control of the vloggers.²¹ This is also the case with gorillashrimp, who, for all his joy about the appreciated changes so far, also wonders about various physical phenomena.

He not only expresses surprise about having an adam's apple now, "which I didn't think was gonna happen, but it did."²² He is also irritated about the hair growth on his legs, which is not very pronounced and still patchy. While bringing in his hands together above his thigh to trace the direction of the increasing hair growth, he remarks: "It's still not completely there, it's still not. And I've got some weird bald spots on my legs, too. But I think that'll eventually fill in." And although he is very happy about the fact that his feet have grown, he is slightly disappointed to probably not "get into the men sizes."

Whether he will ever be able to buy shoes in men size, if the hair on his legs will continue to grow or not, or whether it will run out on his head - these are just some of the uncertainties in a gender transition with testosterone. These uncertainties and the fact that he documents them

19 Tobias Raun: *Out Online. Trans Self-Representation and Community Building on YouTube*, Abingdon, New York: Routledge 2016, p. 118, emphasis sh.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 106.

21 Cf. Kathrin Peters/Andrea Seier: »Gender & Medien. Einleitung«, in: Kathrin Peters/Andrea Seier (eds.), *Gender & Medien Reader*, Zürich, Berlin 2016, pp. 9-19.

22 Here and in the following I quote from gorillashrimp: 3.21.15 - 1 Year on Testosterone - FTM Transition Update - List of Changes Throughout the Past Year.

publicly, however, do not query his transness. “It is what it is,” gorillashrimp notes with a shrug. In the practice of self-documentation via vlog, these uncertainties and seeming gender inadequacies become affirmable, since they do not lead to the derecognition of being trans by others. This fear of non-recognition is often shared in relation to the medico-therapeutical context where uncertainties or ambiguities about one’s (gendered) future generally undergird the acknowledgement of a trans status, while a body with ‘proper’ gender markers is still the ideal goal. Therefore, a body with – in reference to a binary gendered system – ambiguous gender markers is seen as unwanted and undesirable, as literally in a transitional state that finally will be overcome. This assumption regularly completely disregards the actual feelings of the respective person towards their body. Trans and gender non-conforming people who strive for a hormone prescription nonetheless need to meet these demands of medical and therapeutical institutions, which means to articulate being undoubtedly sure about one’s future gender and gendered body as fitting to a normative binary. Whereas the requirement for being officially acknowledged as trans therefore includes the unambiguous wish to fulfill the expectations of binary gender, on YouTube anyone who calls themselves trans and enters the online community by uploading appropriately titled or keyworded videos *is* trans.

The chronology of the video uploads and the transition narratives that seem successful at first glance, such as the one by gorillashrimp, nevertheless produce uncertain futures. For the rhythms of hormone therapies and the rhythms of update videos make it clear that this future is open in a thoroughly precarious way: the transition finds no conclusion insofar as the hormones must be taken permanently. Also, a YouTube channel knows no capacity limits, so that another update video can always follow even after years of (uncommented or unannounced) pause.²³ In addition, for trans people who take hormones permanently - and that is by no means all of them - it is not certain whether the type of therapy will work in the long term: Dosages have to be adjusted, compounds changed. Endocrinological, i.e. hormone-scientific long-term studies on the therapy have only existed to date in rudimentary form. Gender and the future thus do not become more secure or stable even with hormonal treatment and physical changes, but remain - for differently marginalized persons in different intensities - precarious.

23 The vlogger Wish I was Jim uploads an update video after a break of over six years, cf. Wish I Was Jim: TEN YEARS ON TESTOSTERONE. YouTube 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ARSF7ZKAs8>, 16.06.2020.

Queer temporality of trans vlogs

For a long time, a personalized graphic reading “Some guys go through puberty twice” decorated the main page of gorillashrimp’s YouTube channel. The affirmed ‘second puberty’ points to those aforementioned temporal instabilities of gender transitions with testosterone. From a Queer Theory perspective, Jack Halberstam has identified the importance of adolescence in strictly marked distinction from responsible adulthood as a constitutive element of heteronormative temporalities. Subcultural practices such as punk music and drag shows, however, softened this separation by aesthetically extending adolescence and therefore decoupling aging from the heteronormative logics of reproduction:

In Western cultures, we chart the emergence of the adult from the dangerous and unruly period of adolescence as a desired process of maturation; and we create longevity as the most desirable future. [...] this life narrative charts an obvious transition out of childish dependency through marriage and into adult responsibility through reproduction.²⁴

The trans YouTube videos could be understood as such a subcultural practice that extends puberty and undermines normative temporality. However, Julian Carter suggests that the glorification of continued adolescence is more problematic for many trans individuals than for cis-lesbian or cis-gay youth, as it is precisely future change that matters to them. Carter writes:

When the future is refused, the past loses its dynamic potential and the subject finds himself stuck on the margins of time and social relationship. Making up for lost time requires a return with a difference, rather than an arrest.²⁵

For him, temporalities of transitions are not characterized by a postponement of growing up, but by complex foldings that contain triumphant advances and uncertainties in simultaneous interlacings. Instead of ‘hormone time’, he speaks of “transitional time”²⁶, capturing “triumphalist and invaginated time as co-existing, a convergence which challenges the assumption that they are opposed and mutually exclusive modes of

24 J. Halberstam: In a Queer Time and Place, pp. 152-153.

25 Julian Carter: »Embracing Transition, or Dancing in the Folds of Time«, in: Susan Stryker/Aren Z. Aizura (eds.), The Transgender Studies Reader 2, New York, London 2013, pp. 130-143, hier p. 139.

26 Ibid., p. 141.

temporality.”²⁷ In Carter’s analysis of a dance performance, joy and uncertainty can coincide.

The trans vlogs allow not only for a coincidence but for the *affirmation* of this temporal complexity, of a “return” to puberty “with a difference.” Moreover, even the uncertainty about whether this second puberty will actually be the last one can be affirmed. A second one could be followed by a third or fold into adulthood over and over again. The trans vlogs keep such multiplications open. But they also problematize the taken-for-grantedness of a future at all, as I would like to show with another update video that allows me to address the complex structure of self-documentation, temporality, and subjectivation not only as trans but as black trans person.

At first glance, the video “Week 40 on T: Racism as Black FTM”²⁸ by itsGOTtobegroovy does aesthetically not differ from the update video by gorillashrimp: The video shows the vlogger in a setting that seems to be private, we see his head and shoulders. He addresses the report about the changes he observed in his body during the past months on testosterone to an audience that might have made similar experiences, and thus, like gorillashrimp, implicitly refers to an online trans community that he performatively produces via this addressing.²⁹ But differing from vlogs by *white* vloggers like gorillashrimp, for itsGOTtobegroovy it is not the physical changes that build the main aspects of his update video after being 40 weeks on testosterone. As the title prominently states, it is the racism he experiences that keeps playing on his mind and that shapes his review of the past 40 weeks.

To address the specific media setting of the trans vlog and its temporalities, I want to highlight a short sequence of this video where these entanglements densify. Other than gorillashrimp’s extensive report on many different physical aspects, in itsGOTtobegroovy’s update it is only the beard that gets explicit attention as bodily change throughout the recent weeks. In the exact same posture, both gorillashrimp and itsGOTtobegroovy bring their chins close to the camera to document the effects of testosterone on their facial hair growth. But whereas gorillashrimp turns away the light source to avoid an overexposure that would make it difficult to perceive the hair on his light skin, itsGOTtobegroovy changes the visual register fundamentally. While murmuring, “Actually, I saw [in-distinct, probably a name, sh] do this – once...”, he is switching the

27 Ibid., p. 134.

28 itsGOTtobegroovy: Week 40 on T: Racism as a Black FTM. YouTube 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUJIsKYyaKY&>, 08.06.2018.

29 Cf. T. Raun: Out Online.

recording to night vision. With the camera (software) now being able to better register contrast under the light conditions in the room, the black hair on his face and chin becomes clearly visible: “So, you can see it here – a little mustache. I’ve been shaving it. But also...” Then he picks up the camera and moves it under his chin: “...right here, I got so much of that [beard growth, sh].”



Figure 1: Screenshot from itsGOTtobegroovy: Week 40 on T: Racism as a Black FTM

Even though this sequence in night vision is only a few seconds long, it fundamentally shifts the focus of the update video: Shortly after itsGOTtobegroovy puts the camera back on the desk, switches the recording mode to common light spectrums and makes quick remarks on his plans to shave in the next days, the video cross-fades to a supposedly later moment of his recording where he starts telling about racist incidences he experiences more regularly. His “week 40 on T” update is as much about gendered bodily changes as about the racialization that comes along with being recognized as black male in public. He reflects on the surprise and

anger these racist confrontations provoke in him: “It's really annoying, it's really frustrating that I am being viewed more and more as – I don't know... An oddity? A threat?”

With the aesthetic of night vision that resembles the optics of surveillance techniques, itsGOTtobegroovy perceives the structural hierarchies of visibility, wherein ‘being viewed’ also means ‘being made visible’ as a black man. As the cross-fade indicates, he does not only perceive this moment of racialization and sexualization through this visual mode, but he implicitly comments on it when he starts reflecting on the racist confrontations that differ since he is being perceived as male more regularly in public. With his video he not only documents these confrontations but articulates the racist stereotyping of angry or threatening black maleness as effect of these very documentary media practices that regularly engender non-white and especially black bodies as racialized others, as threats.³⁰ This stereotyping puts black masculinity to a higher risk of premature death due to structural racism and police violence. Also, being (made) visible via documentation practices functions as policing operation prior to physical attacks insofar as it means becoming detectable and locatable.

With regard to black trans masculinities in particular, Kara Keeling connects a problematization of visibility explicitly with potentials of a queer temporality. Keeling's reading of the documentary “The Aggressives” (Daniel Peddle, USA 2005) suggests a mode of referencing a future that might not underly these logics of visibility:

On th[e] terrain [of power and the struggle for hegemony], the benefits of visibility are unevenly distributed. In the colonial world [...], the hypervisibility of blacks and the organizations of space that rationalize their hypervisibility are crucial techniques through which colonial power and white supremacy were maintained. Insofar as colonial logics can be said to undergird present socio-economic relations, black people can become visible only through those logics, so danger, if not death, attends every black's appearance. Yet precisely because what is visible is caught in the struggle for hegemony and its processes of valorization, one cannot not want the relative security promised by visibility.³¹

Keeling explicitly connects the double-edged effects of visibility to questions of temporality and the im/possibility of a future. Reflecting on the

30 Cf. Simone Browne: *Dark Matters. On the Surveillance of Blackness*, Durham, London: Duke University Press 2015.

31 Kara Keeling: »Looking for M—. Queer Temporality, Black Political Possibility, and Poetry from the Future«, in: *GLQ - A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 15 (2009), pp. 565-582, here p. 579.

disappearance of one of the protagonists from the film – Keeling names them M— – Keeling drafts a mode of livable in/visibility for them. Combining Frantz Fanon’s postcolonial approach to temporality with Lee Edelman’s queer critique of a “reproductive futurism”³², Keeling suggests a caring instead of a surveilling mode of visibility which would not ask *where* M—is, but *when* M—could be to live under less violent – speaking of anti-black and trans violence – conditions.³³ This mode of caring is characterized by a sensitivity for the powerful and even violent effects that pervade processes of knowledge production: Keeling herself describes the awareness of somehow being an accomplice to institutions of surveillance to the extent that her practices as a scholar do not operate outside of these logics when investigating M—’s disappearance from the film.³⁴ By asking *when* M—is instead of *where* and thereby to reject dragging M—(back) into visibility, Keeling problematizes and politicizes the supposed self-evidence of liberal politics where being (made) visible, being locatable and clearly identifiable are the necessary preconditions of being able to articulate political demands for a (better) future.

itsGOTtobegroovys self-reflective comment on the visual regime of racialization encounters its effects by implicitly articulating anger as an effect of these very conditions. With itsGOTtobegroovy documenting his gender transition as pervaded by structural racism and organized according to the “representational regime of racial difference”³⁵, it becomes clear that the possibility of a future for black trans people does not solely rely on the access to hormonal therapy. Being a “figure of radical alterity,”³⁶ he as a black gay trans man belongs to those, “for whom the future remains to be won in each moment.”³⁷ Therefore, his videos and the

32 L. Edelman: No Future.

33 Keeling points to parallels and tensions between Edelman’s and Fanon’s works that are each invested in figuring out how to disrupt or reject heteronormative respectively colonial temporalities. Whereas Edelman’s queer polemical figure of radical alterity capable of such a potential refusal has often been criticized for not recognizing the implications of race in the questions of rejecting a future that holds no place for oneself, Fanon again imagines his postcolonial revolutionary subject as cis male and invested in heterosexual libidinal economies. Keeling elaborates on these tensions and suggests a black queer-feminist perspective on temporality mindful of these exclusions.

34 Cf. K. Keeling: Looking for M—, p. 577.

35 Stuart Hall: »The Spectacle of the ‘Other’«, in: Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices, London, Thousand Oaks, New Dehli 1997, pp. 223-290, here p. 256.

36 K. Keeling: Looking for M—, p. 568.

37 Ibid.

projection of gender transition are – in yet another dimension than the ones by gorillashrimp – speculations on the possibility of a future.

Daring trans futurities

The futures of the testosterone update videos do not proceed teleologically, like Raun, Horak and others argue. Although the media practices of self-documentation via transition vlogs somehow enable a possible future as trans, these very practices also put potential futures at risk, as they make life more vulnerable and precarious and colonial shaped media technologies amplify vulnerability to life-threatening intensities by rendering certain bodies visible especially for policing and surveillance. Other than gorillashrimp, who at the end of his video shares his optimism on an individual trans futurity especially with those who might not see this possibility at that moment, itsGOTtobegroovy ends a video recorded 5 years after his 40 weeks on T-update stating: “I wish I could say it gets better but it doesn't.”³⁸

With regard to the often conventional aesthetics and narrations of the trans vlogs, Horak claims: “criticizing hormone time for not being 'queer' enough misses the life-saving work that these vlogs do.”³⁹ In gorillashrimp's and itsGOTtobegroovy's videos, the opposite becomes clear: trans vlogs are pivotal for trans futures, for trans survival, precisely for establishing queer temporalities of uncertain futurities. The temporalities of transitions with testosterone prove to be not only complexly folded like Carter suggests, but queer, insofar as in trans vlogs the affirmation of a gendered becoming is possible that now and then goes along mixed feelings, uncertainties, and doubts. The trans vlogs document that the process of a transition, and therefore gender, does not have to prove itself to be unambiguous and stable, or striving after a seemingly predestined future, to be potentially livable.

Notes

Browne, Simone: *Dark Matters. On the Surveillance of Blackness*, Durham, London: Duke University Press 2015.

38 itsGOTtobegroovy: Living with racism in Black FTM transition [CC]. YouTube 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hUwkC4Yuy4&list=PLqs9xYryw_R8yD1FU6ShcN87Xl8xVHfo3, 08.06.2018.

39 L. Horak: *Trans on YouTube*, p. 581.

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