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**Gardner, Abigail S ORCID: 0000-0003-2994-741X (2019) YouTube, Ageing and PJ Harvey. Convergence, 25 (5-6). 1155 -1167.
doi:10.1177/1354856517750367**

Official URL: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1354856517750367>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1354856517750367>

EPrint URI: <http://eprints.glos.ac.uk/id/eprint/4940>

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Introduction

‘The Community of Hope’ is a PJ Harvey music video that premiered on YouTube on March 18th 2016. PJ Harvey is audible in it but not visible. In the column of thumbnails down the right hand side bar of the screen however, there are music video performances from the early stages of her career, where her performing body is central. In 2016 she was 47 years old, but on YouTube, her youth is an integral visual component to her ageing present, acting as point of corporeal and vocal comparison. Although Kuhn claims that ‘the past is gone forever’ (1995: 4), Harvey’s past performances, these online ersatz ‘family albums’, colour her contemporary work and set up a relationship between the younger body and the disappearing older woman. This matters because it narrates a tale of the erasure of ageing women within popular music culture, of which YouTube might be said to be one component, an erasure that does not take account of PJ Harvey’s continuing authorial creative endeavour and agency. There is a pull between acknowledging this treatment of the performing feminine body, and noting that it takes place within an online anti-linear ecosystem that not only destabilises chronology but allows for a multiplicity of performing selves to co-exist in its sidebar culture. This tension lies at the core of this article and in particular, feeds into a discussion over the relationship of images of ageing female performers and their youthful counterparts within YouTube. The article argues that YouTube’s flat archive has the effect of making the female performer’s ageing body invisible and applies to PJHarvey’s output but not necessarily to other female performers who might appear in videos throughout their careers.

The incursion of images of the youthful body onto ageing female musicians’ performances on YouTube is emblematic of a ‘cultural logic of similarity’ (Airoldi et al, 2016:9), or a broader audio-visual popular culture where ‘images and clips circulate freely, repetitively and non-

sequentially' (Negra and Holmes, 2008:23). YouTube videos are 'nodes in a network' (Airoldi et al, 2016:4) that inhabit a 'zone of convergence' (Jenkins, 2008:156 cited in Roy, 2015:153) with 'related videos inducting a directed graph in which an edge can be established between each pair of videos' (Davidson et al, 2010:295 cited in Airoldi, 2016:4). This nodal environment is rhizomatic and feeds into a dynamic where the palimpsestic juxtaposition of a multiplicity of official, unofficial performances, interviews and fan mash-ups collide and queue up down the side of the main music video.

The article is interested in visual presence, not in fans or audiences or in discursive representation; it is not concerned with the continuing fandom across the life-course (Jennings, 2012) or of the modalities of the ageing voice (Elliott, 2015). It is interested in the contemporary female performer's (here PJ Harvey) collisions with images from past performances. It builds on work in the area of popular music and ageing to highlight the current contradictions surrounding how women 'appear' as music performers within an audio-visual regime that has a constant recourse to youth. It is therefore concerned with the 'visual' side of this audio-visual medium. This is not to discount the importance of what has been termed 'the vocalic body' (Connor, 2006:35; Jarman-Ivens, 2011:7, 8), that is, the associative but complex relationship between the body and the voice, but the focus is on the centrality of the youthful body and its role as anchorage to ageing within the YouTube music video medium.

Using Moglen's (2008) work on 'transageing', and referring to Ricoeur's work on time and narrative, the article argues that YouTube's presentational rhetoric is indicative of a tension between vertical and horizontal modes of ageing. This latter mode is a particularly useful lens through which to enter the uncertain temporality of the YouTube platform and is illustrative

of the tensions that abound within popular music culture over the role of the ageing woman in relation to performance within an audio-visual domain argued for in the current field (Jennings and Gardner, 2012; Elliott, 2015; Jermyn and Holmes, 2015). Moglen's work is a psychoanalytical exploration of ageing and the self; an attempt to think outside of the expected narrative trajectory. It offers this article a route that navigates what I consider to be a pull between a feminist frustration over the ways in which the ageing female performer is constantly measured up against a youthful self and the possibilities of looking beyond the age/youth schism. Her work narrates a path between lamentation and celebration which applies to what is happening on YouTube; lamentation over the disappearing ageing body at the expense of the sidebars of youth and celebration of a destabilised chronology. Moglen is writing about her ageing process and re-reading Freud in order to do so. She moves beyond what she calls a 'vertical' model of ageing, which is driven by repression and based on a modernist concept of the integrated subject, towards a horizontal model characterised by dissociation, which is aligned to a post-structuralist, de-centered subject (2008:304). Her use of the indices, 'vertical' and 'horizontal' suggest a spatial link within a subject that has something to do not only with the relationship of the unconsciousness to the conscious, as she details, but the subjective experiencing of time and ageing. The horizontal, dissociative model, she argues, 'is the more capacious model for the consideration of the experience of ageing because it can serve an incorporative or an introjective function' (2008:297). The incorporative function is defensive, maintaining 'ghostly spectres of youth as consuming objects of loss and desire' (2008:297). The introjective function, by contrast, 'initiates a dynamic and creative process in which multiple self-states of past and present are available for recognition and enactment' (2008:297). This introjective function within her dissociative, horizontal model allows for a complex and creative dialogue that she calls 'trans-ageing', the 'constant, erratic movement that takes place in consciousness across, between and among the

endlessly overlapping states of being and stages of life' (2008:306). The word that helps us map her model across to YouTube is 'overlapping' as this is her reading of the more positive introjective function whereby experience, affect, memory and age all collide and complement each other. This process is similar to the overlapping of the dis-chronological images of PJ Harvey from across her career as they share space in the side bar margins of the YouTube screen with her contemporary work. However, it is worth keeping in mind that the two functions within Moglen's horizontal dissociative model may co-exist and cause tension. Sowhilst YouTube enables a temporal logic of linearity to be confused and displaced enabling introjective opportunities, traces of Moglen's incorporative and defensive 'spectres' may still be at play. This then forces us to consider arguments around bodily presence and performance in relation to ageing within this circular audio-visual regime that is defined by repetition and a flattening out of chronological time.

YouTube is reliant on loop technology, whereby material is constantly fed back on itself. It is similar to the recording technique that layers up sound to produce texture and volume. Here, in YouTube, it is used to build up an archaeological stratum of an artist that is user generated. Algorithms are also driving the user experience, determined as it is by 'aggregated practices of sequential viewing' (Airoldi, 2016:1). Academic work on this algorithmic engine behind the YouTube screen suggests the complex mechanisms by which users will encounter music videos (Airoldi, 2016; Davidson, 2010; Bendersky, 2014). This article acknowledges those debates in relation to video suggestion, network culture and entry mechanics, whilst adding in the musical notion of looping to articulate how videos are fed into the sidebars, with a particular emphasis on the chronological discontinuity of these loops. But it does not seek to add to arguments over that 'engine', rather it is interested in the surfaces of YouTube and their importance as everyday encounters. Twenty-year-old videos popping up as current ones

are searched for would tend to suggest that this loop culture is presenting Harvey's past at the expense of her current creative activity. This is similar to the televisual recap, whereby, after an advertising break, the show's narrative is replayed and explained to an audience who might just be coming into the show at mid-point. For those new viewers 'coming into' PJ Harvey, her back catalogue is presented as orientation and contextualisation. It serves to present her current performances alongside ones a quarter of a century earlier within the same feedback loop and this is important because it flattens out time. This enables YouTube to function in part as a 'flat archive', one where there is no due reference to the past but rather, a collapse of the past into the present and the past as present similar to Jameson's (1992) idea of postmodernity's disavowal of historical lineage. It is a development of the continuous present proposed by Jameson (1992) whereby the 'now' is historically decontextualized in an ahistorical amnesia. But it is also different to Jameson's flattened down temporal terrain because of the repetition and type of imagery against which the contemporary PJ Harvey is presented. The nuances afforded to narratives of ageing by this reorganisation of videos from the past and present in particular how they are enabled by this flatness and circularity subtly impacts on narratives of ageing as they are represented within the YouTube video site.

Elodie Roy (2015) has written about this relationship as the two 'modes' of YouTube:

Two main modes of accessing a YouTube video seem to exist side by side: either one knows what one is looking for, and YouTube acts as a 'find engine', or one drifts from one video to the other, using the 'related videos' search engine.

Roy, 2015:161.

Roy's use of the verb 'drift' refers to the French Situationist's remapping of urban space.

'Drifting', in its Debordian sense, was similar but not the same as 'the flâneur', and both combatted boredom with the familiar, rewriting the pathways of city living by deviating from the mapped environment. The 'drifters' marked themselves out as resistant to any uni-directional purpose, of doing or of working and, it might also be argued, they refuted capitalist time that is written into the expected trajectories along which such routes are

prescribed. The YouTube ‘drift’, is both an extension and a re-articulation of Debord. It is integrated into that YouTube map and so not unexpected. It allows the user any entry point into an artist’s back catalogue, where they can hear the youthful voice, see the younger body, and be afforded a degree of ergodic corporeal and vocal travel. It is also a tense and liminal space between the ‘timesuck’ that might exemplify aimless internet surfing and the audiencing of any one particular music video. Others suggest there are three ‘ways’ into YouTube. Davidson et al suggest that there is ‘*direct navigation*’, *search and goal-orientated browse*’ and ‘*unarticulated want*’ (2010:293) but clearly, one mode can intrude on another, might ‘suggest’ a view not anticipated (Bendersky et al, 2014:1769).

The move down the sidebar to video material that is related to the one originally searched for is a significant relocation from one mode to another. This is a semantic deconstruction of the activity, whereby drift is both a movement away from a core activity and potentially, its very substance. Indeed, writing on ‘Music and Discovery’, Tom McCourt and Nabeel Zuberi note how ‘Online platforms do much of the work of discovering music, navigating listeners through databases and delivering sounds calibrated from richer and more nuanced user profiles’ (2016:123). Their focus is Spotify and algorithmic led music platforms but their nod to the agency of the database in delivering sounds might be mapped onto YouTube’s ‘steering’ of the viewer as it ‘drifts’ through these thumbnail sidebars. This culture of (non)haphazard encounters is described by Airoidi as ‘exploration pathways’ (2016:3)

Sidebars are an ‘everyday’ feature of the online world’s design praxis that the video platform YouTube is part of, why consider them important? It’s only a ‘thumbnail’, insignificance is written into it. It is easy to overlook the significance of what, on first enquiry, seems trivial, easy perhaps to not notice the banality of ones surroundings as they subtly shift. But this is

what this article is about; the slight modification, in particular, of how YouTube's internal architectural structure shifts focus constantly to the past and how this in turn, has a potential impact on how age appears. It is an attempt to look at the familiar through a different perspective, one whose primary focus is ageing. Something is at stake in this visual online arrangement and this 'something' is age, specifically with respect to women and ageing in popular music. As Jean Burgess and John Green state in the preface to their work on YouTube, 'Love it or loathe it, YouTube is now part of the mainstream media landscape, and a force to be reckoned with in contemporary popular culture' (2009: vii). As such, it is important to look at how the dynamics of ageing map out in music videos across the platform, not in the performances themselves but in the selection of what is on offer, in the menu. It is in the spaces of this most everyday environment that claims can be made about the potential repercussions of audio-visual media storage, in this case that it problematizes ageing by a constant exhortation to reify youth through the drift to the past. The side-bars historicize Harvey, presenting her within her 'canon' and rendering her legible to new audiences within that canon. These side-bars are navigational tools confirming her authenticity via past performances. She cannot, within a popular music economy that reveres lineage, escape these versions of her youth.

Arrested Development: PJ Harvey's music videos on YouTube

PJ Harvey is a critically acclaimed and commercially successful English musician. Appearing on the independent music scene in the early 1990s, she has produced nine studio albums, won the Mercury Prize twice (in 2001 and 2011), written poetry (*The Hollow of the Hand*), guest-edited the BBC Radio 4 show (on October 9th, 2014), been awarded an MBE (July, 2013) and an honorary doctorate (at Goldsmiths, University of London, September, 2014). Across her career, she has mobilised various musical traditions and genres to offer a singular vision of

desire, sexuality, and more recently, of nation (Gardner, 2015). Seamus Murphy, with whom she co-wrote *The Hollow of the Hand* directed the videos for *Let England Shake* (2011) and *The Hope Six Demolition Project* (2016). They offered a different aesthetic, still in line with the albums' concerns (Vernallis, 2004) but with Harvey performing as narrator and as herself, the musician. This was a change from her performances of the archetypal feminine figures of her performances between 1993 and 2007 which had seen her illustrate her alienation from archetypal feminine figures and re-inhabit them anew through music, gesture, lyrics and costume (the femme fatale (in *DOWN BY THE WATER*, 1995), the hysteric (*MAN-SIZE*, 1993), or the whore (*50FT QUEENIE*, 1993)).

I know a lot about these earlier PJ Harvey videos because ever since YouTube began in June 2005, I have been watching them on it. That's a lot of watching. This was part of a PhD research project on her performances within video and has not stopped. For over ten years I was interested in what was in those videos and concentrated on her performance; of camp, the diva, the femme fatale and of Englishness. Recently, as my work has focused more on women and ageing across popular music, I have turned my attention to what lies outside of the videos. This is not to say that the concern now is with marginalia, whereby the margins, the sidebars and click baits, have become central to the visual economy at the expense of the text or video itself. Rather, that those margins are informing how age is articulated on YouTube through their repetitive, flattening and sequential nature. This article is therefore centred on that very realignment of the visual arena within which video performances now take place and about the potential ramifications for ageing women within a rearticulated visual economy. YouTube is one component within a broader shift in popular cultural conceptions of time, which in turn, impact on how ageing appears across audio-visual popular culture. The key difference in this shift, of which YouTube is part, is the move away

from thinking about age as a predominantly linear concept which progresses through distinct stages in an expected narrative arc. This is not to say that these stages do not exist as experiential and representational possibilities, but YouTube's platform of audio-visual ergodism urges a rethink of age as chronological whilst continuing to confirm youth as the dominantly important (st)age by which an artist is anchored.

By way of illustration, it is worth narrating the viewing/drifted process whereby this potentiality emerged. The methodology involved investigating the normality of my own daily music video encounter and from that, seeing what patterns emerged. It is therefore, to a very small extent, a media contents analysis. From June to September 2016, I 'directly navigated' (Davidson, 2010:293) to the music video for 'Community of Hope' screen grabbed the opening shots and began to assemble them all together. I noticed that if I chose not to use full screen, which I rarely choose unless I am really concentrating or pausing the video for research purposes, my eye was diverted from the video in the centre of the screen by the thumbnails on the right. These offered me glimpses of Harvey's history and career. There was a constant diversion to scenes from her past that collided into the same visual space wherein her current album was being presented. This diversionary capacity has become so normalised, so much part of a new way of seeing, of our visual navigations, that it seems almost too obvious to analyse any further. It is simply how things are now. But that violent juxtaposition of the past into the present is part of a newly disordered and yet entirely normalised digital audio-visual state, whereby chronological certitude is now redundant. This process of being confronted by an insistent youthfulness in the form of older videos was not only apparent in *my* searches of PJ Harvey videos, compounded as they were by previous searches and views within a side bar narrating a personal viewing preference history but is the norm. Were I to view HUNG UP (2009) by Madonna, (whom I had not previously

searched for) then LIKE A VIRGIN (1984) and VOGUE (1990) would also appear down the sidebars (on 14/1/17). Searching three days later (on 20/1/17) would result in a different side bar menu, but still with old Madonna videos on it, this time LIKE A PRAYER (1989) and PAPA DON'T PREACH (1986).

YouTube's 'wallpaper of the past' has a nagging impact on how we read the body's progress through time, in particular how it ages. The dominance of this visual regime might be played out in other real-life scenarios too. On Twitter, for example, a music writer complains about a PJ Harvey performance at a festival in Sweden being too contemporary. Chris Lilley writes 'Someone urgently needs to remind PJ Harvey that she has a 20 + year recording career and not just two concept albums about war #wowgbg' (12/08/2016 on Twitter). In 2016, Harvey released her ninth studio album, *The Hope Six Demolition Project* and, in line with standard music industry promotional practice, was touring it. She only pulled out a small number of numbers from her backlog, concentrating instead on the work from her two most recent albums, *Hope Six* (2016) and *Let England Shake* (2011). This attempt to forge newness, to foreground her recent creative endeavors and maintain her creative edge, sits uneasily with the demand for familiarity and for work from her younger self; the same old story or songs.

The argument for familiarity and recognition is not a new one (Adorno 1991, Fiske, 2011:84) across popular culture practices, but there is a degree of discomfort between the re-performing of the past and the presentation of the new, which sat ill with some Harvey fans. Indeed, it is perhaps only in the studio where newness might be forged, away from an audience that clamours familiarity and a return of the same. PJ Harvey is not yet 50 years old, but her ageing process is informed by visions of her in her youth, and there are questions around this that in particular, as a feminist scholar of popular music, are important to address,

not least because this visual regime works to temper age, to refer backwards, to look at what used to be. Rock careers are played out in performance, and now that those performances emerge in music video, which in turn, are hosted on YouTube, it is time to question the environment wherein those performances sit and how ageing is presented not in the videos themselves, but in the amalgam of archive videos and performances that continue to stick to the ageing performer.

Ageing in Popular Music

Ageing is starting to matter in popular cultural studies but the matter of ageing within YouTube is, at present, unwritten. From the gerontology and sociology driven research of Stephen Katz (1996, 2000, 2014) and Barbara Marshall (2002, 2014), which explored the links between ageing and representative media mechanisms, to the feminist work being done on ageing in a visual media (Krainitzki, 2015, 2016; Swinnen, 2013, 2015), it has become a productive lens through which to reconsider media. Less beholden to the gerontological import and more couched within conventional musicological and cultural studies traditions, other work is focused on older performers and the ‘sound’ of age (Elliott, 2015), on ageing within subcultures (Bennett, 2006, 2013; Hodkinson, 2015) and on the representation of older women across popular music (Jennings and Gardner, 2012). There is too, a lot of work on memory and music in relation to community archives (Cohen, 2014; Collins, 2014, Baker and Collins, 2015). Age, across these interventions, is approached generally as an unchallenged marker; it, especially women’s ageing, is understood and deconstructed as caught up within a broader problematic nexus of appearance, appropriacy and acceptability (and so continues a feminist critical practice). It is positioned as a qualitative experience. But there remains, to date, a paucity of work on ageing as it surfaces within the changing topographies of popular music encounters; that is, how ageing is understood within broader digital environments.

Some of the more recent work on ageing and popular music has sought to question the ‘false dichotomy of young and old people’ (Jennings in Twigg and Martin, 2015: 82) in favour of understanding that ageing is, as its grammatical structure implies, a continuum and open to the kinds of temporal slippages that Moglen claims. This reappraisal is illustrative of the research into ageing and the media that has been taking place within The Women Ageing and Media research centre (<http://wamuog.co.uk>) at The University of Gloucestershire, which began with AHRC funding in 2007. Along with its international partners at The University of Montreal, the European Network of Aging Studies (ENAS), the North American Network of Aging Studies (NANAS) and the ACT project (Concordia), these hubs are centred on opening up the dialogues between ageing studies and other disciplines and deliver their research into journals such as *The Journal of Aging Studies*, *Age, Culture and Humanities* and *The Journal of Cultural Gerontology*.

Scholarly interest in ageing is therefore located in ethnographic, sociological, musicological and Cultural Studies’ frames of reference; age is respectively located as experienced (old age), recalled and reified. Much of this work too does not dispute or reconsider where, along an ageing continuum, age might be placed. For example, work by Jacqueline Warwick and Allison Adrian, (2016), investigating girlhood through different interrogations of ‘voice’ remains centred on the notion of fixed points of ageing. These points offer delineations of types of age that emerge across many of these works, youth, middle, old, although the categorisation of ‘old’ in particular, remains vexed (Jennings and Gardner, 2012: 3). ‘Old’ age within popular music emerges in the representative mechanisms of the UK Music and mainstream media discourses as ‘heritage’ (Empire, 2011) or ‘colostomy’ rock (Strausbaugh, 2001). These are descriptive terms for artists in their 60s, 70s and 80s as they continue to

tour. 'Heritage' rock positions the ageing musician as a cultural icon, similar to an 'event' or a 'listed building' and so part of a national landscape that is marked by reverence and acceptability. 'Colostomy' points to the physical decline that may mark the end of life of the ageing individual, and, by its reference too, provokes perhaps disgust, shame or empathy by the nature of this decline in its loss of physical control and its descent towards the abject, irrational body; leaking, demented, out of control (Grosz, 1994) and in need of care. These two forms of description point to the ageing rock star as both reified and reviled, canonical and comic. If this potentially declining body is repeatedly propped up by exhortations to its past, where on YouTube we can see it performing as its younger self, this somehow lessens the materiality of the present through its repeated exhortation of youth.

Ageing and Repetitive Circularity

Repetitive evocation (or circularity) of the past/youth complicates the linearity of the ageing process. It maintains that PJ Harvey's 'nowness'; her (middle) ageing body is constantly inflected by earlier performances. This is not to say that her body is 'haunted' by its past since the ramifications of this term, mostly from Mark Fisher's (2014) work, would suggest a melancholia and loss coupled with the return of the unwanted or unfinished that does not work here. Rather, images of her in her youth are not those of Fisher's melancholically unfinished bodies, but Moglen's 'consuming objects of [both] loss and desire' (2008: 297) and thus contradictory. What I am suggesting instead is that there is an overlapping of moments in time that the YouTube platform affords and this overlap impacts on the currency of the contemporary ageing body by its parallel evocation of the past. This juxtaposition of the past and present enables a degree of circularity in terms of how to place a performance in linear time and is a process that might be aligned to pop's cyclical character (Reynolds, 2011). This has implications for how performers such as Harvey remain mediated by their

youthful past as they mature, where their former selves/versions repeatedly share screen space with their present.

Writing on pop music and feminism within neoliberalism, Robin James (2015) considers the role of repetition within current popular music forms noting its history and its status. Her argument covers the debate over the European 'secreting' of repetition as progress (James, 2015:54), in favour of accumulation and growth and she looks to arguments made by Tricia Rose and James Snead in turn, on different approaches to the construction and reception of repetition in music in Afro-American music and 'European culture' (Snead, 1981, cited by James (2015:55). The key to her argument is that it is queer and Black musical and artistic cultures that have prioritised repetition, un-hitched as they are to a modernist principle of progress. This, mapped out onto a culture whereby the neo-liberal individual is primary, her argument seems to suggest current patterns in repetition within mainstream popular music offer a different 'take' on modernity as progress. What is worth taking from her work is this idea of the positive appeal of the repeat. This will not be news to musicians; in fact, it is almost banal to suggest anything else. But if we consider how narrative structures have been paramount within the popular music canon, that even house music and trance encode narrative or emotional trajectories into their sequences, then we can start to piece together a pattern whereby it is the narrative journey that has primacy over repetition. And this maps across to the dominant Western and modernist understanding of ageing as a chronological narrative. And so this then, is where YouTube's display screen confounds such chronological complacency.

The repeated imagery of a youthful PJ Harvey on YouTube manifests as an example of an audio-visual culture which is experiencing (and this quote comes from a call for papers for a

symposium hosted by the University of Southampton in October, 2016) ‘a situation where temporal coordinates are as interestingly mixed and layered as are our geopolitical situations’ (<http://www.southampton.ac.uk/amt/news/events/2016/10/future-past-tense.page>). The work being done here is focused on art and visual culture and yet its direction in terms of approaching the relationship between past and present is a fruitful seam to follow for rethinking ageing within an audiovisual terrain such as YouTube. The mixing and layering up of co-ordinates is what happens in Roy’s (2015) ‘drifting’ process, in particular, the past impinges constantly on the present. This situation, wherein past remnants remain as indicators of a present persona, calls to mind Ricoeur’s (1990) work on time, specifically his ideas on the uncertainties of temporality, which is taken up by Keith Negus (2012) to map out how popular music negotiates time. Negus uses Ricoeur’s work on the uncertainties of temporality to carve out a space from where he formulates questions over the relationship between popular music and time. The motivation to do this is driven by the understanding that there is a huge literature on place and identity in relation to music, but not much, if anything, on time and how that impacts on music production and consumption. Negus seeks to set out a stage from whence to do this, acknowledging that much work on the relationship between music and time has been done, on how music ‘unfolds in time, and is performed, played back, and engaged with as an “art of time”’ (Negus, 2012: 483). Music, for Negus, marks time. Ricoeur argues that narrative grids make sense of time (1983:338 in Negus, 2012:484) as sequences that are realised through factual and fictional accounts. Ricoeur’s key premise is that there are distinctions between ‘cosmic time’, lived time and clock time; the first is too huge to be understood by humans, the second is lived and the third is calculated through mechanisms developed across cultures to section and organise time. Within ‘lived time’, there is the ‘paradox of the triple present, the present of the past, present of the future, present of the present’ (Negus, 2012:486). Ricoeur explains how ‘we experience the past as

something that no longer exists, yet which is also apparent as an “encore” and “memory” or as “traces” and “remnants” in the present’ (Negus, 2012:486). Ricoeur’s reading of time is that it is somehow ‘messy’, and unruly, and that language and social constructs aim to divert attention from this unruliness. YouTube is a representative regime which thrives on this unruliness and is illustrative of a new way of conceptualising time, which in turn, must be important to how we read and reconfigure, narratives of time as they are affixed to ageing and ageing bodies, across popular music and indeed, beyond. Part of YouTube’s role in this reconceptualization of temporality is in its potentially archival status.

Ageing in the Flat Archive

YouTube is and is not an archive. Writers on media, memory and materiality call it a ‘default media-archive interface’ (Garde-Hansen, 2011:80) and if they claim it as an archive, then it is ‘unstable’ (Roy, 2015:153), ‘accidental’ and disordered’ (Burgess and Green, 2009:88).

Robert Gehl (2009) suggests that it is not an archive in and of itself. Rather, it is a ‘Wunderkammer’, a decontextualized, chaotic and flattened cabinet of wonders. Archival status is, instead, afforded internally within YouTube by bloggers who taxonomise the videos and create meaningful narratives. If we agree that YouTube has the potential at some points in its existence, however unstable, to be considered an archive, in so far as it orders and creates knowledge in the Derridean sense, then there could be something important in the positioning of Harvey’s younger self alongside her present in YouTube’s ‘flat’ archive. The archive controls material, renders it ‘ordered’; labels, partitions, categories, these are the dividing mechanisms of the analogue archive, sorting and clarifying. Taxonomy has changed in YouTube. Algorithms, tags and adverts are the markers of this digital state, filtering our consumption for us and organising our access to the clickable world.

YouTube is, however, an unruly archive with respect to ageing. Its flat internal chronological architecture offers no chronological coherence within its presentational structure. PJ Harvey's ageing body is missing at the same time as her youthful body reappears. Earlier in her career, her music video performances were focused on the body, on *her* body; it is the focus, the centrepiece, which she excavated time and time again with questions around desire and female sexuality. More recently, her work has dealt with war, national identity and belonging, has ventured into reportage, and here her body is no longer the central focus. In recent videos, she appears as narrator, as an extra, as marginal or not at all. Ageing is making her body disappear from view. This is not merely because she has chosen to mine new material, to develop 'new areas of expression ...and to transition into a more political sphere musically' (Gardner and Flint-Nicol, 2016:173), which is her prerogative as a musician, but in so doing, she has withdrawn 'her presence as star and author from the cover images and videos' (ibid, 2016:172). In this earlier, co-written piece, which was focused on the Gothic potential of PJ Harvey, we argued that her body 'returns [as a] a spectral presence in the public consumption of her work (ibid, 2016: 172). Revisiting this idea in relation to this article's focus, and with Moglen as a theoretical navigator means that for the ageing body to be continually ambushed by loss and desire for youth negates the potential for the ageing performer to be a continuing site of desire (specifically in relation to an audience that ages with them, (see Jennings, 2012). It also fails to account for the 'ageing self as a dynamic multiplicity of innumerable selves: a compilation that is subject to endless, subterranean revision' (Moglen, 2008:304). This positive view of the polysemic self is promising for approaching the experiential self, but the stubborn and repeating self within the YouTube domain is the youthful self. This is indicative of the 'everyday story' referred to in the title of this article where narratives of ageing within YouTube are subject to similar patterns of erasure visible across popular music. It is not a new story. Older women disappear from film, television as they age, by contrast,

popular music genres such as jazz, soul and folk have been kinder, less enslaved to a regime of youth, since they operate not outside the parameters of a visual regime of youth and desire, but are less beholden to them, for reasons that are outside the parameters of this article (Jermyn, 2016; Jermyn and Holmes, 2015). No, it is not a new story but it can be edited; ageing women appear as part of maternal canon (e.g. Shirley Collins, Calypso Rose, Shirley Bassey), they re-emerge as literary Grande-dames (Patti Smith, Viv Albertine, Tracy Thorn, Kim Gordon) and they continue as the chanteuse (Marianne Faithful, Petula Clarke). PJ Harvey is a performing musician. She tours, she writes poetry, she makes creative comment on current affairs, she continues in an artistic career. On YouTube, this career is inescapably and consistently visually interpellated by the proliferation of images from her past performances.

Conclusion

This foray into YouTube's internal scopic architecture has suggested that there is something at stake here for ageing and women, and that Harvey's work offers a good platform from which to begin to pursue this. First, the repetition of the past alongside the present ensures that the past has an equal claim on viewing attention as the present and is inextricably connected to it. We cannot see a video out of its historical context, even when that history itself appears as de-chronologised. There is always a back-story; always a residue of youthfulness. The creative impetus of an artist, and the desire to make new music is consistently mapped out against this archival back catalogue, which anchors the ageing body to the younger version from which it can never fully escape. The hold that youth has over the contemporary version of the artist therefore cannot be underplayed although the ageing performer can produce strategies to present themselves as a 'dynamic...a compilation' (Moglen, 2008:304). There is clearly more work to be done on this, a lot more; there are

audiences to ask, bloggers, viewers, fans, but as a starting point the suggestion put forward here is that YouTube has the potential to be a contributing factor in a broader shift around conceptualising temporality which in particular, upsets ageing as a linear process. Whilst this can be a multifaceted and positive turn, enabling the non-chronologous experience of ageing, as Moglen frames it, there are tensions that YouTube's scopic architecture reveals whereby the fixity of youth pursues the mutable ageing present. YouTube is one component within a broader culture where temporality's certainties are being confounded whilst youth remains the touchstone against which older women are mapped.

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