

Priscilla Hopper

LGBT 3796

Soares

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Repercussions of a Failed Facade

A perfect life does not exist. Our exteriors are facades for the inevitable failure of human life. We call this failure due to the fallacy created by the concept of a Normative Timeline.

We're unable to be human without our blemishes. It's impossible to be our perfect self, even at our best. We have the saying "I'm only human" but daily we punish ourselves and others on a case-by-case basis with judgement because of perceived flaws.

These are glitches, glitches in our societal standards for perfection. We accept the concept of weaknesses, but chastise one another because of them. "...we know the deception of the societal lie that endlessly looks toward a future whose promise is always a day away" (Edelman, 29). Here Edelman argues that by stepping outside of the Normative Timeline, you consequently are punished by society. It's wrong to have divorced parents; you come from a broken home. You cannot have body dysmorphia, but you also can't adhere to society's standards to be model-like. Your parents must be upper-middle class or it's assumed you live in a shack. You must have children or you don't care about your partner, your future, or the rest of your family. It's distractingly unfair.

C. Wright Mills made a distinction between personal troubles and public issues in 1959. Personal troubles refer to an issue "...affecting individuals that the affected individual, as well as other members of society, typically blame on the individual's own personal and moral failings..". On the other hand, public issues involve social problems affecting more than one individual.

Although this distinction exists, it's clear they have a direct line to one another. Mills understood that problems often examined as private troubles were naturally public issues, thus creating the term Sociological Imagination. "Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both," Mills wrote. We are often unable to distinguish between the personal and public issues in our lives, and the concept of a Normative Timeline is an example of how public issues candidly relate to personal ones. In fact, a Normative Timeline constructs an ideal way of living based on standards set by colonization. Unfortunately, decolonization in today's society seems somewhat unachievable, so each of us is unable to decouple from the norm set by a utopian ideal. However, the ideal is not the utopic want from society anymore. We long for diversity and defying the regular. But today, we still see each other's surface and social category.

Social media is the platform for unachievable expectation, it is the ultimate facade. Accounts and profiles represent an inauthentic culture. A faux timeline that impacts society and users' well-being. Growing up in Los Angeles, I experienced personal disruption due to unsettling judgement toward my social media presence. At 13 I felt like I was drowning in my online persona or posts. Social media presents the expectation to influence and, if you cannot persuade or evoke participation, you shouldn't have social media. Now, having matured out of the toxic nature of California, I feel unrestrained and liberated to post what interests me or what I want to document. A little video, a clip, weird picture, content that matters to me personally rather than attempting to appeal to the social order. I've evolved. I've succeeded to decouple from the concealing nature that social media is; it doesn't really matter anymore. Social media is merely a shortsighted categorical conviction platform that, once realized, can be used fearlessly.

The video I paired with this essay is an illustration of my personal timeline. It begins with my childhood. I'm happy. I'm free. I'm enjoying my life as a good and normal kid. Then, I jump to high school and college. There is virtually no difference in emotions in the clips when I am older, however, with age comes wisdom. As a teenager, I gain awareness of where society has placed me in its curriculum, vulnerable but in control--to a certain point. On the outside, you'd see me as a normal student, person, young woman, however, that barely scratches the surface. I edited these videos to emulate a simulation. Edelman argues that Normative Timelines are constructed around children, but when do we stop seeing the world as our playground... with freedom and without fear?

Part of us living is us glitching. We're skipping our way through society with our lovely facades of a pretty normal life. It's clear we have responsibilities, but why? Why is it my responsibility to stash away my earnings in a 401k? Why should my online persona represent my authentic self? We know deep down inside that bias is real and our realities have been molded for us, not by us. And try as we might to say otherwise, our insecurities and fears stem directly from the public's eye of us. Be fearless! Be real! But behind that exterior, we are not in as much control as we think, it's just a facade.

Works Cited

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