Music on the periphery: an inquisition into hyperfreak and hyperflip

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In this essay, I will discuss the rise of "hyperfreak" and hyperflip, two broadly defined subscenes of electronic dance music emerging from previous SoundCloud scenes, including hyperpop. Hyperfreak, hyperflip, and hyperpop are three connected but generally distinct genres that have risen on the SoundCloud streaming platform over the past few years. Hyperfreak and hyperflip are defined by musical qualities that have a high degree of overlap, which I will investigate later. There are many transgender musicians in these scenes, who invented them and continue to push their sonic implications to new realms. To discuss the cultural and gender impacts of these new subgenres, it is important to consider the historical and economic conditions they exist in. Historically, there are trends in electronic music that are distinctly feminist and queer, from disco through modern EDM today. Economically, these scenes are tied to the late-stage capitalist atmosphere of capitalist realism and its consequences for postmodern cultural production. This idea, pioneered by Mark Fisher, describes the critical context that helps to explain the emergence of these genres. Specifically, these scenes employ revivalism and pastiche through a heavy usage of sampling and forms that draw inspiration from all kinds of electronic dance music. The main question I will investigate is whether these scenes pose meaningful resistance to capitalist realism, whether they can be feminist and queer havens as their ancestors were, and the difference between subjective and objective experiences.

dance music as a queer, feminist practice.

It is important to investigate the historical nature of dance music as a queer and feminist safe haven. One of the first forms of electronic dance music which all contemporary dance music can trace its roots back to is disco. During the 1970s and into the 1980s, disco was one of the

most popular genres of music in America. It laid the groundwork for other foundational, more region-specific forms of electronic dance music, such as house music in Chicago and techno in Detroit. The song *Love to Love You Baby* is considered by author Danielle Sofer in their book *Sex Sounds: Vectors of Difference in Electronic Music* as a case study in disco and sex as mediated through electroacoustic music. In their analysis, Sofer calls out how Brian Currid had theorized dance clubs as "sequestered queer safe havens" where "club-goers became fueled by their identification with the sexually liberated diva to act out fantasies of performing the diva together with other dancers," (Sofer, 2022). While this interpretation is problematic regarding its reinforcement of the trope of typically Black female disco performers as hypersexual, it nonetheless paints the spaces disco was experienced in as progressive.

When disco became popular, straight white male rock critics distanced themselves from the genre due to its queer, African American or Latino audiences and performers. The backlash towards disco became so strong that it resulted in the Disco Destruction event at Comiskey Park in 1979, where participants were encouraged by radio DJ Steve Dahl to bring disco records to explode. According to Sofer, "In the words of musicologist Mitchell Morris, 'All the world knows by now that 'disco sucks' [and Disco Destruction were] a response of thinly disguised homophobia'" (Sofer, 2022). While both rock and disco had an electrified sound at this time, disco was rejected due to its perception as "inauthentic" and "lazy", while rock was glorified for its "authentic" character.

> Commonly equated with simplicity, disco's musical and textual repetition becomes transposed onto the identity of the performer, who is characterized as leisurely and unlaboring (Sofer, 2022).

With electronic dance music such as disco, technology serves as a mediator between the performer and the music. According to Bob Ostertag,

> With electronic dance music, the precise mental grid that had been lurking unheard for thousands of years behind human music was pushed out front and center and made audible (Ostertag, 2002).

With technology doing the heavy musical lifting, the performer becomes a mere player. They are disconnected from the physical, bodily performance of their music, and as Ostertag later states, the performance is done by the listeners. This sentiment is echoed by Sofer. While Ostertag finds the disconnect distasteful, in his own words, "Reaction to music with an electronically precise beat is the most generationally determined thing I have ever seen in music, or any other art form for that matter," (Ostertag, 2002).

From this, it can be determined that electronic dance music, from its early days, played a socially and musically progressive role as a genre. In *From Dance! To "Dance": Distance and Digits*, Simon Emmerson even states that "'Dance' with a capital 'D'… has articulated new listening modes, integrating sampling and mixing into the act of listening itself," (Emmerson, 2001). The distinct line between those who enjoyed early electronic dance music and those who criticized it was drawn through age, gender diversity, and acceptance of sexuality.

In the age of the internet, the relationship between body and musical performance has become further obscured. On SoundCloud, artists can remain anonymous beyond a screen name, with not even a distributor to link their identity to their music. For many artists, this is an advantage. Obscuring their bodily relationship to their music allows listeners to focus absolutely on the sound of the music, devoid of any indication of physical effort or locational context. This adds to the subjective factor of the music, emphasizing the personal connection between the

listener and the sounds of a given song. In the context of an individual listening to SoundCloud on their personal device, the individual's personal bodily reaction in the moment becomes the only tie between body and music. In the context of electronic dance music, this subjective thread is extended through hyperpop, hyperfreak, and hyperflip.

hyperpop, SOPHIE.

The musical ancestors of hyperfreak extend back to the mid-2010s with the emergence of PC Music. PC Music was an electronic music label featuring acts such as A.G Cook, QT, and SOPHIE. I will focus on the music of SOPHIE, as her work is widely regarded as foundational to the later hyperpop scene of the late 2010s and early 2020s from which hyperflip was born. When she first started releasing music, SOPHIE remained an all but anonymous figure. Before she was known for her solo work, most popular press focused on her production work for big pop acts such as Charli XCX. She focused on electronic synthesis for the sounds of her music, even going as far as to say "the language of electronic music shouldn't still be referencing obsolete instruments like kick drum or clap." (Xeon, 2014). It was only in 2017 with the release of the music video for "It's Okay to Cry" and the interviews that followed that SOPHIE revealed herself to be a transgender woman (Jocelyn, 2021).

SOPHIE's emphasis on sound synthesis and a unique was deeply intertwined with her experience of gender. According to music critic Hannah Jocelyn, "SOPHIE created a body of work that frantically tore apart sound and gender, where enhancement and exaggeration created the most authentic presentation." (Jocelyn, 2021). With the power of hindsight and an abundance of carefully researched evidence, many have argued that institutions have historically fought to keep women out of music (Nochlin, 1988). SOPHIE's music and her notion of physical instruments as "obsolete" can be understood to sever the already strained physical connection

between performer and music by removing the connotation of physically realizable instruments in electronic dance music. If SOPHIE's music is understood to be disconnected from this history through the exclusion of physically realizable instruments and absence of connection to physical space, it serves as a liberated, neutral space for the expression and presentation of gender constructions.

SOPHIE's sonic implications of space, liberation and gender were inspirational to her fans and a generation of young queer people. Among those queer people were many transgender musicians, the first hyperpop artists. These artists reproduced and built upon the enhanced and distorted soundscapes of SOPHIE, which was further augmented in hyperflip and hyperfreak. One can hear the emphasis on synthesized and non-physical sounds throughout hyperpop, which quickly gained popularity over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. Artists like quinn, Jane Remover, kmoe, tropes, Gupi, Fraxiom, 100 gecs, umru, and dollywood1 saw large gains in followers and listeners over the pandemic as artists held virtual concerts on Zoom and in Minecraft (Zollner, 2020). While these virtual spaces served as spaces for collaboration and community building, another key part of the genre was the usage of the digital streaming platform SoundCloud. While there are many unique aspects of hyperpop that were accentuated by the SoundCloud platform, the social nature of the platform was most important. SoundCloud allows for comments on tracks and reposts of tracks, which increased community sentiment among artists and allowed for instantaneous feedback on songs. The online, social nature of the platform also led to virtual collectives such as NOVAGANG. Due to A.G Cook's musical relationship with Charli XCX, PC Music began to bleed into her sound. Charli is arguably the biggest mainstream proponent of the scene, collaborating with 100 gecs, A.G Cook, SOPHIE, and umru, and endorsing countless others. Through quantifiable collaborations and qualitative

inspiration, the sensationalized, metallic sound of hyperpop has largely spread to mainstream pop. Listening to Charli XCX's music before and after the Vroom Vroom EP, entirely produced by SOPHIE, you can clearly hear the influence of SOPHIE's post instrument world.

paradigm (shift).

Finally, we arrive at the genre of dariacore. This is the direct relative of hyperflip, with little to distinguish the two besides their names. Dariacore was started by Jane Remover, a prominent artist of the hyperpop scene under an alternate SoundCloud account, leroy. Her first album, *Dariacore*, was released on May 14th, 2021 with sequels *Dariacore 2: Enter Here, Hell to the Left* and *Dariacore 3... At least I think that's what it's called?* following. The albums have never been released on other major digital streaming platforms like Spotify or Apple Music, only being available for purchase and download on Bandcamp. The Jane Remover Dariacore albums use excessive sampling of both music and memes, with frequent usage of sound bites such as a siren, glass breaking, and the Pink Panthress "hey" sound effect. Dariacore is "electronic music that's been filtered through over a decade of the internet's love-hate relationship with big-stage EDM and dubstep," according to Jesse Taconelli, the founder of Jane Remover's label (Press-Reynolds, 2021).

Hyperfreak is functionally an extension or subscene of hyperflip/Dariacore, all of which bear the same marks of SoundCloud culture as hyperpop. In hyperfreak, there is a larger proportion of sexually explicit lyrics, samples and remixes, with samples from songs such as "Peggy" by Ceechyna, "Nasty" by Tinashe, "You Make Me Feel…" by Cobra Starship featuring Sabi, or "Vroom Vroom" by Charli XCX. Hyperfreak often samples from hyperpop artists, which means the proportion of transgender musicians being sampled is much higher than with other genres such as hip-hop. This uplifts transgender musicians in an already liberated sonic

space. The aesthetic language of hyperfreak is expressed through the covers, song names and usernames of its artists. Artists reject marketability and mainstream appeal for appeals to dance, femininity, and sexuality, along with obscure references that serve as inside jokes to foster community. While the demographics of hyperfreak artists remain mysterious due to the highly anonymous nature of artists, the aesthetic values contribute to an environment which empowers women in their sexuality in a critical way. Susan McClary posits the need for this type of environment in *Feminine Endings*:

> Recently, theorists such as Teresa de Lauretis and Denise Riley have argued that women need to… practice deconstructive analyses of the tradition [of celebrating the body] when necessary, but also to try to imagine new social realities — worlds in which the celebration of the erotic need not reduce women back to sex objects, in which the intellect and the body can be mutually supportive and collaborative (McClary, 2002).

Taken in isolation, the celebration of eroticism in many of hyperfreak's samples and SOPHIE's gender-defiant landscape have a subjective quality to their feminism and euphoria of gender. By maintaining celebration of eroticism and extending it through dance and movement, hyperfreak allows for critical sonic palettes that can begin to build communities, or an objective factor.

I have assembled a short playlist as a case study for artists that exemplify the language of this genre through one of these means. In terms of artists names, slut and MOTHERF*CKER are sexual, while artists like tiffany, gwen, and leah embody more of the feminine aesthetic. The cover art of MOTHERF*CKER, three, tiffany, and slut exemplify the visual aesthetic of the scene and some of its tendencies. Figures 1 through 4 demonstrate cover art and artist profile art that is representative of the scene's aesthetic.
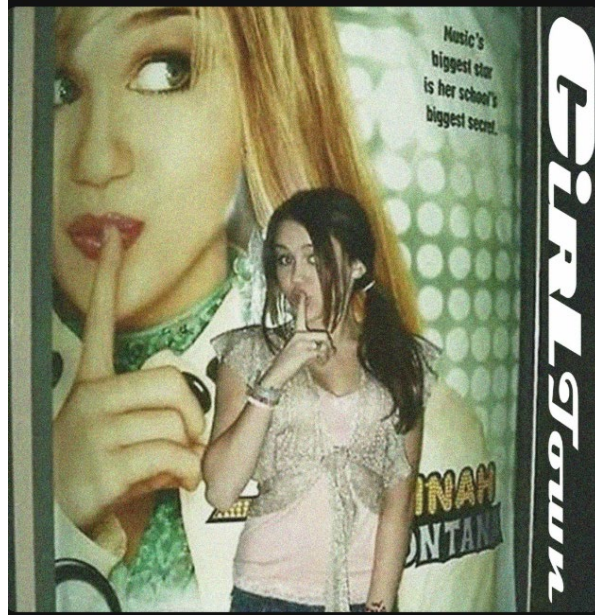
Fig. 1: Cover art for "#shakeTHAT" by three. This shows visual movement and dancing in a stylized way.

Fig. 2: Cover/profile art for MOTHERF*CKER, used as the cover for most of their songs. The tight shirt has sexual connotations. Credited to @hibiscuslover420

Fig. 3: Cover art for "prettygirl anthem #JACKMYSWAG" by tiffany. This exemplifies the feminized side of hyperfreak, which portrays and often samples mid-2000s women pop artists.

Fig. 4: Cover art for "Bass Down Low" by D V D, released under the nightcore4totalsluts compilation account. The artist name again uses slut in a reclaimed, ironic way.

masculine subversion.

Susan McClary understood that "the principal innovation of seventeenth-century tonality is its ability to instill in the listener an intense longing for a given event: the cadence," which "organizes time by creating an artificial need [for a certain pitch]." After the need is established, "tonal procedures strive to postpone gratification of that need until finally delivering the payoff in what is technically called the 'climax', which is quite clearly to be experienced as metaphorical ejaculation" (McClary, 2002). Using the context of the movement-scale phallic tension and release in sonata form enumerated by Susan McClary in *Feminine Endings*, the modern EDM buildup/drop structure can be understood as a phallic, masculine build and release of musical tension. Tension is added during the buildup using continuous effects such as filter sweeps and tremolo, and discrete effects such as increasing subdivision of rhythm in percussion fills and "dropping out" the kick drum (Smith, 2021). All the buildup effects come to fruition in the drop, which is the most energetic and danceable part of the song. The drop reintroduces the kick drum and premiers the chorus or reiterates it with more energy on songs with vocals, serving as a phallic climax. Hyperfreak and hyperflip deconstruct and subvert the importance of the drop through excessive usage of buildup, excessive usage of drops, or the absence of preparation. Many songs include more than two drops or no formal drops at all. Often, the drop happens with little tension preparation at all, which destabilizes the central nature of tension/release structures in EDM. For example, in Joker's "GUILLOTINE", the first drop is prepared by 2 bars of anticipation, compared to 16 bars in Zedd and Foxes' "Clarity". The second drop of "GUILLOTINE" uses an 8-bar build but destabilizes the tension with 2-bars of "anti-drop", where the melody is stripped away but the drums are introduced and remain for the rest of the drop. In three's "Let's Get This Over With …… [NONSTOP]", the drop is formally

prepared by 2 beats after the beginning of the measure, in a subversion known as "jumping the 1". Other examples on the case study playlist subvert the drop in other ways. Musically, hyperfreak also distinguishes itself from hyperflip with more chromatic and altered sixth motion, especially in bass patterns. The bass sounds themselves are often more transient and stab-like in hyperfreak, but due to the breadth of influences for the scene it is not universally true. The sonic features of hyperfreak are often less distorted and frantic than hyperflip, with less high frequency content and more legible samples. Percussion patterns stick more towards the strong beats of the measure, while hyperflip tends towards a skittish double or half time feel.

Fig. 5: Typical EDM buildup and drop in Zedd and Foxes' "Clarity". 0:39-1:24.

sampling, for context.

Sampling is a central musical tool used by hyperfreak and hyperflip artists, often to an overwhelming degree in hyperflip. There are significant ramifications of sampling as digital musical practice. Described in *Sound Unbound: Sampling Digital Music and Culture,*

Sampling follows the logic of the abstract machinery of a culture where there are no bodies—just simulations of bodies. The fragment speaks for the whole; the whole is only a single track drifting through a vast database… Once, every sound had a distinct source. A door slammed shut, a horn was blown, a guitar string was strummed. Audio came from a discrete event; it was tied to a discernible action (Miller, 2008).

Sampling is paradoxical. It removes sounds from their previous cultural and locational contexts, relying on the simulation of previously recorded events to represent and reinterpret meaning. Yet, sampling often relies on the listener's intimate knowledge of the source material to recognize the sample *as a sample* in the new context. To examine the usage of samples in hyperfreak and hyperflip, it is useful to reference the concept of plunderphonics. The idea is referenced by hyperflip artists in their track tags, most notably by Jane Remover in her latest album as leroy, *Grave Robbing***.** As defined by Greg Kot, plunderphonics is a term for "any music made completely out of existing audio recordings, including copyrighted material, and then altered in some way to create a new composition." The concept, presented by John Oswald in 1985, posits that musical repurposing and reproduction has been done for decades, and that sampling is merely an extension of these practices into the digital age. He references the precarity of the line between original and derivative works throughout history, with examples such as jazz solo quotations, melody borrowing in various genres.

The distinction between sound producers and sound reproducers is easily blurred, and has been a conceivable area of musical pursuit at least since John Cage's use of radios in the Forties… The sound of music conveyed with a new authority over the airwaves is dubbed, embellished and manipulated in kind (Oswald, 1985).

Oswald advocates for "a state of music without fences, but where, as in scholarship, acknowledgement is insisted upon," to democratize music reproduction and benefit those who want to reproduce creatively (Oswald, 1985). In *Plunderphonia* by Chris Cutler, regarded as the most definitive writing on plunderphonics, he writes

> [S]ince the turn of the century the importation of readymade materials into artworks has been a common practice, and one which has accumulated eloquence and significance. The re-seeing or re-hearing of familiar material is a well-established practice and, in high art at least, accusations of plagiarism are seldom raised. More to the point, the two-way traffic between high and low art (each borrowing and quoting from the other) has proceeded apace. Today it is often impossible to draw a clear line between them… The old values and paradigms of property and copyright, skill, originality, harmonic logic, design and so forth are simply not adequate to the task [of discussing plunderphonics] (Cutler, 1994)

Cutler understands that in the postmodern world, the distinctions between low and high art have been greatly eroded, and old, legally enshrined measures of quality are unable to categorize good and bad acts of plunderphonics. Much of Oswald's essays revolve around the inability of the legal system to deal with plunderphonics in a meaningful way, which is grounded in fair use and copyright law. Copyright law revolves around the idea that cultural productions like music are entirely unique and original, and that the producer can therefore own the rights to the contents within. While explicit examination of copyright law is outside the scope of this essay, it is sufficient to understand that the idea of cultural productions as private property is a concept firmly rooted in capitalism. To counter this notion, which is implicitly accepted by legal institutions of the state today, Daphne Keller states in her essay in *Sound Unbound*, "Human

culture is always derivative, and music perhaps especially so. New art builds on old art. We hear music, process it, reconfigure it, and create something derivative but new" (Miller, 2008).

In hyperfreak, sampling is to ground new pieces in the nostalgic and build community through the usage of commonly known media through the subculture. Miller echoes the sentiments of Cutler in *Sound Unbound*, arguing

> The tendency to recombine fragments of media, to play with the pieces as pieces, has of course been a prominent artistic trope in recent decades. It is seen not only in music, but in a great deal of contemporary artwork, much of which emerged in dialogue with the poststructuralist theory of Lacan, Barthes, Foucault, and other (Miller, 2008).

> With the various mentions of the philosophical frameworks of postmodernism and poststructuralism and the economic system of capitalism, it is necessary to tie these concepts together using Mark Fisher's unifying theory of capitalist realism and explain why hyperfreak and hyperflip use sampling and plunderphonics.

capitalist realism.

The reuse and combination of past cultural forms are the only forms of cultural change under capitalist realism, as conceptualized by Mark Fisher in his work *Capitalist Realism*. Fisher describes capitalist realism as the character of capitalism in its late stages of development, arguing that this stage of capitalism began on October 6, 1979 with American acceptance of neoliberal policy and "supply-side economics." Capitalist realism is an atmosphere and an attitude that relies on the general acceptance that capitalism is natural and realistic, especially given the dearth of political alternatives.

A moral critique of capitalism, emphasizing the ways in which it leads to suffering, only

reinforces capitalist realism. Poverty, war, and famine can be presented as inevitable parts

of reality, while the hope that these forms of suffering could be eliminated if painted as

naive utopianism. Capitalist realism can only be threatened if it is shown to be in some

way inconsistent or untenable: if... capitalism's 'realism' turns out to be nothing of the sort

(Fisher, 2022).

In the past, capitalism was contested as an economic system. For a period, capitalism had

to battle with feudalism as a dominant economic system; after that, capitalism had to contend

with the Stalinism of the USSR for global dominance. During the periods of contest, people were

able to imagine futures beyond the scope of capitalism due to real resistance to the capitalist

system, whether that be the backward pull of feudal overlords who resisted change or the

Stalinist pull of the USSR's planned economy. However, in the modern day, Fisher says there has

been an absence in meaningful resistance to the capitalist system. The only anti-capitalism,

Fisher says, has been in the form of gestural anti-capitalist media. For example, *Wall-E*, a movie

that criticizes how one company destroys the world and ship humans off of it, performs our

resistance for us, which strips us of the obligation to resist the system. Capitalist realism

embraces neoliberal policies such as "flexibility" defined by the deregulation of Capital and

increase in proportion of part time labor; it entails "subordinating oneself to a reality that is

infinitely plastic, capable of reconfiguring itself at any moment" (Fisher, 2022). This, along with

the requirement that even if you internally criticize capitalism you take no action against it, leads

to what Slavoj Zizek describes as a "cynical distance" between internal attitudes and external

actions in individuals. You can feel that capitalism is bad for the world and understand its

negative impacts on you personally yet continue to operate in capitalist exchange precisely due to this cynical distance.

All of this contributes to the atmosphere of capitalist dominance which perpetuates every facet of life. One of the outcomes of capitalist realism is the inability to imagine futures that reorganize society without capitalism, which has led to the inability to imagine new cultural forms. Thus, "new" postmodern cultural practices have heavily relied on the *aesthetic* revival of past cultural moments and the combination of those through pastiche. I emphasize aesthetic because cultural forms are revived free of the notion that they can be models for lifestyle, without any reference to the social context that birthed them. Examples of this can be found in all facets of popular culture today, such as the popularity of "pop-punk", which is devoid of the anti-establishment attitudes of early punk music; fashion with the revival of styles such as 1990s and Y2K fashion, which were influenced by Black hip-hop culture and LGBTQ dance culture, respectively; and movies, with the countless video game/book ports that major studios are producing today. These are mechanically driven by capitalism's "'system of equivalence' that assigns all cultural objects a *monetary value*, thereby turning them into purely aesthetical objects," (Fisher, 2022). Fisher argues that culture is "precorporated" into the mainstream today, exemplified by the establishment of "alternative culture zones which endlessly repeat cultural gestures of rebellion and contestation as if for the first time" **cite**. New, "alternative" and "independent" cultural forms which represent desires have already been formatted and vetted so they can be incorporated into the mainstream. Through this lens, have hyperpop, hyperflip, or hyperfreak been able to break free from the chains of capitalist realism?

According to Simon Emmerson, there are two broad trends in postmodern cultural development, of which hyperfreak does not fit into. One is a trend of homogeneity, a "melding

together" of different music due to the interactions between world cultures encouraged by globalization. The other is the maintenance of "islands of strong ideology," which are carried over from modernism. These do not interact with each other, and are constantly in danger of subsumption by the forces of globalization (Emmerson, 2001). With Mark Fisher's understanding of capitalist realism, the danger for these "islands" is that they will lose their meaning and potential for subversive expression, which eliminates their culture entirely. For a genre like hyperfreak that is borne in a "post-history" society, this is not an issue. There is no historical, physical, or cultural basis for hyperfreak, hyperpop, or hyperflip that can be washed away by globalization. The scene is a decentralized community centered around a digital streaming platform; its distributed nature and basis in capitalist realism means it is not a "holdover" form from modernism. In fact, since sampling is so central to the scene, greater contact with different cultures brings more potential reference points for integration into new songs.

algorithmic subsumption.

If hyperpop independently enumerated resistance to the oppressive structures of society through musical language, this resistance was absorbed into the mainstream when Spotify developed the *hyperpop* playlist in 2019. For many in the community, this playlist was both a point of achievement and a point of contention. As the playlist became synonymous with the scene and played a more central role in who got played, artists began to meme the playlist, with the mere mention of it invoking a dry irony among those in the know. The *hyperpop* playlist demonstrates capitalist realism's ability to "precorporate", commodify, and commercialize potentially subversive forms of culture like hyperpop, which had created space for gender explorations. The space for gender constructions that hyperpop and SOPHIE provide are

fundamentally subjective. Due to technology's severance of the relationship between artist body and music, the only link between body and music in hyperpop is between the listener and the music. With no relationship besides listener and song, any musical expressions of gender or creation of liberated spaces by artists can be interpreted, co-opted, and dissipated by the cultural logic of capitalist realism. There is no better example of this mechanism in action than the neoliberal adoption of identity politics over structural change. While there are subversive consequences to hyperpop on an individual basis, structurally LGBTQ people, and particularly trans people, have never been in more danger. Politicians with the power to irrevocably make LGBTQ people safer fail to do so time and time again, with different political factions adding temporary protections then stripping them away. To this end, the problem with subjective constructions is that they must ultimately face the objective material conditions described by capitalism realism.

two ends fighting each other.

There are also tendencies of hyperfreak that are products of capitalist realism. The cultural tendencies of pastiche through sampling, revivalism of 2010s EDM through the usage of dubstep, complextro, and electro elements, and using meme clips with an ironic distance to the source material, jokes which are only ironically funny because of their out-of-place context are three capitalist realist tendencies that hyperfreak artists use. The sources used for samples are from many different periods of time and musical/nonmusical contexts, even within the same song. On "PINK FERRARI", DJ PUPPYTRAX samples "Vroom Vroom" by Charli XCX, "Runble" by Skrillex, Fred again.., and Flowdan, "Tia Tamera" by Rico Nasty and Doja Cat, and "LEFT TO RIGHT" by Oddmob within the first 30 seconds. There are also Jersey Club whip

sound effects and other samples that I cannot identify the source of. Two quotes from Fisher explain the plunderphonic nature of hyperfreak well:

> What we… are now facing is a generation born into that ahistorical, anti-mnemonic blip culture - a generation, that is to say, for whom time has always come ready-cut into digital microslices (Fisher, 2022).

The generation that produces hyperflip and hyperfreak was born into postmodernism, a philosophical framework that rejects the "meta-narrative of history" in favor of localized subjective narratives of individuals. For many younger people, history has become a series of disconnected, instantly accessible, subjective narratives which change depending on who you ask. Hyperfreak and hyperflip's seemingly illogical combinations of samples are bound together by these young artists' subjective enjoyment of each one. Each sample is value-equivalent under the logic of capitalist realism; they are already free from any objective context that might otherwise prevent the pastiche of samples that bear no relation in time and genre. Capitalism has been the only lived history for those born into capitalist realism, and it would like you to think it is the only viable future.

The revival of nostalgic, 2010s pop music through remixes can be further understood through the words of Fisher as "profound social and economic instability result[ing] in a craving for familiar cultural forms, to which we return in the same way that [Jason] Bourne returns to his core reflexes," (Fisher, 2022).

> We the audience are not subjected to a power that comes from outside; rather, we are integrated into a control circuit that has our desires and preferences as its only mandate, but

those desires and preferences are returned to us, no longer as ours, but as the desires of the big Other.

conclusions

Thus, the question becomes if hyperflip and hyperfreak constitute accepting capitalist realism "without question," and what their future holds. The distorted, sample-ridden songs from hyperflip are an effective vessel for understanding the anxious, dull haze of capitalist realism, a disconnected series of references to safer times expressed through frenzied, blurry tracks. Its rejection of historical coherence and embrace of chaos, while a product of capitalist realism, also resists capitalist realism's demand of outward conformity with the logic of neoliberal capitalism. Hyperfreak is similar in its conclusions, but to a lesser effect due to its decreased spectral chaos, more organized song structures and more legible samples. Both genres stem from the subjective spaces of gender exploration created by SOPHIE, and they draw from the feminist, queer roots of electronic dance music. Through the community building aspects of dance music, hyperfreak has the potential to become a reinvigorated, critical celebration of femininity that recognizes the shortcomings of patriarchal sexualization while emphasizing exploration of eroticism.

Lost Frog

A recent development in hyperflip has been the prominence of the Japanese netlabel Lost Frog Productions in developing the scene. They have released numerous compilations as pay-what-you-want on Bandcamp that include both artists who have been producing hyperflip for years and newer ones. They are also hosting live shows with hyperflip artists and DJs in Japan (Press-Reynolds, 2025). This indicates that hyperflip does have the ability to thrive as an offline

scene and highlights the community building and unifying potential for a nominally unmarketable genre. Commercial growth is incompatible with meaningful rejection of capitalist realist logic, so if the scene grows into a formidable commercial force like hyperpop did, it will mean it has been successfully precorporated and cannot serve as a site of resistance. It could also see artists double down on anti-commodification and begin to steer further from capitalist realist logic.

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