

Soc 363: Sociology of Culture

Final Paper

May 13, 2019

Identity and Activism in /r/pcmusic

Introduction:

A primarily queer community located on the website Reddit.com, which I will refer to as /r/pcmusic, is the focus of this investigation. /r/pcmusic is a community named after the London-based popular music record label and art collective PC Music. This paper will address the following questions:

- In what ways is queerness associated with the virtual community /r/pcmusic?
- What mechanisms have enabled queerness to be associated with /r/pcmusic? How is a sense of community maintained in this space?
- To what extent are the members of /r/pcmusic participating in activism or resistance related to their queer identity?

The term 'queer' will be used in this paper to denote an array of gender and sexual identities. A queer identity resists normalizing certain identity attributes above others and resists the enforcing of ridged identity categories. In this sense, queer is not a concrete category, nor does it function as catchall term for lesbian and gays (Taylor 2013).

In responding to these questions, I will draw attention to a supportive, yet subversive energy bubbling under the surface of this virtual space, something I felt while participating in this community.

/r/pcmusic is an online space predicated on queerness; it is safe to assume that your fellow community members are LGBTQ-identified. However, */r/pcmusic* is not explicitly queer, and by no means is it exclusively queer. A straight-identified minority exists within this community, and this paper will demonstrate that some of these members view the subreddit and record label in a different light than the LGBTQ majority.

Reddit.com is a social news website and the third most visited site in the United States. Content is almost entirely distributed and promoted by users in an interactive forum format. Reddit is composed of approximately 1.2 million insular sub-communities called *subreddits*. The basis of each subreddit ranges from broad topics, (e.g. */r/aww*, a subreddit devoted to sharing images of cute animals) to specific interests and hobbies, (e.g. */r/breadit*, a subreddit for those with a passion for baking bread) to the truly strange and eclectic (e.g. */r/birdswitharms* in which users circulate pictures of birds that have been photo-shopped to look like they have human arms). Redditors “upvote” or “downvote” content posted in a specific subreddit. More upvotes equates to more visibility, thereby giving users the power to determine what content becomes popular.

PC Music is a record label known for imparting a surreal and exaggerated edge on pop music, using pitch-shifted vocals and bright, synthetic textures to accomplish this. I was first introduced to PC Music after while I was a junior in high school. I discovered Sophie Xeon’s *Bipp* while browsing through recommended artists on my phone. Sophie Xeon (known by her stage name SOPHIE) has never been signed to PC Music but is heavily associated with the label via affiliation as a producer. Heavy, sugar-coated synths bounce and whirl throughout the track, combining with high-pitched, hyper-feminine vocals vaguely reminiscent of Alvin and the Chipmunks¹. This was uniquely different from other music and I was enamored with it.

¹ <https://youtu.be/MVc3Z-bG6Eo>

Introducing this music to my friends and family led to confusion, a mixture of fascination and discomfort. I questioned my taste. I was left wondering why this music resonated so much with me and I searched for validation online. Eventually, I found /r/pcmusic. I was now part of a community that could reassure me of my tastes. It was a community that echoed the sentiment that this music was on the edge of something great. It was also a community where I felt accepted in regard to my queer identity. Over time, I formed the impression that many members of this community also identified as LGBTQ.

The queer presence on /r/pcmusic is an opportunity to examine how subcultural participation in virtual communities can enable activism or resistance. This paper will accomplish this via examining a puzzle associated with this community; namely, why does /r/pcmusic feel so accepting of queerness?

This paper will argue for two mechanisms contributing to the queering of /r/pcmusic. The first of these mechanisms is affiliation. Members of /r/pcmusic show a great deal of support for artists that have collaborated with PC Music, and many of these associated artists tend to identify as LGBTQ. This is puzzling, given that none of the artists signed to PC Music explicitly discuss having an LGBTQ identity. However, PC Music has incorporated the broader queer community into its fanbase as a result of affiliation with LGBTQ artists. In /r/PCMusic, this manifests in a culture dedicated to worshipping the up-and-coming producer and trans icon, SOPHIE. In turn, the support given to affiliated artists has enabled the formation of a predominantly queer fanbase. This fanbase supports a record label associated with queerness, but which does not inherently deal with LGBTQ themes. In contrast, the musical themes these queer artists employ in their work tend to be different than the “manufactured pop parody” that PC Music represents.

The second mechanism is related to the first has to do with marking /r/pcmusic as a safe space for those with an LGBTQ identity. /r/pcmusic is a space predicated on queerness. It is an online community where users are, in general, assumed to be queer. However, it is by no means exclusively

queer. In part, this mechanism is related to the first. The promotion of queer artists who are not members of the record label is one aspect that marks /r/pcmusic as welcoming of queerness.

Critics and fans alike consider PC Music to be a sort of postmodern critique of consumerism. Pitchfork, an online music magazine, compares PC Music with the historically subversive genre of Punk music in the article *PC Music's Inverted Consumerism*²:

"PC Music utilizes the banality and omniscience of branding as an aesthetic tool the way punks deploy teenage aggression; it's fundamental to the work. Its artists have hijacked the familiar hooks of advertising—fast, feminine voices that demand connection, bright colors, catchy jingles."

Born & Haworth discuss the concept of 'accelerationism' in relation to the internet-mediated music genre, vaprowave. Accelerationism is a post-Marxist political theory which suggests that capitalism should not be resisted but sped up, and as a result, it will crumble due to inherent contradictions. (Born and Haworth 2017). PC Music can be viewed as a sort of manifestation accelerationism. Subsequently, PC Music inherently feels futuristic, as if it were meant for music-listeners of the future rather than those who exist in the here-and-now.

In *Cruising Utopia*, José Muñoz discusses the futurity of queerness:

"Queerness is not yet here. Queerness is an ideality. Put another way, we are not yet queer. We may never touch queerness, but we can feel it as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality. We have never been queer, yet queerness exists for us as an ideality that can be distilled from the past and used to imagine a future. The future is queerness's domain." (Muñoz 2009).

² <https://pitchfork.com/thepitch/714-pc-musics-inverted-consumerism/>

An avant-garde and cutting-edge interpretation of popular music has accrued a devoted following of queer individuals. Subsequently, this has enabled the virtual space of /r/pcmusic to become a sort of virtual queer haven on the website Reddit. /r/pcmusic is an inclusive space not explicitly designated as queer but nonetheless is designed by queers, for queers. /r/pcmusic represents kind of online space where queerness can confront itself and manifest on its own terms.

Literature Review:

In *Dude You're a Fag*, C.J. Pascoe examines the power dynamics underlying the construction of masculinity in youth via ethnographic analysis of high school students. In Chapter 3, Pascoe discusses the function of "fag discourse": "boys reminded themselves and each other that at any moment they could become fags if they were not sufficiently masculine." (Pascoe 2005: 60). She argues that the students observed use the abject identity 'fag' to ridicule those who fail to embody a particular kind of masculinity, enabling the policing of gender. In turn, this policing restricts what constitutes acceptable masculinity for gay men.

In an article on queerness in digital spaces, Brandon Miller examines how Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual (LGB) individuals seek community and negotiate identity in an online forum. Miller points out that the LGB identity is stigmatized, yet concealable. As a result, Miller situates the internet as a place where sexual minorities can discover and manage their identity, enabled by the anonymity provided by cyberspace (Miller 2016). Pascoe and Miller demonstrate the importance of the internet for queer youth as a refuge where they can negotiate their identity via the anonymity and safety mediated by an online environment.

Vikki Fraser's study on digital queerness considers how Pink Sofa, a web-forum for queers, functions as a closet that individuals voluntarily seek out and interact with. She discusses how these spaces provide a place where queers may interact with their identity without derogative connotations for the first time. She argues that closets should no longer be considered a strictly oppressive force. "This approach in turn undermines recognition of the important subjective work undertaken within the closet and the way that closets might, in fact, become for queer people an integral part of interaction and mobilization, as well as spaces for learning and negotiating languages for and embodiments of queer." (Fraser 2010). However, she also recognizes that these closets tend to impart a limited understanding of the full range of queer identities available to queers. Therefore, Fraser's study suggests that /r/pcmusic may be acting as a cybercloset, aiding in the formation of a queer consciousness.

Judith Halberstam's article *What's that smell? Queer Temporalities and Subcultural Lives*, examines the ways in which queer communities spend time in ways are different from their heterosexual counterparts. According to Halberstam, queer temporality refers to how "queer uses of time and space develop in opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality and reproduction." (Halberstam 2003). Halberstam argues that queer subcultural involvement produces alternative temporalities that enable participants to imagine a future that runs counter to traditional, heterosexual life narratives. Halberstam suggests queer subcultures defy the hegemony of the dominant culture as well as the mainstreaming of gay and lesbian culture, "preserving the critique of heteronormativity that was always implicit in queer life" (pg 3). Halberstam draws on observations surrounding the queer music subcultures of queercore, lesbian punk for their analysis. Halberstam also discusses the relationship between queer subculture and the mainstream: "The more intellectual records we have of queer culture, the more we contribute to the project of claiming for the subculture the radical cultural work that either gets absorbed into or claimed by mainstream media." (Halberstam 2003).

Jodie Taylor's *Claiming Queer Territory in the Study of Subcultures and Popular Music* builds on the analysis of subcultural studies presented in Halberstam's article. Taylor's argues that scholars who bring a queer perspective to subcultural and popular music are vital in preserving queer narratives and products of queer subcultures. "As scholars, and particularly for those of us who identify with aspects of sexual minority culture, we must continue to contribute to the queer archive in ways that are attentive to the multiplicity of styles and cultural forms that manifest as unique expressions of sexual difference." (Taylor 2013). In addition, Taylor discusses the importance of queer music subculture in creating a space for resistant queer sexualities to take form. This occurs via the merging queer sensibilities with pre-existing cultural forms. Taylor incorporates and argues for the need of an interdisciplinary approach, which includes aspects of cultural sociology, popular musicology, and queer studies.

Halberstam and Taylor are critical to the methodological approach employed in this study. These authors stress the importance of understanding queer subculture in their own terms, rather than for what they appear to be doing at face-value. I view this research as building upon the queer subcultural analysis Taylor and Halberstam discuss. However, a novel aspect of this research is that the community examined exists within an online space.

Simona Rodat's article brings attention to the term 'cyberqueer'. Through discussing major topics and research trends pertaining to the cyberqueer, Rodat examines the ways that the internet has contributed to the formation of a new kind of social space where the distinction between private and public spheres of human life have been blurred. Cyberspace is a place where LGBTQ individuals are not constrained by space or norms that pervade "real" society and are therefore able to express an array of identities not possible in their physical lives. Rodat defines the term cyberqueer as being understood in terms of "the actions of individuals and groups who subvert the norms of heterosexuality and benefit

from the numerous opportunities for interaction and communication opened by the internet.” (Rodat, Simona 2014) According to Rodat, the term cyberqueer demonstrates a resistant edge, in and of itself, resulting from the interdependence of the terms ‘cyber’ and ‘queer’ in the creation and maintenance of LGBTQ cyberspace. Rodat discusses considerations for researcher in this domain, including the importance of characterizing the effect that our virtual experience has on our non-virtual self, the need to understand the creation and maintenance of online spaces by cyberqueers, and the potential of these spaces to act as the “third place”, a place for community-building that lies outside work or home. Rodat argues that “The ‘virtual’ cannot simply be seen as breached from the ‘real’, as long as the virtual impacts the decisions individuals make in their non-virtual lives. Subsequently, Rodat argues that virtual environment is part of ‘reality’. Online and offline experiences are tied to each other and shape the reality in which people dwell.” (Rodat 2014).

Charles Soukup examines Ray Oldenburg’s term ‘the third place’ in an online context. The third place describes public spaces used for informal social interaction outside of the home and workplace. Soukup investigates whether online interactors can experience third place conversations in computer-mediated environments. He argues that collective performance in online spaces produces a set of mutual norms, grounded in shared reality, which indicate how actors behave online. As a result, ‘place’ or situation tends to be self-selected and mutually constructed by community members. Arising from this is the freedom to create any type of ‘place’ for the purposes of interaction. (Soukup 2006).

/r/pcmusic appears to be one of these virtual third places, a “home-away-from-home” where participants play an active role in constructing their community. Additionally, *Youth, Activism, and Social Movements* provides an account of youth participation in activism in the digital age. The authors discuss the development of movement societies and the emergence of fan activism as factors in changing context for youth activism, which will help to understand how queer-related activism manifests in this community. (Earl, Maher, and Elliott 2017).

Methods:

In *Reading the Romance*, Janice Radway investigates the subcultural participation of female romance readers. Radway states that “..when analysis proceeds from within the belief system actually brought to bear upon a text by its readers, the analytical interpretation of the meaning of a character’s behavior is more likely to coincide with that meaning as it is constructed and understood by the reader’s themselves.” (Radway 1991) . Radway’s approach to understanding subcultural participation from within a belief system is essential to the methodology employed in this investigation.

In the spirit of Radway, most data collected for this investigation originates from within the community itself, in their own words. I view my role in this process as a spokesperson of sorts or as an interpreter for the community, which I feel appropriate given my personal involvement with /r/pcmusic. Therefore, what I refer to as data includes the opinions and attitudes expressed by community members, as well as records of interactions occurring between them.

As mentioned in the introduction, the construction site that will be used for data collection is the online internet community /r/pcmusic, a subreddit on the website Reddit.com. Approximately eight-thousand redditors are subscribed to this community, although it’s not clear how many of these users are active participants. /r/pcmusic is interesting in that it is a cybercloset, meaning that it contributes to the formation of queer subjectivities, both limiting and expanding conceptions of ‘queer’. At the same time, /r/pcmusic is not overtly specified as a queer space. The record label tends to collaborate with queer artists, but none of the members of the label explicitly identify as LGBTQ. This is a puzzle that I plan to investigate with the data presented in the next section. Therefore, this research hopes to understand the function of this space for its users, what maintains this space, and the extent to which users of /r/pcmusic use the space to manage identity and enact activism related to a queer identity.

In order to collect data of this nature, weekly analyses of all posted threads was carried out over the course of a month. Reddit provides the option to sort threads in a community by the number of user-given upvotes, and one can specify a time interval for this sort. On a weekly interval, I sorted threads by their number of upvotes for the past week. I then looked through these threads, selecting certain posts which seemed especially relevant to my research. Threads include a title, the body (either an image, link, or text) and a comment section, where other community members can provide their reactions to the post or other comments made to the post. This is similar to the methodology employed in Miller's article served as the base for this method of data collection. Posts were sorted into categories depending on the function of a post. This research aims to reveal what kinds of posts are typical on /r/pcmusic, which posts tend to become the most popular, and what role these posts serve for the community.

An initial post titled "How gay are you all?"³ was my entry point into gauging the presence of a majority queer presence on /r/pcmusic. After carrying out four points of weekly analysis, I also utilized the search function to collect threads which covered topics pertaining to my research. This included posts relating to a queer identity, posts relating to key figures and artists who showed up in the weekly analysis, as well as certain issues and key themes that presented themselves in the weekly analysis, but not frequently enough to elicit a full discourse.

A survey was also posted to the community, and received 173 responses in approximately 24 hours. The survey included demographic information that supported my intuition that this community consists of a queer majority and a heterosexual minority. This survey also exposed a key puzzle within the /r/pcmusic. By contrasting the response and attitudes of LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ participants, the survey data reveals a prevailing perception of the community /r/pcmusic as queer. However, this perception is not equally shared by LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ viewpoints. I also surveyed whether the

³ https://www.reddit.com/r/pcmusic/comments/b343fa/how_gay_are_you_all/

members of /r/pcmusic perceive the record label, PC Music to be associated with queerness. Responses and perceptions were mixed here as well. Some respondents even questioned if a record label could be “queer” while others were quick to claim that “it just is” (see selected survey responses in the appendix).

In addition to data this, I also wanted to capture perceptions of PC Music and associated artists from outside of the smaller community of /r/pcmusic. To do this, I transcribed videos on the website Youtube.com. The results of my survey indicated that Youtube functions as a channel through which individuals discover PC Music. Specifically, I draw from an interview of SOPHIE, and Anthony Fantano’s critical reception of affiliated artists SOPHIE and Charli XCX.

Analysis will be the result of comparing these different avenues of data collection. I am curious in determining if perceptions PC Music within the /r/pcmusic community match or contradict the attitudes that exist outside the scope of the subreddit. In addition, this research will look at differences within the community, with a specific interest in conflict that occurs when sexuality and music-taste intersect.

Data:

In the following section of the paper, I will present evidence that suggests that /r/pcmusic is a queer space, whose community is composed of a majority of LGBTQ individuals. This will be accomplished through presenting survey data, which measured attitudes and demographic information relating to an LGBTQ identity. The survey was posted to the community on May 1, 2019 and received 173 responses in approximately 24 hours. In addition, the thread containing the survey received a

significant number of upvotes, signifying the interest generated by the post.⁴ This survey data also points us in the direction of a key puzzle: why is /r/pcmusic queer in the first place?

Furthermore, threads were collected on a weekly basis to determine how queerness manifests itself in this online community on a day-to-day basis. The threads included in this paper have been distilled down from a much larger pool I collected over the four weeks of data collection. For a wider selection of posts, please view the appendix. In addition, I also conducted a more selective search of all threads in /r/pcmusic, utilizing Reddit's search function. Seven threads are included in the main body of this paper. A larger sample of threads can be found in the appendix. Comments on posts have been selected for and included beneath each post. Please note that some comments may be a response to another comment, indicated when one comment is indented and directly underneath the comment to which is responding to.

For a better understanding of how to read reddit posts, please view the first section of the appendix in which I conduct analysis of an initial post I made to the subreddit titled "How gay are you all?".

In addition to data being collected from within the community of /r/pcmusic, I also transcribed four videos from the website Youtube.com. Three of these videos are reviews of album releases that came from the PC Music affiliated artists SOPHIE and Charli XCX. These have been included in order to provide context regarding critical perceptions of this music outside of /r/pcmusic. Anthony Fantano, "the internet's busiest music nerd", is used to provide this critical reception, as his name appeared frequently in the survey responses. In addition to this, a video-interview of SOPHIE is included to shed light on how the producer views her unique approach to making pop music. SOPHIE's attitudes toward production are contrasted with the comments made by a non-LGBTQ producer signed to PC Music,

⁴https://www.reddit.com/r/pcmusic/comments/bjl309/im_an_undergraduate_conducting_research_on_this/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=web2x

Danny L Harle. These transcriptions introduce the data in the appendix, providing context surrounding key players in scene. Please view the appendix for the critic Anothony Fantano's transcriptions.

Transcriptions:

Figure 1. SOPHIE (PC Music affiliate) on her approach to making music⁵:

“There's sort of confusion around how genuine pop music is and experimental music. I try to imagine a hyper real world of sounds that is sometimes used in blockbuster films and that kind of thing. Sounds which cartoonize and exaggerate naturally occurring or organic sounds and phenomena and materials that don't exist at the moment. An example would be this Piano that is mountain-sized high and imagining what the sound of the piano would be if the string was that large.”

“I was bloody like 8 years old or something when I started doing electronic music. Just going into the shops that was like my fantasy-land, in electronic music shops. I was pretty isolated in my interests in those things and I was really looking for people who I could connect with and it took a long, long time. Probably not until I met a lot of the PC Music people and found people who had similar interests and skills as me.”

“There's a huge amount of work to be done socially, culturally, the gap between where we are now and where we could be and the places that our imaginations can take us are so far away from what we are presented a lot of the time. So I can't get too excited about anything happening now, I'm really excited about what should be happening in the future, what I will hope will happen.”

Figure 2. Danny L Harle (member of PC Music) on his approach to making music⁶:

“Openly manufactured music is something that I'm interested in as an idea, and that's something I'd like to see. It would be quite a radical statement to make these days, because there's a big emphasis on artists being very unique to themselves. But I've seen lots of artists who actually want to be manufactured. And there's an interesting climate where that's not really particularly allowed, because there's a sort of assumption that you have to be expressing a kind of pure identity that's not quote, unquote, fake.”

There's always a kind of tension with music, where people don't want to feel like they're listening to something that's fake. And what they don't realize is the stuff that sounds like it's honest is just as fake as the stuff that sounds like it's fake. There's equally big sort of industrial processes behind both.”

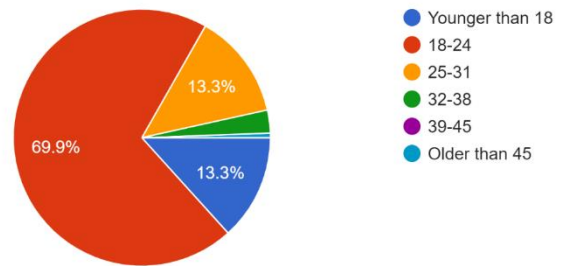
⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ifh0tDrwBA>

⁶ <https://www.highsnobiety.com/p/danny-l-harle-interview/>

Survey Demographic Data:

What is your age?

173 responses



Which gender do you most identify with?

173 responses

Figure 1. Age demographic information from survey.

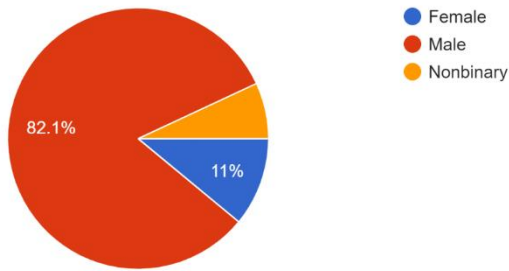


Figure 4. Gender identity demographic information from survey.

Do you tend to identify as LGBTQ+ or queer?

173 responses

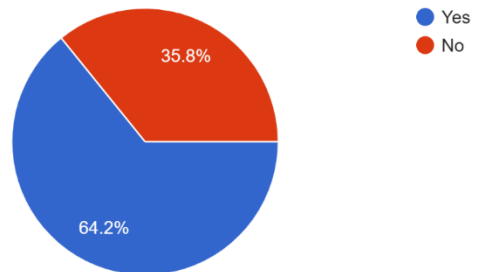
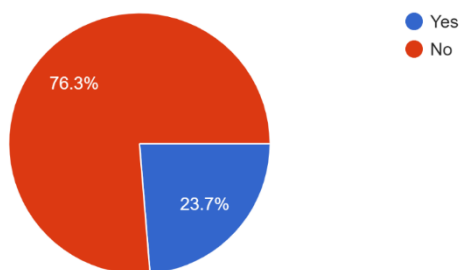


Figure 5. LGBTQ identity demographic information from survey.

Do you consider yourself to be closeted?

173 responses



Survey Responses:

Figure 6. Asked if respondent is open about sharing their queer identity.

Individuals who don't identify as LGBTQ+ or Queer		Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ or Queer	
Question: To what extent do you view PC Music (the record label) as LGBTQ+ or queer?		Question: To what extent do you view PC Music (the record label) as LGBTQ+ or queer?	
Rating	Response	Rating	Response
1	I view it as electronic music, I try not to get wrapped up in identity politics. The music should be the most interesting aspect rather than someone's orientation	1	I view them as any record label, they may tend to work with a lot of queer artists but I don't think many of the PC Music crew are queer or LGBTQ so I think labeling them as a queer or LGBTQ collective is stretching it a little.
3	I think that many of the fans are queer and project that onto the label, but the idea that it's inherently associated with a	2	seems mostly straight now, but back in 2014/2015 when sophie was more involved and when it had a bunch of active

	sexuality is a fairly new one.			anonymous side-projects that play with gender (thy slaughter, lipgloss twins, etc) it was way more queer.
5	It seems inclusive, but not exclusive.		4	I think PC Music is pretty iconic in the LGBTQ+ community, because SOPHIE, a lesbian trans woman, is affiliated with it, but that's about it, really.
6	Pc Music is associated with some fantastic LGBTQ+ artists which is fantastic for representation. Sophie is probably the biggest trans musician right now on top of being the most forward thinking producer on the planet right now. Some artists seem popular within the LGBTQ+ community but I'm a cishet man and feel very included within the fanbase.		7	The following of PC Music is largely LGBT due to many of the prominent adjacent artists being visible in the LGBT community, despite the actual signed artist either not being LGBT or not as prominently visible and vocal in the community.

Table 1. Survey responses regarding the extent to which individuals find queerness to be associated with the record label, PC Music.

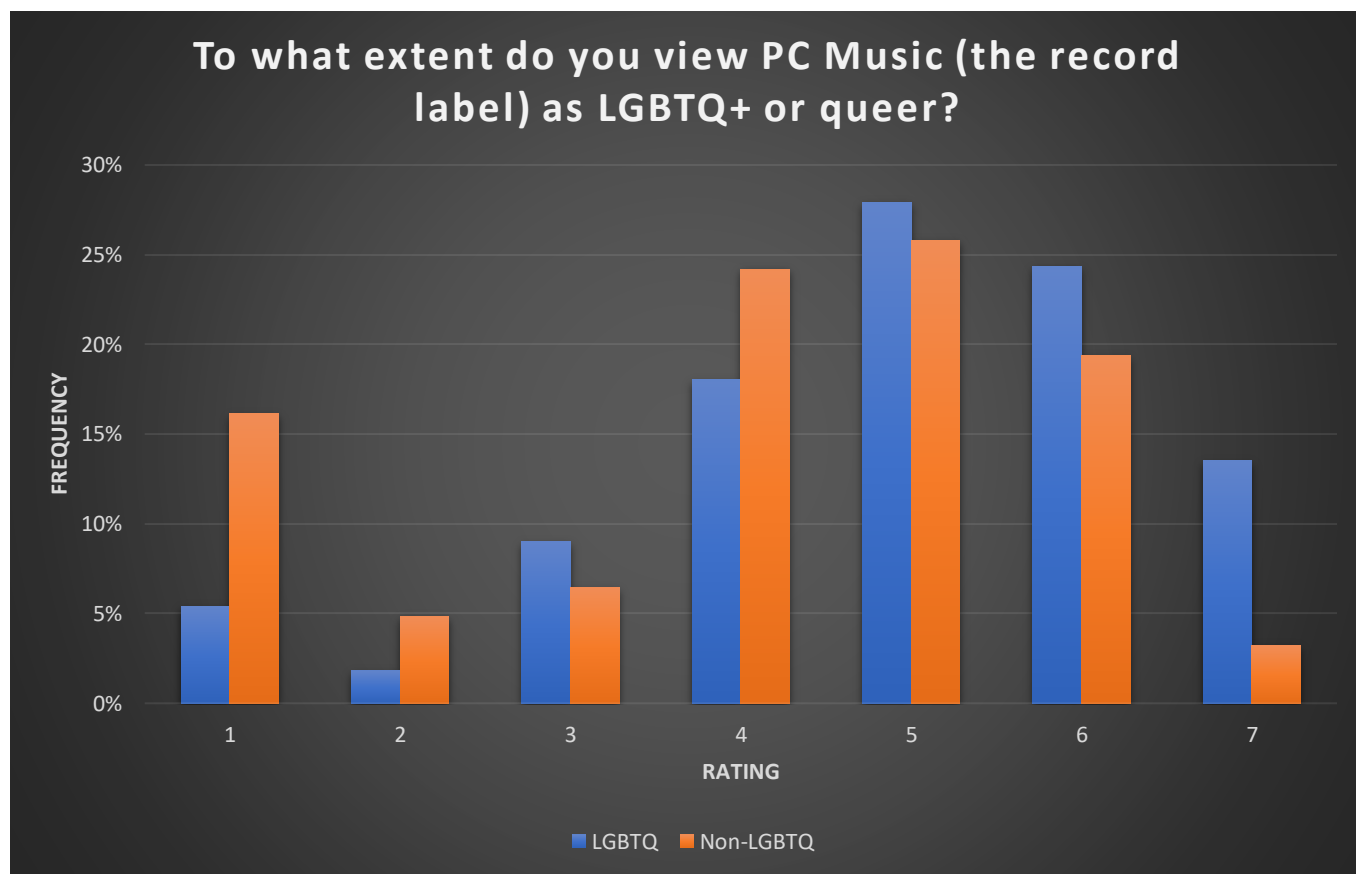


Figure 7. Shows the percentage of rating scores for the extent queerness is associated with PC Music. Frequency denotes the percentage of responses depending on a LGBTQ+ or queer identity. For example, approximately 5% of LGBTQ+ or queer respondents provided a rating of 1 for this question.

Individuals who don't identify as LGBTQ+ or Queer		Individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ or Queer	
Question: To what extent do you view the subreddit, /r/pcmusic, as LGBTQ+ or queer?		Question: To what extent do you view the subreddit, /r/pcmusic, as LGBTQ+ or queer?	
Rating	Response	Rating	Response
2	Mainly discusses music only	4	It is hard to answer this since many on the subreddit don't discuss their sexuality but rather the music but, like I said before the PC

				music fan base is mostly queer so I'd assume a majority of the subreddit is queer.
4	It's just a group of people talking about music there really isn't any room for people to express their LGBTQ+ things		5	I've never seen homo/transphobia on the sub and their acceptance and celebration of LGBT people like Tzef and Sophie is very nice to see.
5	Any pc music related forums I've read usually use language affiliated with the LGBTQ+ scene but I think that language has spread into regular pop culture language.		6	Almost everyone who posts in the subreddit uses queer/queer associated language and references queer culture
6	To me, it seems like most people on the sub are fans of SOPHIE or obsessed with her. This seems to carry over into general attitudes about LGBTQ+ issues.		6	People who are active in the subreddit are primarily LGBTQ+ and mostly presume others are as well. It is a safe space with no discrimination for LGBTQ+ people.
7	It's annoyingly obvious		7	Anytime I see reference to sexuality on the subreddit it's always queer.

Table 2. Survey responses regarding the extent to which individuals find queerness to be associated with the subreddit. /r/pcmusic.

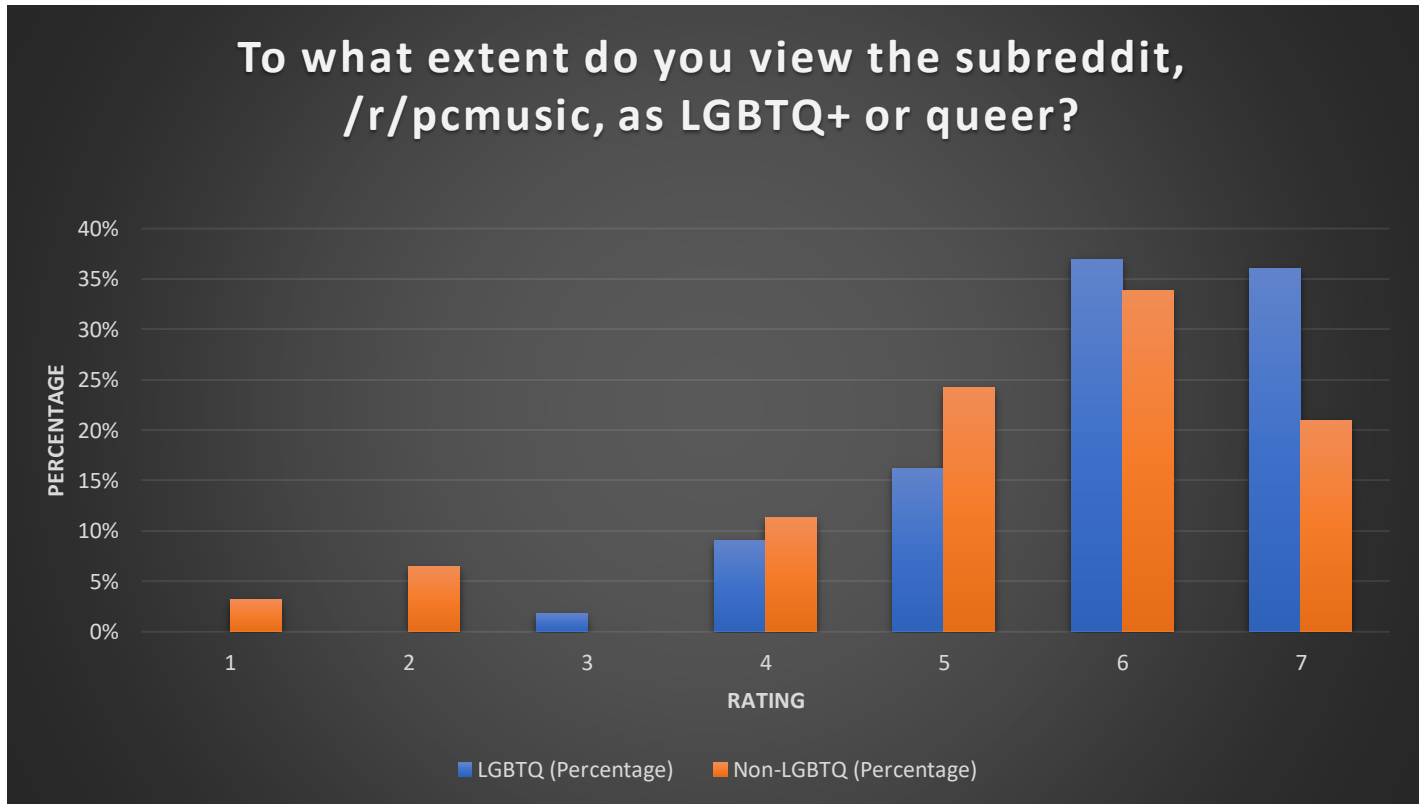



Figure 2. Shows the percentage of rating scores for the extent queerness is associated with /r/pcmusic. Frequency denotes the percentage of responses depending on a LGBTQ+ or queer identity. For example, less than 5% of non-LGBTQ respondents provided a rating of 1.

Selected threads for analysis:

↑ Posted by u/ScaredDecision 27 days ago

208 I MET SOPHIE AGAIN OMGGG

↓



15 Comments Give Award Share 100% Upvoted

↑ MITCHELpx 11 points · 27 days ago
↓ omg omg omg
Reply Give Award Share Report Save

↑ xcxryan 18 points · 27 days ago
↓ lucky bitch

↑ terrorwill 35 points · 27 days ago
↓ that handwriting is wild hahah
Reply Give Award Share Report Save

↑ belabertram 56 points · 27 days ago
↓ I like how that signature could also come from a nine-year-old.

↑ AndiFoxy 3 points · 27 days ago
↓ Queen of flawless autographs! I broke my wrist when I was learning how to write and that's only slightly better than how my handwriting would look if I had to sign things. I feel so much closer to her now.
Reply Give Award Share Report Save

Post 1. A user's post of an autographed SOPHIE vinyl and photograph with SOPHIE with selected comments.

↑ Posted by u/tgentry02 · 18 days ago

7
↓

Collaboration

OC

Hey everyone. I've been into music production and songwriting for quite a while now but I struggle to sing and find effects and modulations to make my voice acceptable. I'm also interested in more of the pop side of PC, and I'm finding my deeper male voice hard to fit in. With that said, if there are any creators here looking to collab, please DM me!

1 Comment Give Award Share Save Hide Report



↑ alexws · 2 points · 17 days ago

↓

As a producer and starting out as a vocalist, your vocals are probably a lot better than you think. I was really insecure but people actually really enjoy my vocals. I recommend a free VST called MAutopitch for a nice autotune - if you're really insecure, you can increase the parameters all the way up and sound like a robot. It's quite fitting for PC Music.

Reply Give Award Share Report Save

Post 2. A user's post looking for fellow Redditors to collaborate with.

↑ Posted by u/moreextremevocals · 5 months ago
126
↓ **DANNY IS A FATHER I REPEAT DANNY L HARLE HAS HAD A BABY**
instagram.com/p/BqqE...  



- ↑ memesus · 3 points · 5 months ago
↓ Is danny straight? I always assumed he was gay huh. Also I'm aware that gay men can have babies but is that's the case here?
Reply Give Award Share Report Save
- ↑ afieldoftulips · 15 points · 5 months ago
↓ He's married to a woman
Reply Give Award Share Report Save
- ↑ how_small_a_thought · 33 points · 5 months ago
↓ Sounds kind of gay if you ask me
Reply Give Award Share Report Save
- ↑ 1de0mux · 5 points · 5 months ago
↓ Not gay, just very handsome
Reply Give Award Share Report Save
- ↑ moreextremevocals · 3 points · 5 months ago
↓ He had a wedding. It was like, a big thing. A G and Sophie and Caroline Polachek and countless others were there
Reply Give Award Share Report Save

Post 3. A user's post indicating that PC Music member Danny L Harle had a baby with his wife.

↑ Posted by u/Sal611 9 days ago

116 Dorian Electra - Flamboyant

↓ youtu.be/BDb1oT...



17 Comments Give Award Share ...

96% Upvoted

↑ Joebiekong 8 points · 9 days ago

↓ I like the video but i dont like the song as much as Man 2 Man. This song stops way too much and is just melodically too all over the place. There's no build to it, the chorus isnt as memorable as Man 2 Man etc. I guess Man 2 Man is just the odd sound out of their discography.

Reply Give Award Share Report Save

↑ CordialMusic 13 points · 9 days ago

↓ I think the audio is experimental and... dare I say, flamboyant ;)

It's def not a safe song, they make so many interesting/bold choices in the audio alone, it's not meant to be as homogeneous/mainstream.

I think it's their most PC track thus far.

Reply Give Award Share Report Save

↑ Joebiekong 2 points · 9 days ago

↓ If you mean PC, you mean experimental.

Actual PC imo is so experiemntal, it becomes the most generic thing ever (Hannah Diamond) and its amazing.

Reply Give Award Share Report Save

↑ CordialMusic 5 points · 9 days ago


↓ Is hannah diamond peak PC music for you? I think of PC music as more of A.G.'s weird harmonies and rhythms. He explains a bit about where the inspiration for his PC music came from in this interview (it's not long): <https://youtu.be/XzpMZUBaavU?t=66>

Post 4. User's post sharing a single by queer artist Dorian Electra.

↑ Posted by u/ScaredDecision 18 days ago

234 ↓

2 Gorgeous Girls in Turks and Caicos



10 Comments Give Award Share ... 98% Upvoted

↑ flowyrs 16 points · 18 days ago

↓ such a powerful image

Reply Give Award Share Report Save

↑ lillybaeum 3 points · 18 days ago

↓ They both look like supernodels genuinely

Reply Give Award Share Report Save

↑ coolnarwhal88 14 points · 18 days ago

↓ amazon queens

Reply Give Award Share Report Save

↑ carlyrebjepsen 9 points · 18 days ago

↓ they're both so beautiful i friggin LOVE this image

Reply Give Award Share Report Save

Post 5. User's post of SOPHIE and her girlfriend, Tzef.

↑ Posted by u/Water_Feature 4 months ago

26 Why is PC Music so divisive?

Seriously, whenever I slip anything remotely-PC on the aux the primary reaction is 'turn that shit off'. Why is the reaction so strong and immediate? Admittedly my friends almost exclusively listen to indie and techno, but so did I for ages. Are your friends receptive to this shit in any way?

20 Comments Give Award Share ...

94% Upvoted

↑ bosconoz 6 points · 4 months ago

↓ my gay friends love pop 2. maybe yours are homophobic

Reply Give Award Share Report Save

↑ Water_Feature 7 points · 4 months ago

↓ But I'm the straight one ͇(͇)͇

Reply Give Award Share Report Save

↑ LewisMcP 8 points · 4 months ago

↓ The amount of times I've been asked if I'm gay because I like this shit, lol

Reply Give Award Share Report Save

↑ Water_Feature 3 points · 4 months ago

↓ The amount of times my gay friends have tried to turn me because I'm skinny and mild-mannered and like pop music

Reply Give Award Share Report Save

Comment deleted by user 4 months ago

↑ Lokoliki 2 points · 4 months ago

↓ It's even more sad that the gays who listen to this can't really dive into it deeper conceptually.

Uh... Excuse me? I'm not entirely sure what your point is since in the sentence right before you say how it's sad that the music has any connotation to sexuality, then you proceed to make a statement which is frankly pretty ignorant and presumptive and based on sexuality. Or at least that's how it reads... I have no clue how you got the idea that gays apparently are unable to use critical thought when it comes to PC Music, but wow, man.

Reply Give Award Share Report Save

↑ joetothec 2 points · 4 months ago

↓ You're right I deleted my comment because it wasn't typed how I wanted to portray my thoughts. It does sound ignorant but it's not what my intention is.

Reply Give Award Share Report Save

Post 6. User's post discussing why PC Music's sound is so divisive.

↑ Posted by u/Moon_chu · 9 months ago · 🗑️

99 Thank you SOPHIE

↓

SOPHIE

All of my life I've been really confused as to who I was and where I was going and I'd never truly liked the way I looked, even when I drastically changed my appearance 10 times every year. It isn't until recently that I realized that I should've been born a girl. In a small town in Alabama, it fucking sucks to admit that to yourself. I'd always known I was gay (that was hard enough to tell my parents) but now I have to come out as trans? They would hate me enough for telling them I'm gay. I've been really down on myself and I've been over analyzing and overthinking how I should look and act but then Sophie came out with the ultimate bop Immaterial, sonically this song sounds like another bubbly pop ballad that Sophie is known for but when you listen to the lyrics it goes a bit deeper. These lyrics saved me, they told me who I was and who I wasn't. I can be anything. I'm not tangible, I'm just a consciousness. Floating in the universe, weightless, a cipher. I've been the happiest I've ever been these past few weeks now that I know who I am and who I can be. Thank you Sophie.

🗨️ 8 Comments 🌟 Give Award ➦ Share 📌 Save 🚫 Hide 🚩 Report

↑ AndiFoxxx · 16 points · 9 months ago · *edited 9 months ago*

↓ I'm with you. As a trans girl myself I have really connected with a lot of the themes Sophie writes about. I think it's kind of an instinctually relatable thing for anyone that experiences gender dysphoria. I've seen parts of myself in her ever since I heard B Who I Want 2 B.

These lyrics are so profoundly meaningful to me:

"All my friends keep asking me, are you happy? Happy as a girl can be. Are you happy? I'm actually ecstatic, I'm so happy, but you couldn't give me that."

"I don't need anyone to be who I want to be, I'm the only one, now I'm not saying I don't want what you're giving, but you couldn't give me that."

It really speaks to me as a trans person. You have to become who you are inside, and nobody else can do that for you.

When she released the image for the live show in LA where she's hidden behind the pink liquid, I knew she was going to come out. I just knew it. When I saw the IOTC music video I cried my eyes out. Part of it was being happy for her, and the other part was sad that someone I looked up to so much was doing what I felt I couldn't do myself.

Immaterial is another song that follows that theme almost exactly. The bridge is so euphoric and freeing, I continue to find myself moved by it every time I listen to it.

🌟 Give Award ➦ Share 🚩 Report 📌 Save

Post 7. User's post regarding an emotional connection to SOPHIE's song, Immaterial.

Data analysis:

Survey Data:

The previous section introduces demographic information of /r/pcmusic, collected by the survey. Figure 1 demonstrates that /r/pcmusic is primarily composed of younger individuals, aged 18-24 years-old. Figure 2 demonstrates that the users of /r/pcmusic are primarily male, with a somewhat significant portion of nonbinary users. Some female users make up the /r/pcmusic community as well. Figure 5 supports the notion that /r/pcmusic is predominately LGBTQ+, with a heterosexual minority. In addition to this, Figure 6 shows that most of the users are open about their sexual orientation and gender identity, but not all users.

Table 1 includes selected responses to the survey question: “To what extent do you view PC Music (the record label) as LGBTQ+ or queer?”. The responses are displayed in two columns, sorted by whether the responder identified as LGBTQ. Ratings were on a 1-7 scale, where a score of 1 suggested “not queer” while a score of 7 suggested “queer”. For a wider range of survey responses, refer to the appendix.

These survey responses indicate the perspectives of LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ identifying individuals regarding their association of queerness to the record label, PC Music. A non-LGBTQ individual who rated the record label as less queer indicated that “The music should be the most interesting aspect rather than someone’s orientation.” A LGBTQ-identifying responder took the same stance, indicated that they viewed the record label as non-queer because none of the members of the record label identify as LGBTQ. At the same time, this user recognizes that the label tends to work with a lot of queer artists. These two responses bring up a key point of contention regarding the queerness of PC Music: Whether a record label can be considered queer if none of the members are queer.

As we move onto responses which provide a higher rating regarding the associate of queerness and PC Music higher, we see references to the fan base being largely queer, SOPHIE being a visible queer producer, the affiliation of PC Music with queer artists and the broader queer community, and the general inclusivity of /r/pcmusic. As one non-LGBTQ identifying respondent puts it, “It seems inclusive, but not exclusive.” As another responder says, “...I’m a cishet man and feel very included within the fanbase.” It’s interesting that non-LGBTQ responders discuss feeling accepted into the community, despite being a heterosexual or cis-gendered man.

Figure 7 is a graph which represents the percentage of total responses divided across the possible rating scores. In addition, this figure represents both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ responses. For example, approximately 5% of LGBTQ respondents provided a rating of 1 on this question, while over 15% of non-LGBTQ respondents rated this question as 1. This graph exposes a trend: LGBTQ respondents tend to view the subreddit as more queer than non-LGBTQ respondents. Overall, this figure suggests that LGBTQ individuals perceive PC Music as queer, although it is possible that this is due to a confusion surrounding the term ‘PC Music’.

Table 2 includes selected responses to the survey question: “To what extent do you view the subreddit, /r/pcmusic, as LGBTQ+ or queer?” The responses are displayed in two columns, sorted by whether the responder identified as LGBTQ. Ratings were on a 1-7 scale, where a score of 1 suggested “not queer” while a score of 7 suggested “queer”. For a wider range of survey responses, refer to the appendix.

Both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ identifying individuals reference a lack of posts or discussion surrounding sexuality. However, a LGBTQ respondent, who provided a rating of 4, qualifies this response by stating that “the PC music fan base is mostly queers so I’d assume a majority of the subreddit is queer.” In contrast, a non-LGBTQ identifying individual responds, “there really isn’t any room for people

to express their LGBTQ+ things.” Another LGBTQ-identifying respondent references a lack of homo/transphobia on /r/pcmusic and the acceptance of trans artist Sophie Xeon and her girlfriend, nonbinary model Tzef Montana as evidence that /r/pcmusic is associated with queerness.

Responses to this question also reference the use of language as signifying the space of /r/pcmusic as queer. A non-LGBTQ individual who responded with a rating of 5 states that “Any pc music related forums I’ve read usually use language affiliated with the LGBTQ+ scene,” but they qualify this by stating that this language has spread into regular pop culture usage. LGBTQ respondents also reference the use of language as signifying this space as queer, while also referencing /r/pcmusic as a safe space. Finally, a non-LGBTQ respondent answers this question by stating “Its annoyingly obvious”. This comment stands in contrast to a LGBTQ respondent who states that “Anytime I see reference to sexuality on the subreddit, its [sic] always queer.”

In addition, Figure 8 is a graph which represents the percentage of total responses divided across rating scores. In addition, this figure represents both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ responses. From this figure, we can see that almost all LGBTQ respondents chose a rating of 4 or above, suggesting that /r/pcmusic tends to function as a queer space for individuals who identify as queer. Some non-LGBTQ individuals gave a rating of 1 or 2, suggesting that some non-LGBTQ users do not view the subreddit as very queer. The majority of LGBTQ respondents provided a rating of 6 or 7, while comparatively fewer non-LGBTQ respondents gave a score of 7.

Data from selected threads:

Post 1, titled “I MET SOPHIE AGAIN OMGGG” is an image with a signed SOPHIE vinyl along with a polaroid photograph of the original poster with SOPHIE. Comments such as “omg omg omg” indicate the high regard users hold for depictions of SOPHIE. This is evident in the discussion of SOPHIE’s messy

handwriting which appears as an indicator of authenticity or familiarity associated with SOPHIE. User AnDIFox goes so far to state that SOPHIE's messy handwriting makes them feel closer to the producer.

Post 2, titled "Collaboration" is a post made by a user who is looking for advice on how to modify his deeper voice to be "acceptable" for PC Music. User alexws adds a comment supporting this user saying "As a producer and starting out vocalist, your vocals are probably a lot better than you think... you can increase the parameters all the way up and sound like a robot. It's quite fitting for PC Music." This post demonstrates how this community can empower consumers as producers, through providing them with an opportunity to collaborate with fellow users. In addition, the artificial nature of PC Music's sound makes it accessible for a variety of users, suggested by alexws's comment.

Post 3, titled "DANNY IS A FATHER I REPEAT DANNY L HARLE HAS HAD A BABY" links to an article discussing the PC Music's producer's new child. A string of comments started by user memesus questions Danny's sexuality as a heterosexual man. This comment is mirrored in the survey responses, which questioned if PC Music could be considered to be "queer" without LGBTQ representation on the label itself. The comments in this thread also speak to the assumed queerness associated with those who participate in this space. A user responds to memesus, stating that Danny married to a woman, to which user how_small_a_thought jokingly responds: "sounds kind of gay if you ask me."

Post 4, titled "Dorian Electra – Flamboyant" links to a music video on YouTube created by the nonbinary artist Dorian Electra. Users CordialMusic and Joebiekong discuss the meaning of the term "PC" and dispute whether Dorian should be considered as PC Music. This discussion captures a point of contention between LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ users regarding the identity of auxiliary artists, such as Dorian, who clearly draw influence from PC Music, but are only associated with the label through indirect association.

Post 5, titled “2 Gorgeous Girls in Turks and Caicos” is an image of Sophie Xeon and her girlfriend, nonbinary model Tzef Montana. User flowyrs adds the comment “such a powerful image”, which user lillybaeum responds to with “They both look like supermodels genuinely.” This post represents the role of SOPHIE as a trans icon for this community. Prior to 2017, with the release of her song “It’s Okay to Cry,” SOPHIE’s gender was assumed to be male.⁷ Anthony Fantano’s review of product, in the index, demonstrates this. The popularity of this post represents the support for SOPHIE’s relationship with Tzef and the role of queer visibility in this community.

Post 6, titled “Why is PC Music so divisive” discusses the controversial nature of PC Music’s sound, especially towards new listeners. User bosconoz comments “my gay friends love pop 2. Maybe yours are homophobic” suggesting that sexuality can explain the divisiveness of PC Music. Water_Feature, the original poster counters this by referencing their own sexuality: “But I’m the straight one”. User LewisMcP adds “The amount of times I’ve been asked if I’m gay because I like this shit, lol”. Water_Feature responds: “The amount of times my gay friends have tried to turn me because I’m skinny and mild mannered and like pop music” suggesting an unwelcomed association of PC Music and queerness.

In the second string of comments, user Lokoliki responds to a comment that has been deleted: “It’s even more sad that the gays who listen to this can’t really dive into it deeper conceptually”. Although we cannot view the deleted comment, Lokoliki had quoted this part of the comment before it was deleted. Lokoliki questions the idea that gays can’t dive deeper into PC Music conceptually:

“Uh. Excuse me? I’m not entirely sure what your point is since in the sentence right before you say how it’s sad that the music has any connotation to sexuality, then you proceed to make a statement which is frankly ignorant an presumptive and based on sexuality. Or at least that’s

⁷ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_S0qCeA-pc

how it reads... I have no clue how you go the idea that gays apparently are unable to use critical thought when it comes to PC Music, but wow, man."

User joetothec responds: "You're right I deleted my comment because it wasn't typed how I wanted to portray my thoughts. It does sound ignorant but it's not what my intention is." This conversation represents conflict that exists between LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ members of this subreddit.

Post 7, titled "Thank you SOPHIE", posted by user Moon_chu. Moon_chu discusses the experience of growing up in a small town in Alabama and the role of SOPHIE's music in affirming their queer identity:

"I'd always known I was gay (that was hard enough to tell my parents) but now I have to come out as trans? They would hate me enough for telling them I'm gay. I've been really down on myself and I've been over analyzing and overthinking how I should look and act but then Sophie came out with the ultimate bop Immaterial, sonically this song sounds like another bubbly pop ballad that Sophie is known for but when you listen to the lyrics it goes a but deeper. These lyrics saved me, they told me who I was and who I wasn't. I can be anything. I'm not tangible, I'm just consciousness...I've been the happiest I've ever been these past few weeks now that I know who I am and who I can be. Thank you Sophie."

This post offers insight on the emotional quality imbued into SOPHIE's music. This post comes from a transgender user's perspective and demonstrates the importance of having queer artists succeed in the music industry. Additionally, this user finds support through sharing their story online with a supportive community. User AndiFoxy responds to this:

"I'm with you. As a trans girl myself I have really connected with a lot of the themes Sophie writes about. I think it's kind of an instinctually relatable thing for anyone that experiences gender dysphoria. I've

seen parts of myself in her ever since I heard B Who I Want 2 B. These lyrics are so profoundly meaningful to me.”

Transcriptions:

The first piece of evidence presented in the data section is a pair of transcribed quotes coming from artists associated with PC Music. Figure 1 is a series of quotes from SOPHIE, a queer producer heavily affiliated with PC Music. Figure 2 is a quote from Danny L Harle, a heterosexual producer signed to PC Music.

In her interview, SOPHIE discusses her approach as a producer, which includes imagining sounds that don't exist yet and bringing them into reality through her music. In addition, SOPHIE positions her work as an imagining of the future of sound. SOPHIE also discusses becoming acquainted with PC Music early on in her career and the mutual understanding regarding skills and musical interests. Conversely, Danny L Harle discusses the paradoxical nature of authenticity in the music industry. He points out the dichotomy of “fake music” and “honest music”, suggesting that authenticity is a manufactured quality that artists seek to artificially create. Danny L Harle references “openly manufactured music” as something that he would like to see more of, declaring this kind of music as a “radical statement” which moves beyond the dichotomy of fake and authentic.

Discussion:

Is PC Music queer? What is PC Music?

The initial question I set out to answer deals with the extent to which queerness is associated with the record label, PC Music. Drawing from the survey data, responses to this question appear very depending on who you are asking. Respondents who rated the record label as less queer and were not LGBTQ tended to cite the music as the most important factor. These respondents were hesitant to associate sexuality or gender with their music taste. This is evident by one respondent who stated "I

have never felt something sexual with my guy friends (I am biologically male) and I have never felt that I am something other than a male". This respondent uses his non-LGBTQ identity to justify his conviction that the record label is not queer. Conversely, LGBTQ respondents who rated the record label as less queer tended to reference the lack of LGBTQ-identifying individuals on the record label as their reasoning. One responder's quote captures this: "aren't they all straight cis people? Fucking danny got married and had a kid...". LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ respondents who rated the record label as more queer tended to cite similar reasons, such as affiliation and association with openly LGBTQ artists, an inherent queer quality to the music (e.g. by addressing queer themes or using hyper-feminine imagery), as well as the large queer following of the record label. Nonetheless, non-LGBTQ respondents emphasized a feeling of acceptance and inclusivity: "...but I'm a cishet man and I feel very included in within the fan base."

Figure 7 demonstrates these trends. Approximately 15% of non-LGBTQ respondents and 5% of LGBTQ respondents provided a rating of 1. On the other hand, approximately 40% of LGBTQ respondents provided a rating of 6 or 7, while only 25% of non-LGBTQ respondents provided a rating of 6 or 7. Therefore, LGBTQ members of /r/pcmusic tend to view the record label as more queer than their non-LGBTQ counterparts .

In order to understand what is going on here, I turn to a study by Born and Haworth, who investigated the emergence of internet-mediated genres of music. Born and Haworth have the following to say about defining a genre in the digital age:

"...not only musical sounds but music's paratextual, material, and institutional forms, its subcultural styles, and the configuration of both the music industry and audiences have been taken to participate in 'genre worlds' and to require theorization in terms of genre."

The point that Born and Haworth are making is that in an internet-mediated context, genres should be thought of as relational, or in a state of flux. The social and aesthetic aspects that a community brings to their appreciation of a genre matter in constructing that genre. Therefore, the record label, PC Music, can be thought of as more than just a label, but as a genre or movement whose boundaries are forged from the impressions and cultural practices of fans who make up the community surrounding the label. Applying this framework, it becomes clear why heterosexual respondents may be more hesitant to rate the label as queer than their LGBTQ counterparts.

This distinction shows up in the weekly thread analysis in post 4 (“Dorian Electra – Flamboyant”) and in post 6 (“Why is PC Music so divisive?”). Dorian Electra is not part of the PC Music label, but they can be considered an artist following in the wake of the label/genre's success and popularity, who is in a position to capitalize off of the PC Music fanbase. The following quote is taken from the description of the Flamboyant Youtube video⁸:

'Rising pop star Dorian Electra (pronouns: they/them/theirs) makes music that defies gender norms...Electra has also quickly built a dedicated fan base thanks to their futuristic spin on 00s pop, 80s funk, and a long-standing love of satirizing rigid gender roles and views on sexuality.'

In post 4, we see two users debating over the classification of Dorian Electra's new single as "PC" or not. CordialMusic shares their view that "peak PC music" is exemplified by A.G. Cook's production style (the founder of the PC Music record label), while user Joebiekong takes the term "PC" to denote a style of experimentation, widely applicable to non-PC artists. Therefore, according to Joebiekong's, Electra's music would be considered under the umbrella term of "PC Music".

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDb1oTfcmCI&feature=youtu.be>

In post 6, we see two heterosexual users discussing the LGBTQ connotations that accompany liking this kind of music. User LewisMcP discusses having their sexual identity assumed to be gay due to their music taste. Water_Feature adds the comment, "The amount of times my gay friends have tried to turn me because I'm skinny and mild-mannered and like pop music." These comments demonstrate an association of an LGBTQ identity and a taste for PC Music.

The second set of comments on this post deals with an example of homophobia that can occur in this community. User joetothec had questioned whether gay audiences are able to "dive deeper conceptually into [PC Music]". This user views the LGBTQ fanbase as less critical of PC Music. However, the data in this investigation suggests that this user might be uncomfortable with the thought of queer artists being incorporated under the umbrella term "PC Music", as this would represent the queering of their music taste. Lokoliki responds, calling joetothec's comment "ignorant and presumptive and based on sexuality". Joetothec responds stating "You're right I deleted my comment because it wasn't typed how I wanted to portray my thoughts. It does sound ignorant but it's not what my intention is." While homophobia is not absent from /r/pcmusic, it tends to be dealt with by the community.

Therefore, these findings suggest that the extent to which queerness is associated with PC Music differs depending on who you ask and how people view the phrase "PC Music". Members of /r/pcmusic who prefer to view the phrase as denoting membership of a record label, and not as broader a genre or movement, limit the definition of what constitutes PC Music. This may, in part, be fueled by a lack of acceptance of non-PC Music queer artists, such as Dorian Electra. This suggests that some straight listeners, who view PC Music as less queer, to limit what constitutes "PC Music" to the exclusive category of members that are part of a record label. Meanwhile LGBTQ audiences appear more likely to cite the wider context surrounding this genre. This is evident in how respondents who rate the label as more queer on the basis of LGBTQ representation tend to cite affiliated artists and the fan base as reasons for associating queerness with the record label, PC Music.

Approaches to Music-Making:

This finding can be demonstrated through the content of the music being made when we compare the production styles of Danny L Harle and SOPHIE. Danny's approach to music production involves exploiting a contradiction within the consumerist culture we reside; the false dichotomy between "realness" and "fakeness" in an artist's manufactured aesthetic. This approach to music making can be considered ironic, where "the opposite of what is meant is expressed and that one implies the opposite of what one says." By creating "openly manufactured music", Danny L Hare exposes listeners to this contradiction. Through embracing this manufactured quality of music, Danny creates music that is more "authentic" in that it rejects the false dichotomy discussed earlier. Danny's approach to production exemplifies PC Music's attitude toward pop music; as a hyper-charged parody of contemporary pop music. Parody is defined here as "the adoption of a recognizable structure and constitutive criteria of an original that mocks and belittles that original." Overall, one goal of this PC music artist is utilizing parody to critique consumerist music culture that dominates the industry.

Conversely, SOPHIE, a queer affiliate of PC Music, approaches her production in a very different way. Rather than employing parody to invert expectations surrounding authenticity, SOPHIE makes music that is authentic in its own right. SOPHIE imagines her music as taking place in the future, thereby transgressing the limitations of categories which exist in the here-and-now. Therefore, the aesthetic quality of SOPHIE's sound is not a grounded critique of the music industry, but rather reimagining of what music would sound like without the oppressive forces that result from it. Pearce and Lohman discuss approaches to making content in the trans music scene:

"We argue that within this scene, 'trans' exists in the space between deconstructive strategies (grounded in genre evasion) and constructive strategies (grounded in a cut-and-

paste approach): this is the case for events as well as personal identity. In this way, 'trans' performance comes to reflect personal approaches to identity formation." (Pearce and Lohman 2019)

Therefore, SOPHIE can be considered a "PC-adjacent" artist whose approach to music-making embodies the sentiments of /r/pcmusic responders; Those who view PC Music as a wider genre or movement. Conversely, Danny L Harle's approach is more limited to the goals of the PC Music record label, in exploiting the contradictions present within consumerist culture. These two processes separately appeal to an audience in different ways. Danny is reconstructing a new style of music from the deconstructed remnants of consumerist culture, while SOPHIE is reimagining what music would sound like once it is freed of these constraints. However, these two approaches are not at odds with each other, and each deal with themes that would appeal to a queer audience.

What about /r/pcmusic?

So far, this discussion has demonstrated how the phrase "PC Music" is ambiguous. "PC Music" seems to refer to multiple ideas at once; a record label imparting an ironic edge on pop music, a genre or style of music that appeals to a specific fan base, and also a wider movement associated with a reimagining of the fundamentals of pop music. The data suggests that each interpretation of the term "PC Music" appeals to a queer audience. However, non-queer audiences appear to be less comfortable and receptive to definitions that step outside of PC Music's parody of pop music.

Figure 8 demonstrates a key difference in how LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ individuals associate queerness with /r/pcmusic. Approximately 70% of LGBTQ respondents provided a rating of 6 or 7, while approximately 55% of non-LGBTQ individuals provided this same ratings. In addition, only 2 (around 2%) LGBTQ participant provided a rating that was less than 4. Approximately 10 % of non-LGBTQ

respondents provided a rating of 1 or 2. Therefore, LGBTQ respondents are much more likely to view /r/pcmusic as a space that is heavily associated with queerness than non-LGBTQ community members.

This section will discuss the association of queerness with the /r/pcmusic community. Drawing on survey responses and posts, I will argue that two mechanisms are at play in the queering of this online space. One of these is the affiliation with PC Music with queer artists and queer fanbases. The other mechanism is an assumed queerness that users imbue through the content posted in this community.

/r/pcmusic as a Safe Space:

Survey responses indicate that non-LGBTQ respondents who rated the subreddit as less queer were likely to cite the function of this space as one meant for discussing music. As one respondent put it "It's just a group of people talking about music there really isn't any room for people to express their LGBTQ+ things." Some LGBTQ respondents echoed this idea that music is the primary topic of discussion, but tended to reference the PC Music fanbase as being more queer than not. Several respondents from both categories indicated the use of language, slang, and humor associated with the LGBTQ community. In addition, LGBTQ respondents also pointed out the fact that they view the subreddit as a safe space, where transphobia and homophobia are, for the most part, absent.

One non-LGBTQ respondent simply provided a rating of 7 with the explanation that "It's annoyingly obvious". This response stands in contrast to an LGBTQ-identifying respondent who provided a rating of 7 and the following response: "Anytime I see reference to sexuality on the subreddit it's always queer." These responses suggest that the first responder finds it annoying to occupy a space where sexuality is assumed to be queer. This is a finding that is demonstrated in a post titled "DANNY IS A FATHER I REPEAT DANNY L HARLE HAS HAD A BABY". User memesus is surprised to discover that PC Music artist Danny L Harle is married to a woman and having a child, suggesting that this user is surprised by Danny L

Harle's heterosexuality. This comment demonstrates Halberstam's point that queer subcultural involvement produces alternative temporalities that enable participants to imagine a future that runs counter to traditional, heterosexual life narratives.

Therefore, /r/pcmusic can be understood as space that is predicated on queerness; a space where it is safe to assume that your fellow community members are also LGBTQ-identified. This arises from survey responses indicating that it is a safe space for gay and trans individuals, and the use of LGBTQ-associated language and humor. The content and subject matter of posts, and the artists affiliated with "PC Music" also contribute to this climate, where queerness is assumed to be the norm. However, it does seem that all community members necessarily support or recognize this reality. Lokoliki's response to homophobia, discussed earlier, also demonstrates how /r/pcmusic functions as a safe space.

The Role of Affiliation:

A clear example of affiliation leading to queerness on /r/pcmusic has to do with the fanbase built around the producer SOPHIE. Early on in her career, SOPHIE was able to benefit from affiliation with /r/pcmusic due to their similar approaches to music-making. However, I will argue that in the long run, PC Music has benefited from being associated with the queer icon, SOPHIE. Through affiliation with SOPHIE, and other artists with queer identities, such as Dorian Electra, PC Music marks itself as a welcoming space for queer individuals.

Posts 1 and post 5 are both images depicting to the producer SOPHIE. These kinds of posts I will refer to as "SOPHIE worship" based off of Linda Lister's article *Divafication: The Deification of Modern Female Pop Stars*. In discussing diva worship, Lister presents the following:

"While their divas sing onstage, fans dutifully lip-synch every word, projecting their own dreams onto their idols, while themselves assuming in some small part of the persona of the diva." (Lister 2001)

I see this same process playing out within the /r/pcmusic community, given the amount of content having to do with the PC Music-affiliated producer SOPHIE. In fact, during my weekly gathering of posts, I found that the clear majority of posts related to SOPHIE somehow or another. Whether user's posted included picture of SOPHIE, a remix inspired by a SOPHIE song, or a request for a bootleg version of SOPHIE's unreleased content. Lister continues, "Therefore, as society continues to embrace female empowerment, no doubt the deification of the diva will thrive, because diva worship appears to enable both the worshiped and the worshiper."

The depiction of SOPHIE and her girlfriend in post 5 demonstrate the ways that LGBTQ /r/pcmusic members benefit from SOPHIE worship. User flowyrs comments "such a powerful image" which user lillybaeum responds "they both look like supermodels genuinely.". Both Sophie Xeon and Tzef Montana are two queers in a relationship, who are also both beautiful and aesthetically-pleasing individuals. The power that flowyrs attributes to this post is a result of the queer identity of these individuals and their pride for their identities.

In addition, Post 1 is a thread that serves to authenticate SOPHIE. Commenters are excited by a picture of the poster and SOPHIE as well as SOPHIE's signature. These comments which reference SOPHIE's sloppy handwriting demonstrate the function of authenticity in /r/pcmusic. Sharing photo like these, the distribution of unreleased content and bootlegs, and the proliferation of an overall culture of SOPHIE worship cement SOPHIE as an icon for this community. However, my impression is that SOPHIE's queer identity is secondary to her ability as a producer. SOPHIE's popularity on the subreddit denotes

the importance of artists with a visible queer identity. Without SOPHIE, it is unlikely that this space would have a queer icon to rally behind and unite LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ listeners alike.

Activism and Resistance in /r/PCMusic:

To conclude this section, I will discuss the extent to which activism, resistance, and subversion are present within the community of /r/pcmusic. /r/pcmusic is an online space predicated on queerness, which I argue, enables it as a site for activism and resistance. /r/pcmusic is assumed to be a queer space by the majority of its community members, and this view tends to hold true regardless of member's sexuality or gender. I have argued that this has come about through the mechanisms of affiliation and the marking of /r/pcmusic as a queer space. However, /r/pcmusic is not an exclusively queer community. As such, queer participants mark the space as queer through vocalizing queer sexuality, the use of LGBTQ language and humor, and the promotion of queer artists. This process, which involves claiming a neutral site as queer, is inherently activist and demonstrates how online spaces can become refuges for LGBTQ individuals. Therefore /r/pcmusic is a place where queerness can be negotiated on its own terms, without the constraint of assumed heterosexuality.

In her study on the function of online spaces as cyberclosets, the author Vicki Fraser suggests that these spaces enable and limit the formation of queer subjectivity online. This point is relevant in understanding the importance of the function of /r/pcmusic as a queer space online. However, I would argue that /r/pcmusic is less of a cybercloset, and instead, more so resembles a virtual third place. These virtual third places expand participants' social world, demonstrating the role of technology in everyday life. Because /r/pcmusic is an online community where membership is based on music taste, it functions as one of these spaces.

However, as it happens, most of the members of this community turn out to identify as LGBTQ. I have argued that affiliation and the marking of this space as queer through assuming queerness has led

to this. Therefore, /r/pcmusic, and the cultural practices within this community have come to feel inherently queer. However, many non-LGBTQ members are a part of this community due to the simple fact that they enjoy the music. This process accounts for why the results of the survey were as divisive as they are. It also suggests that the members of this community are participating in subcultural resistance. As discussed by Halberstam and Taylor, this kind of resistance involves carving space for queer sensibilities in popular culture by producing the space for life narratives that run counter to traditional heterosexual notions of time.

The process of affiliation tends to lead to the widespread support queer artists in this community. In addition, post 2 (titled "Collaboration") demonstrates how this community not only supports established queer artists, but also enables consumers as producers. Because /r/pcmusic tends to be occupied by queers, this community provides unestablished queer artists a starting point and potential fanbase.

The content and style associated with the kind of music that is distributed within this community has the feeling of being situated in the future, rather than the here-and-now. This has been demonstrated by examining the approaches of producers SOPHIE and Danny L Harle. However, while Danny draws inspiration from contradictions in the past to mock the present, SOPHIE positions her work as a reimagining of the present, situated in the future. This relates to Jose Munoz's notion of queerness in relation to utopia:

"Queerness is that thing that lets us feel that this world is not enough, that indeed something is missing. Often we can glimpse the worlds proposed and promised by queerness in the realm of the aesthetic. The aesthetic, especially the queer aesthetic, frequently contains blueprints and schemata of forward-dawning futurity...Queerness is essentially about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on the potentiality or concrete possibility for another world." (Muñoz 2009)

Therefore, /r/pcmusic is a space dedicated to an appreciation of an aesthetic which is situated in the future and has come to be associated and occupied by queerness. This aesthetics, embodied by the producer SOPHIE, and to a lesser extent, producer Danny L Harle push music into the future. However, SOPHIE imbues her music with the lived experience queerness, and her work embodies the aesthetic dimension which Munoz refers to.

This is evident when we look at how queer individuals view SOPHIE's music as a source of emotional support, validation, and inspiration. Post 7 (titled "Thank you SOPHIE") demonstrates the importance and power had by SOPHIE, as an up-and-coming queer producer. User moon_chu discusses their experience accepting their gay and trans identities in rural America:

'I've been really down on myself and I've been over analyzing and overthinking how I should look and act but then Sophie came out with the ultimate bop Immaterial, sonically this song sounds like another bubbly pop ballad that Sophie is known for but when you listen to the lyrics it goes a bit deeper. These lyrics saved me, they told me who I was and who I wasn't. I can be anything. I'm not tangible, I'm just consciousness. Floating in the universe, weightless, a cipher. I've been the happiest I've ever been these past few weeks now that I know who I am and who I can be. Thank you Sophie.'

User AndiFxxxx responds to this post:

'[SOPHIE's lyrics] really speak to me as a trans person. You have to become who you are inside, and nobody else can do that for you.'

When she released the image for the live show in LA where she's hidden behind the pink liquid, I knew she was going to come out. I just knew it. When I saw the It's Okay to Cry music video I cried my eyes out. Part of it was being happy for her, and the other part was sad that someone I looked up to so much was doing what I felt I couldn't do myself.'

These two comments make the need for spaces like /r/pcmusic incredibly clear. The online context allows users to participate in a community without the limitation of having to actually be there. Therefore, a queer individual living in rural America is able to find support, understanding and acceptance that might otherwise be absent outside the virtual context. The activist element at play here is hope. Hope that has been enabled by the formation of a niche social community in cyberspace. Hope for the future, manifested in a devoted, cult-like following of an ironic UK record label and affiliated artists. This hope wouldn't be possible if not for these artists and this community that supports them.

Limitations and Future Directions:

A limitation of this research is that data was collected from a single community on the website Reddit. It would be valuable to conduct similar methods to other communities on Reddit, as well as looking at other queer music communities across the greater web. This would add to these findings in determining whether they generalize to other communities, or if what is being observed is unique to this cyberspace. In addition, this study focused on mainly on sexual orientation in relation to queerness, but this study did not address how age, gender, race and class factor in to the demographic makeup of this kind community.

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