Getting Freaky with Missy

Missy Elliott, Queer Hip Hop, and the Musical Aesthetics of Impropriety

ABSTRACT This article analyzes the music of Black female rapper Missy Elliott in order to consider performative challenges to the politics of visibility and visuality of Black queerness in hip hop. While mainstream media lauds the recent increase in and representation of out Black LGBTQ rappers, scholars such as C. Riley Snorton caution such praise for the unique ways visibility and surveillance are entangled formations that render Black queer communities vulnerable to violence. This article draws on Elliott’s songs “Get Ur Freak on” and “Pussycat” to present alternative ways of navigating the violence of visibility for Black queers and queerness. It argues that Elliott musically inhabits, expresses, and produces queerness through a set of cultural practices that this article calls the “musical aesthetics of impropriety.” The musical aesthetics of impropriety are performative expressions that are developed and deployed at the level of the sound recording, and that exploit the gaps and fissures of what qualifies as proper sexual subjects (e.g., LGBT) and how we come to perceive them as such (i.e., “evidence”) in order to produce alternative sexual and sonic formations. It is, thus, through the musical aesthetics of impropriety that we might imagine and articulate racialized queerness in hip hop differently.

KEYWORDS hip hop, race and ethnic studies, gender/sexuality, queer studies

The imperatives of identity politics around visibility and representation threaten to obscure more complicated processes of how identities are manifested and negotiated in everyday experiences.

Jason King1

What happens when we focus on how black people inhabit their bodies outside of the designs of ocularity?

L.H. Stallings2

This article analyzes the music of African American female rapper Melissa “Missy” Elliott as a way to consider the performative challenges to the politics of visibility and visuality of racialized sexuality, specifically Black queerness, in hip hop. Over the past decade we have witnessed a significant increase in out and self-identified Black LGBTQ

rappers such as Mykki Blanco, Lil Nas X, Azealia Banks, and Young M.A. And while such prominent representation of LGBTQ rap subjects might ostensibly be something worthy of universal praise, scholars like C. Riley Snorton caution against such laudatory gestures. Snorton posits that such celebration often relies on, shores up, stabilizes, and naturalizes assumed proper categories of dissident gender and sexuality like LGBT—papering over those whose sexualities and gender identities fall outside such categories, as well as sexual practices and gender expressions that aren’t necessarily legible under mainstream logics of sexuality and gender—and deploys a logic that links visibility and positive representation in ways that “read alongside (and position against) perceptions of hip hop as a site of black misogyny and homophobia.”

Visibility is not simply a trap, as Michel Foucault famously argues, through which bodies and populations are policed, surveilled, and managed; but more to the point, such insistence on outness and visibility of and for Black queer communities runs the risk of further pathologizing Blackness (via hip hop as an Afro-diasporic art form and its assumed association with queer antagonism), and exacerbating the cultural and legislative calls for “greater surveillance and regulation of black bodies.” This entanglement of visibility and surveillance is particularly pernicious and punitive for Black queer communities as it perpetually renders them (more) vulnerable and, to quote José Esteban Muñoz, “open for attack.”

This article is an attempt to parry such an attack and the politics of recognition that facilitates it. I draw on the musical work of Missy Elliott, specifically her 2001 and 2003 songs “Get Ur Freak on” and “Pussycat,” respectively, and examine, as Jason King suggests in the epigraph, the kinds of “complicated processes” of sex and sexuality that visibility and representation obscure. I argue that Elliott musically inhabits, expresses, and produces queerness through a set of cultural practices that I refer to as the musical aesthetics of impropriety. I define the musical aesthetics of impropriety as performative expressions and musical stylings that are developed and deployed at the level of the sound recording (e.g., the lyrics, samples, sampling and production techniques, and vocal delivery and timbre in a particular song or set of songs), and that emerge through a sustained rejection and subversion of any and all means by which bodies, desires, pleasures, and sexual practices become indicative of or register as visible and “proper” subjects. That is, the musical aesthetics of impropriety exploits the gaps and fissures of what generally qualifies as proper sexual and gendered non-normative identities (like LGBT) and how we come to perceive them as such (the “hard evidence” that proves, naturalizes, and stabilizes such subjects and identities) in order to produce alternative sexual and sonic formations. As I outline below, the kinds of impropriety that the musical aesthetics of impropriety embraces and engenders are ones that fail to register as proper subjects, the methods that we use to define such proper subjects, and the respectable/proper norms governing such

subjects. In so doing, the musical aesthetics of impropriety aligns with and follows Shanté Paradigm Smalls’s recent call for queer analytics of hip hop that are “not necessarily related to bodies and subjects who claim queerness as an identity or affect, but who may have a queer affect or effect in their work.”

Importantly, the musical aesthetics of impropriety does not simply seek to negate and all around ignore a visible and proper subject that is solely tethered to the assumed stable categories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender; rather, the musical aesthetics of impropriety is an intersectional practice and project of queerness. Cathy J. Cohen’s concept of a “new radical politics of deviance” informs my conception of queerness and its place in the musical aesthetics of impropriety. Cohen locates the political promise of deviance, specifically within Black communities, in the way that it challenges “the reification of the nuclear family, the conformity to institutionally prescribed and informally regulated gender roles and intimate sexual relations.” In rooting queerness in deviance, I am not attempting to pathologize queerness or Blackness. My aim is to instead make room for racialized peoples who, and cultural practices that, sit outside the heterosexual and homosexual norms organizing respectable and proper sexual behaviors. I am interested in centering non-normative sexual practices deemed improper, and those that are surveilled and regulated by the state as well as within the field of the everyday.

Snorton argues that the visibility of self-identified Black LGBTQ rappers often insists that such rappers perform what he calls a “politics of pride...which articulate a normative structure for how queers should behave in and for their publics.” I advance the musical aesthetics of impropriety as a queery deviant rejection of the politics of pride and a disruption of heterosexual and homosexual respectability and positive representation. I not only consider pleasures that occur between same-sex subjects, but also, and again drawing on Cohen, folks like poor single Black mothers whose “intimate relationships and sexual behavior are often portrayed as directly in conflict with the normative assumptions of heterosexism and the nuclear family...[and] also often live under the constant surveillance of the state through regulatory agencies.” Reformulating queerness in this way resists the queer/heterosexual dyad that privileges a single-oppression framework of sexuality that still has purchase in queer studies and that often centers whiteness. The musical aesthetics of impropriety rejects this binary and how it renders select and arbitrary non-normative formations as worthy and “proper” queer objects/subjects, in order to

9. Snorton, “On the Question,” 289. It should be noted that Snorton’s critique is about scholarship that treats and celebrates outness as a panacea for hip hop’s assumed inherent homophobia and transphobia; the critique is not about the presence of out black queer rappers. For related work that challenges the disarticulation of queerness and hip hop, see “The Queerness of Hip Hop/The Hip Hop of Queerness,” special issue of Palimpsest: A Journal on Women, Gender, and the Black International 2, no. 2 (2015); and for scholarly literature that critiques the myth of Black homophobia and that cautions against doing queer hip hop studies without queer rappers, see Lauron Kehrer, “A Love Song for All of Us? Macklemore’s ‘Same Love’ and the Myth of Black Homophobia,” Journal of the Society for American Music 12, no. 4 (November 2018).
pursue an intersectional framework of deviance that cuts across and between the imbricated and uneven social formations of race, class, gender, sex(uality), nation, ability, and other vectors of power, difference, and belonging.

The kinds of deviance that Missy Elliott’s iteration of the musical aesthetics of impropriety expresses involve engagements with erotic non-normative sexual desires, pleasures, and practices that are rooted in a Black feminist, queer of color, and queer diasporic critique: a version of what hip hop feminist scholar Joan Morgan calls “pleasure politics,” which trouble the racial, national, class, gender, and sexual politics of respectability governing heteronormativity, homonormativity, and Black womanhood. Missy Elliott uses a set of lyrical and sonic stylings that, to quote Morgan, make room for “honest bodies that like to also fuck.” Missy Elliott is sexually explicit. She grunts, moans, and plays with vocal registers and samples in ways that locate pleasure within sexual practices—like group sex and BDSM—deemed impure, deemed improper, under the normative logics of Black women’s sexuality. Indeed, the musical aesthetics of impropriety violate the logics of Black politics of respectability that, as Treva Lindsey articulates, “police a more expansive continuum for progressive and liberatory female-centered sexual politics,” including but of course not limited to “African American women entertainers” like Missy Elliott. This article uses the music of Missy Elliott as a case study through which we might envision a musical space of and engagements with Black feminist, queer of color, and sex-positive informed practices of impropriety that make audible alternative queer formations.

At the time of this writing, Missy Elliott has not publicly (in print or song) declared a sexual identity, and it does not matter if she openly announces her sexual identification at any point during this article’s published circulation. This article should not be viewed (or used) as an attempt to out, refute, or provide hard and “proper” evidence of Elliott’s sexuality. I am not interested in Elliott’s sexual identity/identities, and I am not suggesting that Elliott’s deployment of the musical aesthetics of impropriety is indicative of any perceived deep and hidden “truth” about her sexual subjectivity. Such approaches are invested in using close reading practices as acts of surveillance that aim to obtain evidence and make sexualities fit a proper and recognizable schema; and thus, it’s a project that runs counter to my intent to imagine queerness in rap away from the politics and trappings of visibility that, to quote Snorton again, “characterize the viscerally public

experience of black life.”

To that end, my use of the musical aesthetics of impropriety is similar to José Esteban Muñoz and Philip Brian Harper’s frameworks of “queer ephemera” and “felt intuition,” respectively, which locate performances like cruising as “alternate modes of textuality and narrativity” that produce queerness via “traces, glimmers, residues, and specks of things.” Indeed, to add another layer to my use of “impropriety,” the musical aesthetics of impropriety also lays claim to Black queer potentiality outside the traditional evidentiary logic of verifiable, hard, and proper proof that often undergirds attachments to the politics of recognition. The musical aesthetics of impropriety, then, define a set of practices that are indirect rather than direct. They reflect a musical and sonic aesthetic strategy that scratches the surface, letting you know that something queer just happened/is happening, but they don’t leave enough evidence to render that queer something visible or vulnerable enough to warrant surveillance and regulation.

Missy Elliott’s 2003 hit song “Gossip Folks” is instructive here to ground the stakes and layered meanings of the musical aesthetics of impropriety. “Gossip Folks” details rumors and gossip surrounding Missy Elliott’s personal life, and her responses to these rumors. The song opens with a group of people, all played by Elliott in digitally altered voices, gossiping about her as she enters a club. One person states: “Girl, that is Missy Elliott; she lost a lot of weight;” another responds: “Girl, I heard she eats one cracker a day;” and a third chimes in: “Oh, well I heard the bitch was married to Tim [Elliott’s long-time collaborator Timothy “Timbaland” Mosley] and started fucking with Trina [a Black woman rapper and frequent Elliott collaborator].” Elliott then spends the rest of the song addressing such gossip, and in one particular line, she discusses the rumors that are specifically tied to her sexual partners and behaviors: “Stop talkin’ about who I’m stickin’ and lickin’, [you] just mad it ain’t yours.”

Here, Elliott acknowledges the rumor about her non-normative sexual activities but refuses to confirm or deny it, holding listeners and the truth in suspense. I raise this point not to foreground the notion of the closet or coming out (a framework and position that many queer of color scholars and activists have critiqued), nor to engage in a discussion about the politics of (non)identification. Rather, this line and song highlight the queer work of rumor and gossip, a hallmark of Muñoz’s framework of queer ephemera, and their participation in the aesthetics of impropriety. Rumors and gossip gesture toward, but ultimately elude, the fixed and visible. They do so precisely because they fail to qualify as proper proof that is often attached to legible subjectivity. As Judith Butler argues, gossip, especially the non-normative erotic variety, “is not a form of outing since it lacks that public dimension; it works through furtive circuits and is preoccupied with minor and major variations of the fabulous at a distance from the regime of truth.”

Thus, in refusing the declarative mode of communication and identification (publicly revealing one’s sexuality), Missy Elliott displaces the “easy referential access” attached to visibility.\textsuperscript{17} She instead inhabits and engenders queerness through and within the impropriety of gossip and rumor. Following Butler again, if gossip “asks another to imagine along, build a reality, make it true, if only for the duration of the communication,” then Elliott’s refusal to contest or confirm such gossip allows her to further play within the imaginative space of the rumor and its attendant queer (in Cohen’s sense of the term) sexual practices of fucking.\textsuperscript{18} In “Gossip Folks,” Elliott embraces and practices the penetrative position of a top (“who I’m stickin’”), she (via her created character at the start of the song) discusses fucking multiple genders (Timbaland and Trina), and she (in same character) does so within and outside of the normative space of matrimony (Elliott sleeps with Trina while still married to Timbaland, which suggests cheating, bigamy, polyamory, and other non-normative kinship formations). But in resisting confirmation of these rumors, in holding “truth” at bay, Elliott creates space to engage in such queer sexual practices without providing the proper proof of and validity to these rumors that would render her visible and open to state surveillance and regulation that always-already accompanies the visibility of these practices; it allows her to safely play with her rumored sexual improprieties.\textsuperscript{19}

This brief discussion of “Gossip Folks” sheds light on how the musical aesthetics of impropriety’s resistance to modalities of proper evidentiary logic manifests in the realm of recorded sound. It is through Missy Elliott’s lyrical refusal to make declarative claims about identity that allows for and animates queer ephemeral performative mixings. My attention to Missy Elliott’s music is a deliberate one, and an attempt to contribute to and complicate the scholarly and journalistic literature on Elliott that almost exclusively confines her racialized gender and sexual play to the realm of the visual (e.g., her music videos, sartorial politics, and marked corporeality).\textsuperscript{20} This is not meant to discredit the work of Black queer feminist scholars like Kara Keeling, Amber Jamilla Musser, and Savannah Shange who use visuality—cinema, pin-up calendars, and rap music videos, respectively—as a medium through which to analyze how Black queer women negotiate

\textsuperscript{17} Harper, “The Evidence of Felt Intuition,” 649.
\textsuperscript{18} Butler, “Solidarity/Susceptibility,” 2.
and challenge visibility and stable identification. But what I want to argue is that we must also look to, as L. H. Stallings notes in this article’s epigraph, “how black people inhabit their bodies outside of the designs of ocularity.” The musical aesthetics of impropriety insists upon a Black queer hermeneutics of music and sound that rests on the routinely overlooked and the perceived to be inconsequential—those musical formations that fail to adhere to the standard and normative logics of musical production, consumption, and reception. It demands a listening practice of impropriety that queries what the “invisible evidence” of queerness—invisible because it does not conform to and is not legible under dominant rubrics of what “counts” as evidence—sounds like for Black queers and other queer people of color. It demands that we think about queerness and hip hop through not simply the visual and literary, but the sonic as well. As Shana Redmond reminds us, music for Afro-diasporic people and in Afro-diasporic histories “functions as a method of rebellion, revolution, and future visions that disrupt and challenge the manufactured differences used to dismiss, detain, and destroy communities.” And so because the mechanisms of visibility and visuality of Black queerness are tools that can “dismiss, detain, and destroy communities,” the musical aesthetics of impropriety—through its resistance to ocularity and legibility—offers one example of the strategies to negotiate such racialized sexual violence.

The remainder of this article explores the musical aesthetics of impropriety in more detail through analyses of Missy Elliott’s records “Get Ur Freak On” and “Pussycat.” I chose these songs because they were released at a unique moment of visibility and crossover appeal in Elliott’s career. “Get Ur Freak On” and “Pussycat” are songs from 2001 and 2003, respectively, a musical period that marked Elliott’s commercial and critical peak—she garnered her highest grossing albums and singles as well as the most Grammy nominations of her career during this time. Exploring the musical aesthetics of impropriety at this moment is important because it is precisely this period where Elliott’s increased popularity articulated with public demands for visibility and scrutiny of social formations like sexuality. Indeed, this exact moment, 2002-2003, prompted Elliott to record “Gossip Folks.” And while I’ll mostly focus on “Get Ur Freak On” and “Pussycat,”


22. Stallings, Funk the Erotic, 14.

23. Despite my focus on an African American artist (Missy Elliott) and an Afro-diasporic form of expressive culture (hip hop), I use “queer of color” to describe the musical aesthetics of impropriety because, as will be explicated in the next section, there are moments when such a framework articulates with non-Black people of color communities, histories, lived realities, and theories. Nevertheless, I have attempted to be specific in my language when referring to the musical aesthetics of impropriety in relation to particular groups.


I will close this article with a brief discussion of Elliott’s current professional life and her return to mainstream limelight. I do so to examine how she continues to deploy the musical aesthetics of impropriety at a time when, as I stated at the outset, there’s unprecedented attention to and celebration of our LGBTQ rappers. What better moments to explore the ways artists use aesthetics to evade surveillance than when said musicians are expected to become and are most visible?

**SHE’S A SUPA DUPA FREAK**

In spring 2001, Missy Elliott released “Get Ur Freak On” from her then-upcoming album, *Miss E... So Addictive*. Produced with her longtime collaborator, Timbaland, “Get Ur Freak On” was a major crossover success; it sold more than a million copies and was Elliott’s first Grammy award winning song. Most scholarship on “Get Ur Freak On,” including my own, focuses on its unique use of non-Western instrumentation and voices, and argues that the popularity of “Get Ur Freak On” ushered in a new wave of hip hop music production that uses non-Western musical formations. While I still believe this to be true, I want to make the case that we can also read and listen to these non-Western musical features in “Get Ur Freak On” as queer of color/queer diasporic formations that facilitate Elliott’s employment of the musical aesthetics of impropriety.

To do so, let’s think critically about the term “freak.” Critical race, feminist, queer, and disability studies scholars compellingly articulate how scientific, medical, and colonial discourses produced the freak as a particularly marked disabled, queer, and/or raced subject. Doctors, scientists, and colonial social actors used bodies of Black people and other people of color (e.g., Sarah Bartmann/Hottentot Venus), disabled peoples (e.g., Chang and Eng, the conjoined twins), non-normative gendered and sexed subjects (e.g., Peter Sewally/Mary Jones), and people who sit at the intersections of all three marginalizations, as primitive and monstrous and as proof that such communities were “foreign and biologically degenerate curiosities, if not outliers, in the mythic nation.” Additionally, freak shows functioned as popular cultural extensions and (re)inscriptions of medical and imperial discourses of the freak. Freak shows used the circus cage as a site of spectacularization in which patrons could watch, gawk at—in disgust, delight, and desire—corporeal differences and consequently participate in a politics of looking that shored up white supremacy, able-bodiedness, heteronormativity, and U.S./Western

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nationalism/imperialism/exceptionalism (as well as other normative formations of power and privilege). 28

Importantly, for the purposes of this article at least, the freak was and is also an erotic(ized) subject. The freak is, well, freaky—its purported perverse physical and visible body was assumed to be indicative of the kinds of sexual practices in which the freak participated. And as Black feminist and queer scholars like L. H. Stallings note, the freak has particular resonance in Afro-diasporic communities for the way it articulates racialized erotics. The broader U.S. popular imaginary portrayed (and still portrays) African Americans as “otherly human, inhuman, or nonhuman” subjects who participate in deviant sex. 29 Cultural references to the freak often marked Black people as those engaging in sexual behaviors that were promiscuous, anal, rough, and in all other ways outside the state-sanctioned and morally respectable monogamous and penile-vaginal sexual behaviors of heteronormativity. The Black freak, thus, was someone who—in their presumed deviance from the human, something that—deserved state surveillance, regulation, and containment.

The music of “Get Ur Freak On” indexes and sounds this queer, racialized, dis/abled, and eroticized history of the freak, but it does so in the service of the freak itself and not a white, heteronormative, able-bodied subject. If, as Eli Clare argues, circus freaks used their objectified position to disrupt the surveillance of the sideshow to reverse, restrict, make strange, and in other words, queer the white non-disabled male gaze, then I argue that “Get Ur Freak On” participates in a similar practice of racially queering such politics of visibility and recognition. 30 This proceeds through what we might call a Black queer crip sound, and develops a soundtrack for such improper objectification. On the track, Missy Elliott and Timbaland participate in a promiscuous sampling aesthetics that draws on and features disparate Global South instrumentation and voices. The song opens with a sampled Japanese lyrical phrase (“korekara min-na-de mecha-kucha odotte sawago,” which roughly translates as “everybody, let’s dance like crazy, and get crazy”), and then moves into an interplay between the South Asian instruments of the tabla drum and the stringed tumbi. Timbaland and Elliott also add their signature “stutter-step” drum pattern to “Get Ur Freak On,” a drum programming technique that music critic Dave Tompkins describes as a “perversion” due to its rhythmic deviations from dominant drum patterns in rap music. 31 And Elliott accompanies and amplifies the crip sounds of the stutter-step with her own repetitious vocals, rapping “sw-sw-switch my style” in the first verse and “getcha, getcha, getcha, getcha, getcha freak on” in the chorus, and doing so in such a way that, when paired with the stutter-step and other specters of disability in the song (see below), also extend sonic valences of a stutter. 32

28. While outside the scope of this article, there are scenes in the “Get Ur Freak On” music video that seemingly acknowledge “freaks” and freak shows. For example, there are moments where Elliott removes her head or dramatically elongates it. And at another point in the video, the space in which the video takes place is populated with non-human or otherly human characters. It’s the non/otherly human that Stallings notes sits at the heart of the freak.

29. Stallings, Funk the Erotic, 2.


32. For more information on the stutter-step, see Marc Weingarten, “Grown Ass Woman Power,” Vibe 7, no. 6 (1999).
Moya Bailey rightly points out that there is a long history of ableist language in hip hop (think of terms like “dumb,” “stupid,” “retarded”). “Freak” in Elliott’s “Get Ur Freak On” is no exception here, as the use of “freak” in rap music goes back as far as “Rapper’s Delight.” Bailey goes on to argue that rather than seeing such terms as either “bad” or “good,” we should interpret the workings of ableism in hip hop as simultaneously liberatory for how sayings like “going crazy” offer African Americans freedom (however small and temporary) outside the constrictions of everyday and institutional racism and as limiting “for those who are ascribed these terms by the medicojurdical system.” Working with Bailey’s approach, I want to think about those in hip hop who are Black and disabled like Missy Elliott—who has been diagnosed with Graves’ disease, and whose severe anxiety keeps her from recording in front of people and at times requires medical attention during public performances—and Timbaland—whose body contains bullet fragments from when he was shot as a teenager, which temporarily paralyzed him, and affects the mobility in his right arm. In what ways might Elliott and Timbaland’s use of freak and crip sounds dually signal hip hop’s complex ties to ableism and disability as well as serve as a reclamation and centering of freakish bodies? Indeed, it must be noted that Elliott and Timbaland are self-proclaimed southern rap artists and producers, and as southern rap scholar Regina Bradley has noted, Black southernness—with its attendant speech modes of drawl—is often framed using ableist language of cognition like “slow.” This extends, for Bradley, to much of southern hip hop until the mid 2000s (which includes the release of “Get Ur Freak On”), in which such music was deemed inconsequential and illegitimate because of its failure to adhere to normative sounds and scripts of the dominant West (G-Funk, hyphy) and East (boom bap, chopping samples) coast rap scenes. Southern rap wasn’t considered “real” hip hop and its presence threatened to debase or “pervert” rap. It is here that the stutter-step beat, Elliott’s stuttering vocals, her use of “y’all” and southern drawl elongation of words like “down” and “round,” the Japanese opening’s call to “get crazy,” and the non-Western instrumentation on “Get Ur Freak On” bridge and combine the U.S. South with the Global South and further render the U.S. South and Global South as outside the proper, normal, and normative parameters of able-bodied, U.S., and East/West coast dominant rap formations. The queer and crip Afro-Asian southern sounds on “Get Ur Freak On” convene a soundscape of impropriety.

“Get Ur Freak On’s” Afro-Asian voices, rhythms, and instrumentation as well as sonic stylings of disablement are multiple and multidirectional. They cross-cut, overlap, and

34. Bailey, “‘The Illest,'” 145.
35. This line of questioning can also be used in relation to other rappers with disabilities, such as DJ Paul, Scarface, Bushwick Bill, and the Ying Yang Twins. Additionally, Leroy Moore’s “Krip-Hop Nation” is a powerful collective of artists whose work sits at the intersection of hip hop and disability.
parallel each other. They are often fleeting as Elliott and Timbaland bring such sounds in and out of the mix; they appear and disappear within and between spaces left by other instrumentation and rhythmic patterns. The layering and density of the sounds in “Get Ur Freak On,” offer a “kaleidoscopic range of dramatically contrasting qualities of sound” that Olly Wilson famously calls the “heterogeneous sound ideal.” And in this way, “Get Ur Freak On” sonically raises the specter of the freak and its differing histories along the lines of race and ability, but it does so without collapsing those subjectivities. The track makes room for and highlights the intersections of these sounds, and by extension their freakish histories, without muting their distinctiveness. Elliott and Timbaland achieve this by musically creating many unexpected ruptures and silences that allow new sounds, new voices, new vocal textures and flows, to enter and exit the melodic and rhythmic matrix of the song. If, as I noted earlier via Joan Morgan, the pleasure politics, which inform the musical aesthetics of impropriety, insist on making space for “honest bodies that also like to fuck,” then Elliott and Timbaland musically create such an environment for those bodies as well as freakish bodies. It is a move that totally destabilizes the aural static schematic patterns of looping that is predominant in hip hop songs, and that then allows for new queer, erotic, and freakish sonic gestures to emerge.

Indeed, Grace Cho, drawing on queer scholar David Eng, argues that gaps force us to develop “radical new methods of looking . . . in order to see something else.” But what about other senses, other phenomenological modalities? Interruptions necessitate radical new methods of listening as well. “Get Ur Freak On” is one such song that produces this critical listening practice, and one toward the queerness of the musical aesthetics of impropriety. For example, in the opening of the third verse, the music stops and Missy Elliott screams, “QUIET! Hush your mouth/Silence when I spit it out.” Elliott then simulates the coughing up of phlegm and spitting it “in your face/Open your mouth/Give you a taste.” Elliott’s lyrics as well as vocal performance of spitting make audible and imaginative the mixing of bodily fluids, and, by extension, raise the specter of contagion. The bodies of Black, Asian, disabled, and queer people, all peoples and bodies that I’m arguing Missy Elliott lyrically and sonically engages and expresses in “Get Ur Freak On,” are not only deemed freaks but also contagious. Scholars in critical ethnic, queer, disability, and performance studies have detailed how legislative, judicial, medical, and popular regimes have historically produced queer communities, immigrant communities, disabled communities, communities of color, and communities at these and other intersections as contagious—their perceived wildness, immorality, impropriety, and all around deviance know no figurative and literal bounds—to shore up norms of race, gender, sexuality, nation, and ability. These freakish bodies were assumed to be biological and cultural

threats who necessitated policing and surveillance due their potential to spread and infect—via (im)migration, sex, blood, etc.—white, male-headed, heteronormative, and able-bodied communities. And as such, incarceration, immigration restriction, detainment and other modes of confinement propped up as institutions to contain and protect white supremacy, ableism, heteropatriarchy, and U.S. exceptionalism.

It is against this historical backdrop of what we might call freak phobia that helps to explicate the queer, and I’d argue radically queer, potentiality of Missy Elliott in “Get Ur Freak On.” Rather than reject the label of freak and offer a redemptive narrative, rather than acquiesce to the politics of respectability and assuage difference—and thus be read as a legible liberal subject under the politics of inclusion—Elliott desires to infect. She, a freak, actively spits—saliva? blood? semen?—into the mouth and/or onto the body of an unsuspecting and presumably uninfected person, and then proceeds to rap, “Holla, ain’t no stopping me/Copy written, so don’t copy me.”

Elliott revels in her position as a Black queer female freak and contagion, as a patient zero of sorts (she is, after all the copy written original). The chant of “now, go get your freak on” during the song’s chorus works as an anthem, as a call to infect. L. H. Stallings rightly argues that there is often a slippage between “freak” and “fuck” within Afro-diasporic culture, as the former is often a euphemism for the latter in Black parlance. Euphemisms are those indirect gestures that express the invisible evidence of queerness, and so to “get your freak on” is to engage in a queer act of getting your “fuck on.” Further, while some might read Elliott’s demand to “get your freak on” as an allusion to the 1970s funk dance “the freak” and not about sex, such a reading ignores the imbricated erotic intimacies of dance and sex, particularly in Black dance music and culture. It is, as Stallings’ work attests, to ignore the linkages of the Black dance and the Black orgy, and to participate in a politics of respectability around Black non-normative sexualities that seeks to “segregate dance from partying and partying from fucking.”

In analyzing this relationship between racialized queerness, sex, disability and infection, and the musical aesthetics of impropriety in “Get Ur Freak On,” I am also reminded of the discourse surrounding and practices of condomless sex, or “raw sex,” between Black queer men. C. Riley Snorton persuasively argues that twenty-first century media, popular culture, and public health attention to rising HIV/AIDS rates within African American communities produces a “biopolitics of representation, or the scopic will to identify, reproduce, and subjugate bodies and populations through symbolic systems and structures” of raw sex between Black men who have sex with men (MSM) as well as Black heterosexual women—the latter for whom raw sex Black MSMs are, under the logics of the “down low” moral panic, deemed as the reason for rising rates of new HIV


40. I want to thank Jeffrey McCune, Tiffany Barber, Amanda Sewell, and Lauron Kehrer for getting me to think about this point.

41. Stallings, Funk the Erotic.

42. Ibid., 183.
infections in Black women. Marlon Bailey extends Snorton’s work to posit that such “surveillance and pathologization” of Black queer male sexualities creates a “hegemony of safe sex that coerces Black gay men to concede pleasurable and satisfying sex, if they indeed find risky sex pleasurable and satisfying.” For Bailey, the disproportionate stigmatization of raw sex among Black MSMs denies them “deep intimacy, a closeness and ‘a being desired and wanted’ in a world in which Black gay men are rarely desired and wanted,” and offers normativity, via condom use, as the sole site of sexual propriety and respectability. “Get Ur Freak On’s” release and popularity coincide with this cultural and medical moment of surveillance of Black queer sexualities. And so Elliott’s sonic and lyrical call to infection, her onomatopoetic exchange of bodily fluid that articulates with and accompanies her call to get one’s freak/fuck on, works as an embrace of the impropriety of raw sex that such “deep intimacy” engenders. “Get Ur Freak On” champions sonic relationality as a mode of refusal to the acquiescence of the panopticism of Black queer raw sex. The chant “now go get your freak on” is an urging to (re)produce more freaks, more risky, raw, and reckless queers of color through infection.

“Get Ur Freak On,” thus, operates as a queer-world making record. Its transnational, racialized, and crip sounds and lyrics reproduce racialized freaks and queers. And such an alternative world-making vision ties into another euphemism for “freak.” To freak also means to mess, to play, to make strange, to in other words, queer. In her now classic study of hip hop and Black feminism, Joan Morgan calls for Black feminists who love and share erotic attachments to hip hop to “fuck” with its grays. Gray does not fall decidedly on one side or the other, neither black nor white. Gray is that murky, uncomfortable space of being neither here nor there. Gray is constantly in flux. This evasive and dynamic movement, this resistance to and negation of the stable and normative logics of sexual identification is what Missy Elliott engages in “Get Ur Freak On.” Elliott does not on the song, or the album, pursue a non-normative erotic interest or encounter that we might typically read as “queer.” She does not explicitly discuss same-sex social relations, but she does scratch the surface of them. She deploys the musical aesthetics of impropriety to gesture through sound, instrumentation, and lyrical euphemism queerness and queer relationalities. Missy Elliott creates an improper queer soundscape on “Get Ur Freak On,” to make space for the improper actors of the freak without providing the proper evidence of normative queerness. And she would continue such queer gestures and soundscapes the following year with her next album Under Construction.


45. Ibid., 253.

46. Missy Elliott would revisit such thinking of raw sex and the repetitious/stuttering of “getcha getcha getcha” on her 2005 song with Jermaine Dupri and Janet Jackson titled “Gotta Getcha.”

“Pussycat” is an R&B record from Missy Elliott’s 2002 album Under Construction. It was released as a B-side single to her chart-topping song “Work It,” and despite not being an official single, “Pussycat” became a minor radio and club hit; it reached 77 on the Billboard Hot 100 Singles chart. We might interpret “Pussycat’s” modest success to its controversial subject matter. “Pussycat” finds Elliott again using euphemisms, but this time she uses “pussycat” as a not so subtle coded term for her vagina, her pussy(cat). Elliott provides context to the recording near the end of the song:

I just wanna talk about how people always say, “Yo that’s too nasty!” And “Why your mouth so vulgar? Why you gotta sing all these nasty records and all that?” But I be representing for the ladies, and we got something to say. We’ve been quiet too long, lady-like, very patient. We didn’t get mad when Prince had his ass out. We thought he was gonna turn around to the front, and have the front out too. But, you know, that didn’t happen. We always had to deal with the guys, you know, talking about how they gonna wear us out on records. And, you know, so I had to do records that’s strictly representing for my ladies, and how to keep your man, keep his eyes from wandering, looking around. And sex is not a topic that we should always sweep underneath the rug.

I quote Elliott’s commentary at length because it captures her feelings on the history of masculinist and sexist narratives in Black popular music as well as the politics of respectability that seek to manage and organize Black women’s gender and sexual expression. She uses Prince’s 1991 MTV Video Music Award (VMA) performance of his song “Get Off” to explicate her sex-positive and anti-misogynoir musical vision in general, and its particular manifestation in “Pussycat.” At the 1991 VMAs, Prince performed “Get Off,” a song detailing a man’s desire and approach to having sex with and pleasing a sexually frustrated woman (i.e., in Elliott’s framing, how he’s going to wear women out). Prince wore a bright yellow outfit exposing his ass, and opens the performance simulating anal sex with two other men. Elliott cites this performance to critique a double standard in popular music: men are able to visually and musically express their sexual proclivities in ways forbidden to women. It is a double standard rendered even more salient when we couple this performance with the chorus of “Get Off,” “let a woman be a woman and a man be a man,” which suggests a necessity for the separate sexual pleasures and desires of men and women. In response, Elliott refuses proper femininity (and silenced sexual desire that is attached to such propriety), and takes on sexual impropriety, embracing the “nasty” and the “vulgar” in order to challenge the policing of women’s, and especially Black women’s, bodies and pleasures.

In “Pussycat,” Elliott’s refusal to adhere to such norms of racialized gender and sexuality does not translate into a mere “flipping of the script.” “Pussycat” does not reverse the direction of the heteronormative male rapper/singer addressing and pursuing an imagined woman, a rhetorical move that would present a woman as an active social

actor to the silent and passive male listener. To do so falls victim to the heterosexist discourse to which it is responding, and inevitably recenters men by positioning Elliott’s ultimate intention as one geared to, in an allusion to Prince, get(t) her imagined male sexual partner off. Instead, in “Pussycat,” Elliott centers her pussy(cat), and her and its pleasures. Elliott sings in the chorus, “Pussy don’t fail me now/I gotta turn this nigga out,” revealing that the song is neither about, nor addressed to, men. Elliott is quite literally directing her words and focus toward her pussy(cat): her main (love) interest, both at level of attention and subject of desire, is her vagina.

Elliott sonically articulates such a desire for and enjoyment in her vagina by moaning throughout the recording. The first vocal utterance in “Pussycat” is an airy groan, and one that Elliott deploys at every moment of silence, especially between verses as well as in the spaces where the music drops out. I draw attention to Elliott’s vocalizations of pleasure in the silent spaces of “Pussycat” because it is in these silences, and it is because of these silences—just as they were in the gaps and silences in “Get Ur Freak On”—that non-reproductive, non-heteronormative joy and pleasure are expressed and experienced. Elliott’s production of and performance within silence as a site from which to articulate Black woman-centered erotic pleasures forbidden under the logics of Black respectability politics is emblematic of what Mecca Jamilah Sullivan, drawing on Hortense Spillers, calls “interstitial languages.” For Sullivan, interstitial languages “describe imagined, shared linguistic systems developed by Black women writers and their characters” that “reject the constraints of normative language and normative sexuality, using sexual deviance as a point of departure for rearticulated social worlds.”

Elliott’s orgasmic moaning within the silences of “Pussycat” mark the kinds of deviance that assist in negotiating and productively altering the complex terrain of heteronormativity and misogynoir within hip hop. Her moaning makes audible erotic attachments not to a man—but to her pussy(cat). Her erotically pleasurable grunts become sites of what Mireille Miller-Young calls “illicit eroticism” that refigures “the racial logic of sexual respectability and normativity” in service of Black queer embodied sexual pleasure. It is from silence that Elliott’s pussy(cat) speaks (back).

Missy Elliott’s sonic sidelining of men and pursuit of pussy(cat) deepen when we consider the song’s addition of Elliott’s protégé, Charlene “Tweet” Keys, who unexpectedly begins singing backup prior to and following the song’s bridge. Tweet famously collaborated with Elliott earlier in 2002 on the song “Oops (Oh My)” from Tweet’s debut album Southern Hummingbird. Similar to “Pussycat,” “Oops (Oh My)” is a song about self-pleasure and masturbatory fantasies. Set against South Asian percussion and a Bollywood-inspired guitar riff, the song finds a high and intoxicated Tweet returning home to masturbate, stating in the chorus: “Oops! There goes my skirt droppin’ to my feet, oh my/Oops! Some kind of touch caressing my legs, oh

Oops I’m turning red, who could this be?” Elliott appears near the end of “Oops (Oh My)” and raps about an inability to “reject myself” that results in an inability to “touch myself.” Additionally, like on “Pussycat,” Elliott moans during her rap as well as the final chorus on “Oops (Oh My),” marking her as performing the sexual affective registers of Tweet’s masturbatory fantasies and practices; Missy Elliott makes audible the pleasures of Tweet’s masturbation.

The erotic lyrics and sounds of “Oops (Oh My)” sparked rumors that Elliott was a lesbian and that she and Tweet were involved in a same-sex relationship, and their collaboration on “Pussycat” further advances, without offering the visual and proper evidence to confirm/deny, such rumors. For example, Tweet’s backup vocals on “Pussycat” emerge in such a way that they flow underneath, above, and intersect Elliott’s own vocals. Tweet and Elliott produce a dialogue and duet during the chorus that intertwine and overlap the positionalities and pleasures of Elliott and Tweet in relation to themselves as well as their pussy(cats). When Elliott provides a breathy moan through the chorus, listeners hear Tweet issuing a fully realized and vocally expansive coo that rises. As Elliott’s grunts mark delight in the pleasure of her pussy(-cat), Tweet’s rising vocals mark the climax, the end result, the orgasm of such pleasures. I want to take the use of orgasms in “Pussycat” seriously here for the ways in which orgasms are often positioned as, according to Annamarie Jagose, “queer theory’s bad object.” Such a position as a “bad object” resonates with the musical aesthetics of impropriety that I argue can help us think about and listen to queerness in hip hop differently. Here, Elliott takes up the ways in which an orgasm “overrides, even as it makes increasingly fine distinctions between, more stable and authoritative categories of sexual classification,” gesturing toward, without visibly providing the dominant perceptible evidence of, Black female same-sex pleasure. Tweet and Elliott vocally put the orgasm to task, much like they did in “Oops (Oh My),” to speak the name of same-sex pleasure. Tweet’s supportive moans not only amplify Elliott’s erotic enjoyment in her vagina, but they also do so in ways that position Elliott and Tweet in close proximity and intimacy. Their vocal performance mark the trace, the queer ephemera, of this Black female erotic intimacy.

Tweet’s feature on “Pussycat” also further displaces the imagined male whom Missy Elliott’s pussy(cat) purportedly seeks to bind to monogamy. Indeed, the listener is now and more drawn to the relationship between Elliott and Tweet. Tweet ad-libs “fail me” while Elliott sings “pussy don’t fail me now” during the chorus, and Tweet sings the ad-libs with so much intensity that one questions if she hopes that Elliott’s pussy(cat) does fail Elliott’s male partner so that she and her imagined man will no longer be together; that is, that they would break up so that Tweet can experience and find pleasure in Elliott’s pussy(cat). It is, thus, this collaboration between Elliott and Tweet in the chorus that Tweet’s vocal presence and vocality overshadow the importance and role of Elliott’s imagined male lover (and, by extension,
heteronormativity). Tweet and Elliott collectively construct a curtailing of heteropatriarchal norms using Elliott’s vocal aesthetics that center her relationship with her own pussy(cat), and then extending that to a Black woman queer dual and overlapping pleasures of Tweet and Missy Elliott. In other words, Elliott’s male significant other becomes the site through which Elliott develops a stronger and more intimate relationship with and to her vagina as well as to Tweet.

But it would, perhaps, be wrong to assume that Elliott’s imagined male lover is fully excised from “Pussycat.” Somewhat surprisingly, the start of the third verse features Elliott and a male rapper. This male rapper, however, is not listed in the liner notes of “Pussycat,” an omission that speaks to something that we later find out: the male rapper is actually Missy Elliott herself. She used studio recording software to pitch and slow down her voice in order to mimic the lower and deeper vocal registers that listeners might perceive as male and identify with heterosexual male masculinity.

I want to read Elliott’s sonic practices of mimicking a male rapper as part of the long history of Black women performance aesthetics that Uri McMillan calls “avatar production.” For McMillan, avatar production highlights how Black women “engage in spectacular, shocking, and even unlawful role-plays” and “comment back on identity itself, to subvert the taken-for-granted rules for properly embodying a black female body.” While McMillan centers his study on avatar production in “literary, visual, and digital” spaces, I am concerned with its efficacy at the site of sound. In particular, Elliott uses this male avatar in the service of queerness. We find this avatar in Elliott’s 2002 hit song “Gossip Folks” as the Black male initiating the rumor of Elliott’s same-sex relationship with rapper Trina; and he is on the 2003 track “Toyz Interlude” as an employee at “Pleasure World,” a fictional sex toy store where Elliott purchases a vibrator. For “Pussycat,” Elliott does not use the male avatar to directly address her critiques of the heterosexism of (Black) popular music that she delineates at the end of the song; he does not discuss how he is going to “wear” Elliott out. And remarkably, or perhaps not so remarkably, he is not even interested in Elliott’s pussy(cat). He is focused on another body part: the ass. Elliott’s male avatar raps: “I wish we was like Puffy over Jennifer/Him and her/So much like I and we/We just love the booty.” Here, Elliott’s avatar produces what Jennifer Christine Nash defines as “black anality,” an analytic that describes “how black pleasures are imagined to be peculiarly and particularly oriented toward the anus.” The avatar uses the relationship between Sean “Puffy” Combs and Jennifer Lopez as a frame of reference for his relationship with Elliott and marks the representational and material attachments of Blackness and ass. The avatar roots his sexual relationship with

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53. Elliott’s play with higher and lower vocal registers in crafting a character resonates with Frank Ocean’s practices on “Nikes” for his 2016 Blonde album as well as, and perhaps most saliently, Prince’s similar vocal distortions for his alter egos Camille and Bob George on Sign O’ The Times and The Black Album, respectively.

54. McMillan, Embodied Avatars, 12.

55. Ibid.


57. Although Lopez is Latinx, her ass, as Nash points out, is often interpreted through the Hottentot Venus and Afro-Latinidad.
Elliott not in her pussy(cat) but in his and her own anus. He uses the collective “we” to frame their shared and mutual joys of anal sex play, to which Elliott later responds in the song “Can I put my booty, booty up in your spaghetti, daddy?” Elliott’s avatar becomes an object through which to express the musical aesthetics of impropriety. The avatar centers Black anality as non-reproductive/non-procreative sexual practice in ways that reject the logics of the politics of respectability that police Black women’s sexual behaviors as only proper as reproductive and involving penile-vaginal intercourse. It performs a desire for and arousal in what Hoang Tan Nguyen calls “a politics of bottomhood that opposes racism and heteronormativity without scapegoating femininity.” Elliott’s pursuit of a sonic avatar allows her to create and embrace alternative and improper imaginaries of sexual practices and pleasures—Black anality—that resist norms governing the proper erotics of Black female subjectivity.

“Pussycat” as a whole, then, presents the possibilities of queer sex and eroticism through improper gestures and acts. Elliott and her imagined male partner remain together (he will not cheat) because it is her anus and not her pussy(cat) that he desires and fucks. Moreover, such Black anality allows Elliott and Tweet to engage Black female sexual practices of communal vaginal play and stimulation without producing the visual and proper proof of a sexual identity. Which is to say, Elliott’s collaboration with Tweet and her deployment of avatar aesthetics in “Pussycat” claim and produce pleasure in and desire for the erotic enjoyments of and in queer sex and queerness. “Pussycat” offers, to make use of Roderick Ferguson’s theorizing of Barbara Smith’s reading of Toni Morrison’s *Sula*, “a set of social relations that point to the instability of heteropatriarchy and to a possible critical emergence within that instability.” “Pussycat,” much like “Get Ur Freak On,” showcases the ways we can listen to, analyze, and produce queerness in popular culture without the evidence and visibility of queer subjectivities.

**CONCLUSION: THE IMPROPRIETY OF MISSY**

What I’ve attempted to do in this article is explore what we miss when we solely look, both in terms of visual analysis as well as dominant modes of perception, toward self-identified, queer subjects and social spaces in our approaches to queerness.


in hip hop. This is not an argument for the closet. Nor is it an attempt to push for scholarship on queer hip hop without LGBTQ subjects. Instead, I am concerned with how we limit our studies of queerness in rap when our focus is constricted by and contained within the liberal politics of visibility and representation. Far too often, and especially for Black people and other people of color, visibility becomes a site through which communities are policed, and so I offer what I call the musical aesthetics of impropriety as an alternative epistemology of queer Black popular music. The musical aesthetics of impropriety is a queer of color set of gestures and mode of critique that resists and subverts the trappings of visibility in order to pursue the possibilities of the deviant and the improper. We must continue such intellectual pursuits of the visual as well as listen to and interrogate popular music performative acts, those improper expressions, that always already disrupt, interrupt, and make strange the normative logics of recognition. To do so is to engage in a cultural transformative act that allows us to imagine queerness and queer hip hop differently.

It is perhaps useful to end this discussion by going back to the work of Missy Elliott and her recent resurgence in mainstream media. She’s made Super Bowl appearances (as an actor and performer) four times between 2015 and 2020; she was awarded Billboard’s Women in Music Innovator Award in 2015, the VH1 Hip Hop Honors Award in 2016, and the MTV Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award in 2019; and she released a number of solo singles, collaborated with many contemporary top artists, such as Lizzo and Ariana Grande, and she even released her EP Iconology in 2019 (her first studio release since 2005). Notably, in the midst of this visibility, Elliott has seemingly remained committed to creating music that adheres to the musical aesthetics of impropriety. For example, she is featured in the remix to Dua Lipa’s 2020 song “Levitating,” where she raps, “Oh my my/Get to stuttering like I, I, I/I’m a freak I like to play shy,” an allusion to and an indexing of the Black queer crip sounds of “Get Ur Freak On” outlined above. More explicitly, Elliott’s song “DripDemeanor” from her EP Iconology furthers these engagements with the musical aesthetics of impropriety. A song seemingly about heterosexual explicit flirtations—Elliott raps in the opening verse lines like “he just tryna get my twat”—the second verse finds Elliott curiously editing out, literally silencing, the word “dick” from her rap, the only reference to a penis in the song. And for the remainder of the second verse, Elliott raps about her vagina and her interest in cunnilingus—“you know you so pussy-whipped” and “licky-lick the kitty-kit.” In his discussion of rumors surrounding Luther Vandross’s non-normative sexuality, Jason King argues for frameworks that help illustrate “the way that certain forms of representational silence might actually produce the possibility for the transformation of racialized gender and sexuality.” Elliott’s deployment of silence speaks to the transformative work of the musical aesthetics of impropriety. The elision is the enactment. Her use of silence allows her and us to imagine sex, sexuality, and

61. To be clear, as a songwriter and producer, Elliott has maintained prominence in the music world across genres.
pleasure in other ways. Much like she did with “Pussycat,” Elliott on “DripDemeanor” draws the listener away from heteropatriarchy—via a male penis—and toward the sexual pleasures and practices of vaginas and vaginal sex, including sex with men without penises and/or sex with men with vaginas.63

What I find notable about all of Elliott’s continued deployment of the musical aesthetics of impropriety at this moment is that the musical landscape in hip hop has drastically changed since the 2001-2003 years of “Get Ur Freak On,” “Gossip Folks,” and “Pussycat.” As stated at the outset of this article, there are a growing number of out LGBTQ-identified rappers. Indeed, one of Elliott’s own protégés, Jessica Betts, is an out queer-identified Black woman who recently married actress Niecy Nash; Lizzo, whose artistry is influenced by Elliott, has openly affirmed her sexual desire for multiple genders; and even Elliott’s own contemporary Black woman rapper Da Brat has recently come out as a lesbian and is engaged to famed hairstylist Jessaca Dupart. In the face of such mainstream declarations of sexual identities, Missy Elliott’s refusal to do the same appears outdated, anachronistic, improper. And perhaps that’s the point. It’s to remain an improper subject, to lay claim to the transformative power of what I’m calling the musical aesthetics of impropriety. It is through the musical aesthetics of impropriety that Missy Elliott continues to push toward and further create alternative epistemologies and ontologies of inhabiting and reimagining Black queer histories and lived realities.

REFERENCES

63. Missy Elliott engages in similar practices of redaction of heteropatriarchy in her song “I’m Better,” where, at each moment of potential descriptions of sex with a purported cisgender man, Elliott edits out such descriptions, and replaces them with silences and non-lexical phrasings.


DISCOGRAPHY