

# The Queen Art of Failure: Hope/lessness, Re/productivity and Desire in Perfume Genius's *Too Bright & No Shape*

## El Arte Queen del Fracaso: Esperanza/desesperación, Re/productividad y Deseo en *Too Bright y No Shape* de Perfume Genius

---

MARIYA GORBACHYOVA

Department of Gender Studies  
Central European University  
Nador u. 9, Budapest, 1051, Hungary  
mariya.gorbachyova@gmail.com

Este artículo está sujeto a una: Licencia "Creative Commons Reconocimiento -No Comercial" (CC-BY-NC)  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24197/st.1.2021.78-90>

RECIBIDO: 05/07/2020  
ACEPTADO: 06/10/2020

**Resumen** Siguiendo la línea de la música indie/pop audaz, Perfume Genius brilla en *Too Bright* y cambia de forma en *No Shape*. Tomando prestado de las exploraciones de Duggan, Muñoz y Halberstam sobre cómo abrazar la negatividad y la desesperanza queer, este artículo traza las obras de Perfume Genius, o Mike Hadreas, en la forma de un viaje hacia la creación del arte de la queen(r) del fracaso. Perturbando el deseo heteronormativo de coherencia reflejado en la imagen queer saneada de los medios y el sujeto disciplinado productivo en general, tal arte es parte integral de la praxis queer. Se aborda tanto como una forma de vida y en su potencial para ser la delgada línea entre tratar de inscribir cada abyecto en la categoría de inteligible y simplemente negarse a serlo, mediante la participación en la negatividad queer.

**Palabras clave:** música queer; fracaso; deseo sadomasoquista; negatividad queer; jouissance

**Abstract:** Pursuing the line of bold indie/pop music, Perfume Genius is shining on *Too Bright* and shapeshifting on *No Shape*. Borrowing from Duggan's, Muñoz's and Halberstam's explorations on embracing queer negativity and hopelessness, this article maps out works of Perfume Genius, or Mike Hadreas, in the form of a journey towards crafting *the queen(r) art of failure*. Disturbing the heteronormative desire for coherence reflected in the media's sanitized queer image and the productive disciplined subject in general, such art is integral to queer praxis. It is addressed both as a way of life and in its potential to be the fine line between trying to inscribe every abject into the category of intelligible and simply refusing to be, through engaging in queer negativity.

**Keywords:** queer music; failure; sadomasochistic desire; queer negativity; jouissance

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Pop music has a long tradition of performativity which inevitably puts the emphasis on the bodily representation of gender and sexuality codes. Enforcing the canonizing of desire narratives, music videos act as externalization of “the idea of spectacle in terms of the discipline it imposes on different gendered bodies” (Hawkins, 2006, p. 283), creating the blueprints of heteronormative subjects. Similar coding happens at the level of textual and musical signification, locking in on the voice as the sphere of the political.

This coding often overlaps with the image of a “sanitized” queer that has been exploited by pop music and the entertainment sphere in general at great length. From the glittery outfits of the 70s glam rock to the bold and fabulous drag ballrooms of the 90s, mass culture has been flirting with non-normative sexualities in a way that borders on looking at the spectacle unfolding on a circus stage. Jack Halberstam refers to this interest in subcultures as “voyeuristic and predatory” (Halberstam, 2006, p. 6-8). With the power of media to manufacture subjectivity itself (Watney, 1987, p. 125) and to make things mean, in terms of inscribing intelligibility and the prospects of the political hope and future, any alternatives to the image of the productive heteronormative subject have been erased time and again.

The opposition to this erasure, through the reflections on productivity/reproduction, non-heteronormative and sadomasochistic (s/m) desire, and the ideas of out-of-body existence can be found in the music of queer indie artist Perfume Genius, or Mike Hadreas. “Don’t you know your queen? No family is safe / When I sashay” he sings on “Queen” (Perfume Genius, 2014, 0:02-1:13), a defiant anthem that has become by now the most recognizable song in his repertoire, the jewel of the *Too Bright* (2014) album.

As in his debut on the national TV where he performed wearing red lipstick, black harness over bare skin and under the crystal white suit, his songs possess similar contrast, painted through the palette of both bright and dark emotions, and everything in between. “Do you know how many times it’s been recommended to me to ‘tone it down’ in order to reach more people. I never toned it up (Pollard, 2017),” he wrote in 2016, shortly before releasing his next album, *No Shape* (2017). His songs range from the bold statements on desire to the gentle renditions of love, which become rather inseparable:

He cannot be ignored, because his voice melts every stone, because he doesn't hide; without him, the song felt like dying, but now, it's more like the promise of something healing through the pain. This is what I learnt with artists like ... Perfume Genius: you're never as strong as when you allow yourself to be the most vulnerable person you can be. (Monroe, 2015)

Christine and the Queens' description of working with Hadreas perfectly captures the dichotomy of strength and vulnerability evident in many of his explorations. Building on this and borrowing from Halberstam's analysis of queer negativity and radical passivity in *The Queer Art of Failure* (2011), and Lisa Duggan & José Esteban Muñoz's dialogue on hope and hopelessness, here Perfume Genius's work will be treated as constitutive of queer praxis. Going beyond "Queen" and addressing songs that do not get enough attention, his reflections on desire from both visual and lyrical perspectives will be addressed with the use of the *jouissance* concept, revealing the potential for subversion of a productive biopolitical subject. Coincidentally, Perfume Genius's songs from the *Too Bright* (2014) and *No Shape* (2017) albums will be mapped out as a journey of crafting the *queen(r) art of failure*.

## 2. "BROKE IN TWO" OR EMBRACING MASOCHISTIC DESIRE

Starting at the crossroads between lyrical, musical and performative, Hadreas finds the space of expressing themes that are outside the matrix of heteronormativity in "Die 4 You" (Perfume Genius, 2017). Venturing off there by exploring the practice of erotic asphyxiation, Hadreas sings:

*Limit every second left  
Until I'm off balance  
Oh, love  
I'm there in spirit, ooh  
Each and every breath I spend  
You are collecting*

*Oh, love  
See it through  
I would die for you*

*Each and every breath I spend  
You are collecting, mm  
Limit every second left  
'Til I'm off balance*

Highly sensual sound filled with pauses and soft beats envelops the listener, subjecting them to the hushed whisper-like voice that prompts the addressee, the lover to *see it through*. Alluding to the full commitment to such practice by literally holding the life of your partner in your hands, with its raw and open trust, it also can be read as the narrator being completely seen through by their partner, which reaches a certain apogee in an exchange like this one.

While the song's auidial supervision suggests a highly intimate nature of the narrative, the music video for "Die 4 You" opens up another trope of exploration, connecting it to the reflection on desire in general. Painting the song as a performance set on a dimly lit stage, the video is filled with lights bringing Hadreas to spotlight as he moves in a languid dance, expressing the raw desire in its nature. Floria Sigismondi who directed the video said that she intended to explore desire, which is not personified either by a male or a female (Erickson, 2019). Achieving that through the art piece by Rosa Verloop, the figure of said personified desire used in a video is an eerie mass of unclear shape and form, that is reminiscent of skin in color. The parts of the figure seem to be clashed together chaotically, escaping the possibility of giving definition or inscribing signification, therefore inducing a sense of disturbance in the viewer.

At the same time, as a certain opposition to the figure there is Hadreas himself, who possesses both the close-up frames by commanding his crimson eye shadow, and the more remote ones by moving gracefully first in an elevated open shoulder costume and then in a sparkling long skirt. Enchanting the viewer in a ritual-like fashion by his allure that cuts through the gender stereotypes, Perfume Genius projects a breathtaking contrast to the eeriness of the flesh figure. It adds on top of the literal contrast in light achieved through the whole scene unfolding in a shadowy space, with the clever spotlights pointing to Hadreas and outlining each of his moves. The play on light not only sets up an intimate nature of the exchange, but also allows for another interpretation – where the figure represents Hadreas's views about himself. Feeling of being trapped in his body, which is not enough and/or not right, repeated in different ways throughout *No Shape* in general, reflects here the self/other dichotomy, which is woven into the primary theme of desire's intensity.

This performance fulfills what was described by Félix Guattari as both stirring up "uncertain desire-zones" and making the body "break away from the representations and restraints of the 'social body'" (Guattari, 1996, p. 37; Muñoz, 1997, p. 85) Multiplying the effect, in "Run Me Through" (Perfume Genius, 2017), which can be heard in the same record a couple of tracks after "Die 4 You", Hadreas sings:

*Pitted, deep lined eyes  
 Rough as last night  
 Sharp as a mirror  
 Broke in two  
 Run me through  
 No ins, just outs  
 Pumping ichor  
 Bucket my mouth*

In a way reminiscent of Richard Siken's poetry, these lines are coming together in an almost gentle poetic rendition which nevertheless stays blatant and true to what it actually conveys, since it takes both the listener and the performer further into the territory of s/m desire, that is not so uncharted by now.

Reflecting the same image invoked by "Die 4 You", this narrative is more masochistic in nature, since Mike himself described it as being "attracted to toxic forms of masculinity" (Hilton, 2017), connecting it to a sense of unknown danger, instead of the known sensation generated by complete trust and unbecoming happening in the arms of long-time partners.

### 3. ON THE SUBVERSIVE POTENTIAL OF SELF-SHATTERING

The space occupied by Hadreas in these songs resembles the performance art of self-victimizing, employed for example by Yoko Ono or Marina Abramović. From the viewpoint of the critical analysis, such masochistic practice is about the "relationship between self and other, self and technology, self and power", as Halberstam concludes (Halberstam, 2011, p. 135). It also might be an attempt to transcend, to connect the self to something outside the reach of the intelligible and the physical. For when there is no shape, there are no bounds, neither societal, nor political, religious or any other, and the existence is completely open – to interpretation, to ascribing self-appointed meanings and norms, and perhaps opening up of this place is what Perfume Genius reaches for in his musical exploration. After all, it is an attempt to catch something ethereal, at the corner of one's eye, what he describes as:

There's this idea of transcending, or escaping, your body," he expands, "and the limits of your brain, the limits of your body. I'm not happy with those things the way that they are now; I don't really like..." he pauses to form the right words, "my brain... I feel like even creatively I'm limited by my anxiety, and the patterns that I'm always thinking in. I feel like I'll get to the edge of an idea, and might be brought back. I can't really fully get over it, because physically maybe I don't feel well or something. I would like to not have those limits. *No Shape* is like a formlessness, or the second stage of something. I also liked how it could mean there's no set rule for how to be or seem, or talk. (El Hunt, 2017)

The attempt at a formlessness set about by masochistic aspiration also brings in the aspect of disidentification, as analyzed by Muñoz. As the mode of performance that brings subversion, it can open the possibility to "resist the oppressive and normalizing discourse of dominant ideology" (Muñoz, 1997, p. 83). The physical aspect of redefining the performer's relationship to their body is complemented by the psychoanalytical aspect, with Halberstam explaining masochistic tendencies as "flirtation with death" (Halberstam, 2011, p. 135). Described by Sigmund Freud as the result of trying to repress the death instinct with attachment of the libidinal impulse, practice of masochism leads to a

certain unbecoming, unraveling. Leo Bersani, in turn, interprets this moment of the self bordering on but not reaching death as “self-shattering” or *jouissance*, incorporating it into his analysis of the stigma against queer people as it escalated with the AIDS crisis (Bersani, 1987, p. 217). For Bersani, when the self is shattered, there appears to be a possibility of queer subversion, and a similar significance is echoed in Hadreas’s commitment to die for his lover, and to let him collect “each and every breath” he takes (Perfume Genius, 2017, 0:34).

Halberstam also refers to the analysis of masochism by Kathy O’Dell through a psychoanalytic lens, defining its potential as a tool for recognizing the invisible contracts we tend to make with violence, and negotiating relations with others (Halberstam, 2011, p. 139). When investigating the tools of resistance for queer people, it is vital to remember the threat of structural violence, and the existence on the margins both ontologically and epistemologically we are faced with. Therefore, the crucial aspect of radical praxis, such as the one suggested by Halberstam, would be to explicitly demarcate that it should be done without glorifying and romanticizing violence or trying to subject oneself to unnecessary traumatic experiences adding on top of enforced heteronormativity.

Acknowledging that, the potential of masochism as a balanced, safe, fully negotiated and thought-out practice for queer folk can prove to be a source of a) reinventing the dialogue about death; b) broadening the borders of what constitutes a traditional versus a shameful desire; c) from the position of the other, exposing the self, which by forbidding and rendering the non-heterosexual and s/m desire as non-normative, wishes to engage in said desire itself. The latter would constitute an act similar to Judith Butler’s notion of performativity, as it calls out the illusory nature of heteronormative desire, which is also a “copy without an original” (Butler, 1990; Butler, 2004, p. 128).

Practicing that also refers back to the *No Shape* theme of Hadreas’s record. In this respect, when the self-shattering happens, there is an activation of a certain disengagement mechanism that leads one to escape the constraints of their body for a moment, to switch off their materiality. The idea of the body as central to our sense of worth and productivity has been explored extensively by Michel Foucault (1995). Together with a disciplinary apparatus, the ideology inscribed in modern capitalism works in a way that forces its subjects to believe that their sole existence depends on the scale of success and achievement.

Taking into account the tradition of critical theory that suggests opposing this through deconstruction, there is also a method of *queer negativity* or *radical passivity* echoed in the different postmodern theoretical and art works which all still share a similar sentiment, as analyzed for example by Halberstam. Said negativity finds strength in acknowledging one’s failure, difference, frustration, anxiety, all considered to be unproductive negatives by the mainstream discourse. It goes further than what can be seen in masochism as, per Gilles

Deleuze's words, "the apparent obedience conceals a criticism and a provocation" (Deleuze, 1971, p. 77; Halberstam, 2011, p. 139). For example, in the context of Ono's "Cut Piece" (1964) performance, this reading of masochism can be applied since she allows the audience to cut off parts of her clothing, leaving her open and vulnerable to any acts that might transpire. By withstanding the process, which becomes more and more aggressive with each cut, she subjects herself to a state of dismay and symbolic castration. At the same time, while containing a similarly coded message, Perfume Genius's "Run Me Through" presents vulnerability at a slightly different angle. It reads as a calling-out of heteronormative desire, an explicit call to be broken in two. What is "sharp as a mirror" here is capturing in its clearest form your own desire to be annihilated, seeing it stare back at you unyieldingly from the mirror. It is unrelenting, focused, as *jouissance* described by Baedan as "the unnameable desire that one hopelessly attempts to summarize before giving one's body to another: 'I want to be negated'" (Baedan, 2012, p. 28).

Both Ono's "Cut Piece" and Hadreas's songs constitute what Halberstam refers to as radical passivity. In a society where hope, happiness and optimism often "operate as the affective reward for conformity" (Duggan & Muñoz, 2009, p. 277), masochistic gesture as such pose as the refusal of positive identifications of the self. As opposed to the passive role, which is fulfilled during the *s/m* practice with the connotation of "run me through" desire, the dominant one is reflective of the active, independent, determined biopolitical subject of modernity. Embodying radical passivity, therefore, would be equal to disengaging from the interpellating call of the normative discourses.

#### 4. REIMAGINING QUEER RE/PRODUCTIVITY AND HOVERING WITH NO SHAPE

The productivity of such modernity subjects is closely tied with reproductivity and is analyzed closely by Silvia Federici in *Caliban and the Witch* (2004). Explaining the construction of the modern subject in a way that exploits the woman's womb, she illustrates the dependency of capitalism on the bodies of women. Arguing that its emergence is owned entirely to the accumulation of female bodies and the development of said bodies into a site of workforce reproduction (Federici, 2004; Baedan, 2012, p. 18), she points to the wombs becoming public territories and procreation turning into the site of exploitation and therefore resistance.

Along with the womb, the category of time itself becomes a tool of oppression, as pointed out by Duggan & Muñoz. By the sheer process of universalizing, identity politics focuses on the category of straight and white, putting forward an image of political future that excludes any possibility of recognizing "others" in it (Duggan & Muñoz, 2009, p. 276). As the image is also based on the illusion of a unified past, the temporality therefore becomes threaded into a heteronormative complex of signification. Following the same

line of argument about time, Lee Edelman argues in *No Future* that the principle of the future is used as a political tool and as the mechanism of intelligibility that is built on the premise of caring for the children and providing what is best for them (Edelman, 2005). Therefore, queerness, and its immediate association with no possibility of fertility, is situated out of bounds in this project.

Queer praxis for that reason offers the chance to participate in a different kind of temporality, imagining the future that lies beyond the conventional linear narratives along the lines of birth-marriage-reproduction-death (Halberstam, 2006, p. 4). Hadreas constructs an unsettling-sounding piece, “I’m A Mother” (Perfume Genius, 2014) which reflects on the same question of reconstruction of these phenomena. It finds him cutting through the monotone unsettling rhythm of the melody by shifting from a high wavering pitch to a haunted lower mumble:

*Down here  
I'm a mother  
To the smoke that rolls*

*Down here  
I'm no blot upon the earth  
I'm a restless fate  
And back there*

*It's been a shame*

*I'll be reckless, time  
All along  
And the reckless time...  
All along*

In this track, which Hadreas describes as the one where he is singing “like a demon” (Werthman, 2014), the words almost escape intelligibility. The fact that the lyrics are hard to make out is reflective of the shame of not having the possibility to conceive children, irrational and anxious, almost hard to confess, but still distinctly there. As heteronormative mothers bear children, queer people bear the burden of being cast outside the imagined future, and therefore also the past and the present, which grows inside as a child throughout all childhood and adolescence.

Unwinding from this point of shame and oppression, Hadreas ends up spinning the tale of the unimaginable, “restless fate”. Attempting to catch and conceive the unnameable, he turns the narrative on its head, declaring himself a mother, calling out the heteronormative matrix and the future concept that forces queer people out into the unrecognizable/undeserving/unliving. He *is* a



mother, and he is giving birth to all the struggles, failures and wins, in the dichotomy of all their ugliness and radiance, through his music.

Borrowing from Muñoz, it can be said that a “tactical misrecognition” of sorts is taking place (Muñoz, 1997, p. 89). At the same time, there is an attempt at “interiorized passing” through disidentification, a complicated mix of feelings of shame, vulnerability and defiance. It is followed by the obvious understanding of the inability to be a literal mother, thus it also poses as a calling out of the traditional mother ideal through incorporating and performing it.

Perfume Genius’s allusion to “giving birth out of his a\*\*” (Norris, 2014) can be paralleled with Bersani’s take on *jouissance*, where the sense of self is shattered for a second (Bersani, 1987, p. 217). At that moment a possibility for the unimaginable opens up, if the self is no longer its traditional self, there is a possibility of reinvention. And through that Hadreas’s anthem turns from a shameful rendition to the affirmation of this other mode of existence, to allowing yourself to go beyond the norm and establish a family that does not comply with the societal and the cultural standards. Simply allowing yourself to be enough.

Moreover, the rectum as a grave is described by Bersani through relation with the AIDS-transmission and the stigma that persisted with the ostracization of queer people, where he refers to Simon Watney saying the rectum is the “new sign for symbolic machinery of repression” (Watney, 1987, p. 126). The rectum, then, nevertheless has the subversive potential, and Bersani’s claim can be expanded by the allusion to being a mother. Absurd and eccentric, just like the drag parody that exposes the unreal nature of gender as explained by Butler, the queer mode of sexuality and self can be the anti-grave: not “celebrated for its very potential for death” (Bersani, 1987, p. 222) but the birthplace of a successful queer worldmaking, at least metaphorically.

Another idea central to *No Shape* is that of escaping the body’s constraints, and it intertwines closely with finding the unimaginable. As opposed to the attempt at formlessness of masochism and the reaching for the sexual self-negation, “Wreath” (Perfume Genius, 2017) creates the space for finding the unimaginable just within existence. Reflecting on life with a chronic illness, Hadreas envisions hope, singing in the upbeat chamber pop piece:

*Burn off every trace  
I wanna hover with no shape  
I wanna feel the days go by  
Not stack up*

*Needless, free  
No lie  
No sound*

*Gone and spent  
I'm high, I'm out*

*Running up that hill  
I'm gonna peel off every weight  
Until my body gives away  
And shuts up*

Hovering above the comprehensible is also rejecting the constraints of the disciplined and the biopolitical power, rejecting the future that is envisioned by liberalism only for one category of privileged people. Trying to include every other into this category would not change the future's blueprint, Edelman argues:

“But what if it didn't? What if ... all those doomed to ontological suspension on account of their unrecognizable and, in consequence, unlivable loves, declined intelligibility, declined to bring [themselves], catachrestically, into the gambit of future meaning—or declined, more exactly, to cast off the meaning that clings to those social identities that intelligibility objects...(Edelman, 2004, p. 106).”

## 5. CONCLUSION

When mapping out Hadreas's explorations, it is possible to pinpoint where different queer methods intersect, those like hope/lessness, queer negativity and radical passivity, which, nevertheless, might be criticized for being too abstract or too heavily theory based. The queer critiques by Edelman and Halberstam focusing on film, literature and art could be considered as not radical enough, not out there enough, as mentioned in Baedan. But do they need to be such? What if the basis for the queer praxis is reflected in something like these songs by Perfume Genius?

By moving just beyond the frame, then, the queer praxis of Hadreas's work brings about a radical passivity that calls out the matrix of heteronormativity from a place of vulnerability which, paradoxically, still represents strength and taking control through losing it. It entails letting go of the toxic positivity of neoliberal disciplined subjects through gaining other modes of being. This, in turn, opens up the space for “failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing” (Halberstam, 2011, p. 2). The universals achieved and spread by such tools like media and entertainment are dismantled and the world of predominantly hetero desire coding is disturbed, with queer people refusing to pursue the commodified and sanitized queer image and opting out, instead, for being messy, bitter, cynic, but true to yourself and others.

This praxis borders on the end goal of queerness, just like what Hadreas says about reaching for something, but it not quite being there – and that is the whole epitome of what he does with music:

“I guess I’m trying to set something up, even if I’m not there yet,” muses Hadreas. Set up some sort of language and formula for existing. Do you know what I mean? Like, for truly existing, in my body, in the actual place I’m at now, with the actual loved ones I have around me (Pollard, 2017).

The whole process of “setting up a formula for existence” is reflective of what the queen(r) art of failure project is, without solid definition, but knowing that you want to go beyond the border. Try on different voices like Hadreas, go further than the traditional desire narrative – and in so doing, reject to be named/signified by the interpellating call of the future; through the act of failing to be integrated into the matrix of intelligibility and heteronormativity, find your solace. After all, for many music becomes not just a tool for self-expression, but the source of “the subversive potential hidden by daily life” (Baedan, 2012, p. 31). Writing is being alive. It is failing, laughing, crying, all at once and nothing at all. Reaching for something and feeling *needless, free, burning off every trace*.

#### REFERENCES.

- Guattari, F. & Lotringer, S. (Ed.) (1996). *Soft subversions* (D. L. Sweet, C. Wiener, Trans.). New York: Semiotext(e).
- Baedan. (2012). *Baedan 1: Journal of queer nihilism*. Seattle: Contagion Press.
- Bersani, L. (1987). Is the rectum a grave? *AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism*, 43, 197- 222. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3397574>
- Butler, J. (2004). Imitation and gender insubordination. In S. Salih, J. Butler (Eds.), *The Judith Butler reader* (pp. 119-137). Malden: Blackwell.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Deleuze, G. (1971). *Masochism: An interpretation of coldness and cruelty* (J. McNeil, Trans.). New York: Braziller.
- Duggan, L., & Muñoz, J. E. (2009). Hope and hopelessness: A dialogue. *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*, 19(2), 275-283. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07407700903064946>

- Edelman, L. (2004). *No future: Queer theory and the death drive*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822385981>
- El Hunt. (2017, May 3). *Scent from above: Perfume Genius*. DIY Mag. Retrieved June 29, 2020, from <https://diymag.com/2017/05/03/perfume-genius-no-shape-interview-2017>
- Erickson, S. (2019, June 7). Floria Sigismondi on directing David Bowie, Rihanna, Perfume Genius, Kenneth Anger, and more. Retrieved June 29, 2020, from <https://www.studiodaily.com/2019/06/floria-sigismondi-directing-david-bowie-rihanna-perfume-genius-kenneth-anger/>
- Federici, S. (2004). *Caliban and the witch*. New York: Autonomedia.
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Halberstam, J. (2006). What's that smell? Queer temporalities and subcultural lives. In S. Whiteley, J. Rycenga (Eds.), *Queering the popular pitch* (pp. 3-27). New York and London: Routledge.
- Halberstam, J. (2011). *The queer art of failure*. Durham: Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822394358>
- Hawkins, S. (2006). On male queering in mainstream pop. In S. Whiteley, J. Rycenga (Eds.), *Queering the popular pitch* (pp. 279-295). New York and London: Routledge.
- Hilton, R. (2017, May 5). *Perfume Genius reveals the doubts and defiance behind 'No Shape' track by track*. NPR. Retrieved June 29, 2020, from <https://www.npr.org/sections/allsongs/2017/05/05/527044340/perfume-genius-reveals-the-doubts-and-defiance-behind-no-shape-track-by-track>
- Monroe, J. (2015, October 8). *Christine on Perfume Genius: "He cannot be ignored, because his voice melts every stone"*. Pitchfork. Retrieved June 29, 2020, from <https://pitchfork.com/news/61543-christine-and-the-queens-team-with-perfume-genius-on-new-single-jonathan/>
- Muñoz, J. E. (1997). "The white to be angry": Vaginal Davis's terrorist drag. *Social Text*, (52/53), 80-103. <https://doi.org/10.2307/466735>

- Norris, J. (2014, September 2). *Perfume Genius: Bolder, brasher, & brighter than ever*. Refinery29. Retrieved June 29, 2020, from <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2014/09/73674/perfume-genius-too-bright>
- Perfume Genius. (2014). *Too Bright* [Album]. Matador.
- Perfume Genius. (2014). I'm A Mother [Song]. On *Too Bright*. Matador.
- Perfume Genius. (2014). Queen [Song]. On *Too Bright*. Matador.
- Perfume Genius. (2017). *No Shape* [Album]. Matador.
- Perfume Genius & Mills, B. (2017). Die 4 You [Song]. On *No Shape*. Matador.
- Perfume Genius. (2017). Run Me Through [Song]. On *No Shape*. Matador.
- Perfume Genius. (2017). Wreath [Song]. On *No Shape*. Matador.
- Pollard, A. (2017, April 19). *Perfume Genius: loving the alien*. Dazed. Retrieved June 29, 2020, from <https://www.dazeddigital.com/music/article/35591/1/perfume-genius-no-shape-interview>
- Yep, G. A. (2003). The Violence of Heteronormativity in Communication Studies: Notes on Injury, Healing, and Queer World-Making. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 45, 11–59. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v45n02\\_02](https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v45n02_02)
- Yoko, O. (1964). *Cut piece* [Performance]. Kyoto: Yamaichi Concert Hall.
- Watney, S. (1987). *Policing Desire: Pornography, AIDS, and the Media*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.
- Werthman C. (2014, May 15). *Catching up with Perfume Genius*. Paste Magazine. Retrieved June 29, 2020, from <https://www.pastemagazine.com/music/perfume-genius/catching-up-with-perfume-genius/>