The Age of Hyperreproduction: Latent Floods, Autosimulacra, and the Media Ecology of Generative AI

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Abstract

This paper formalises the concept of *hyperreproduction* as a theoretical framework for understanding the present condition of AI-mediated cultural production. The term names a media-ecological condition in which generative AI systems, embedded within platform infrastructures and driven by imperatives of content maximisation, data extraction, and perpetual scalar growth, produce content at scales and velocities that transform the ecology of cultural production itself. Established structures of authorship are eroded and the contextual grounds upon which cultural objects acquire meaning are destabilised, while the accumulated musical archive is subsumed into the latent spaces of generative models as raw material from which further content can be perpetually spawned. Tracing a genealogy from mechanical reproduction (Benjamin) through simulacral circulation (Baudrillard), the paper argues that hyperreproduction constitutes a historically distinct media ecology in which content is continuously spawned (prompted by prosumers and increasingly by autonomous agentic systems), structurally open to endless reconfiguration, and progressively decoupled from the social, historical, and biographical conditions of its production. The spawned object's primary referent increasingly becomes the system of its own production. The paper identifies and theorises a constellation of interlocking conditions that constitute hyperreproduction: latent floods, semiotic deflation, the liquefaction of the cultural object, infrastructural capture, recursive loops, latent enclosures, the autosimulacral turn, contextual voids, Dead Internet dynamics, and the post-authentic condition, arguing that hyperreproduction operates simultaneously across individual, platform, cultural, and ecosystemic levels as both a condition and a structurally accelerating tendency of contemporary media ecologies.

1. INTRODUCTION

The tendencies that defined the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, from the mass reproduction of cultural artefacts and the simulation and recombination of signs to the platformisation of distribution and attention, are being accelerated to a point of qualitative rupture. Generative AI systems now produce music, text, and images at scales and velocities that outpace human productive capacity and the perceptual horizons of any individual, institution, or archive. Modes of cultural creation are shifting increasingly toward the spawning of content, curation is being displaced by the flooding of content across media environments, and authorship is being progressively substituted by statistical condensation of the digitised cultural memory, actualised through prompts. The implications extend beyond any single industry or medium: they concern the conditions under which cultural objects are produced, the structures through which they circulate, the frameworks by which they are assigned meaning, and the political economies that govern who profits from their existence. The depth and systemic character of these shifts mark the emergence of a structurally distinct regime of cultural production whose conditions, tendencies, and consequences require formal theoretical articulation.

The empirical indicators are by now difficult to dispute. Investor materials obtained by Billboard in late 2025 indicate that users on the generative music platform Suno were producing approximately seven million songs per day, a volume equivalent to Spotify's entire catalogue every two weeks (Robinson, 2025). Deezer has disclosed that it now receives approximately ninety thousand fully AI-generated tracks per day, which at peak in June 2026 exceeded half of all new music delivered to the platform. The ascent is steep, rising from roughly ten thousand daily uploads in the opening months of 2025 to fifty thousand by November of that year and ninety thousand by mid-2026 (Deezer, 2026). Additionally, Liz Pelly's (2025) reporting on algorithmically optimised pseudonymous content on Spotify, what she called "ghost artists," documents how platform-mediated content strategies were already eroding the relationship between artist identity and musical production before generative AI entered the picture.

The major record labels, meanwhile, have moved from litigation to licensing: Universal Music Group and Warner Music Group each settled copyright infringement lawsuits with Udio in late 2025 and entered partnership agreements for licensed AI music platforms, with Suno following shortly after (UMG, 2025; WMG, 2025). What began as confrontation between disruptive generative platforms and the established music industry has resolved into convergence. The three companies that own and control the majority of the global recorded music market are now exploring and actively integrating generative AI infrastructure into their commercial operations.

This paper proposes that the state of generative AI and its implementation across industries and media environments mark the entrance into what I termed *the age of hyperreproduction*, a concept I have been

developing since 2023 across graduate teaching, conference presentations, and ongoing doctoral research. Its purpose is to ground hyperreproduction in a genealogy of reproduction theory, to formally define it as a distinct regime, and to identify the constellation of interlocking conditions (latent floods, semiotic deflation, the liquefaction of the cultural object, infrastructural capture, recursive loops, latent enclosures, the *autosimulacral turn*, contextual voids, Dead Internet dynamics, and the post-authentic condition) that constitute its operative anatomy. The framework is offered diagnostically: it describes a structurally accelerating tendency whose conditions remain culturally and aesthetically contestable. Section 2 traces the genealogy of reproduction theory from Benjamin through Baudrillard. Section 3 offers a formal definition. Section 4 anatomises the regime through its interlocking mechanisms. While music serves as the primary domain of analysis, the framework is intended to be transferable across cultural domains where analogous dynamics of generative saturation, platform mediation, and the erosion of authorial grounding are observable.[1]

2. REPRODUCTION THEORY AND THE GENEALOGY OF HYPERREPRODUCTION [2]

Across the twentieth century, the cultural artefact has undergone successive transformations in its conditions of production, circulation, and reception. Each transformation has prompted a corresponding theoretical reframing, from Walter Benjamin's account of mechanical reproduction to Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulacra to more recent work on platformisation and digital media. The present section situates hyperreproduction within this trajectory.

2.1 Mechanical Reproduction and the Logic of the Copy

Walter Benjamin's (1935/2008) account of mechanical reproduction remains the foundational articulation of what happens to the cultural object when it becomes technically reproducible at scale. For Benjamin, the capacity to mass-produce copies of an artwork through photography, film, the printing press, and sound recording transformed the artwork's ontological status. Accessibility is only one dimension of the shift; the more fundamental transformation concerns the conditions under which the artwork exists as an artwork at all. The reproduced work is severed from its singular existence in time and place, and with this severance comes the decay of what Benjamin terms *aura*: the quality of unique presence and historical testimony that adheres to the original. Mechanical reproduction democratised access while simultaneously hollowing out the conditions of authenticity that had previously grounded the artwork's cultural authority.

What is crucial for the present genealogy is what mechanical reproduction *preserves*. The copy still refers to an original. The phonographic recording presupposes a performance, the photographic print presupposes a scene. The logic of reproduction remains indexical: each copy is derived from and points back toward a source, however attenuated the relationship becomes through successive iterations. The reproduced object circulates *as a copy of something*. Production and reproduction remain conceptually distinct, and authorship retains its structural position as the originating act from which copies proliferate.

2.2 Simulacral Circulation and the Detachment of the Copy

Jean Baudrillard's (1981/1994) theory of simulation traces the progressive loosening of this indexical bond. Baudrillard distinguishes four successive phases of the image.[3] In the first, the image reflects a profound reality; in the second, it masks and denatures that reality; in the third, it masks the absence of a reality, presenting itself as referring to something that no longer exists; and in the fourth, it bears no relation to any reality whatever and operates as its own pure simulacrum, its coherence governed by circulation among other signs rather than by the act of representing an external referent. Across this trajectory, the sign progressively detaches from what it once represented and begins to generate its own quasi-autonomous reality[4], in which the operative coherence of signs is increasingly governed by their relations to one another rather than by their fidelity to a world they were once expected to depict.

[1] Another paper from the author addresses the latent sound object as a distinct ontological category specific to generative AI systems, examining its internal structure, aesthetic properties, and the perceptual and compositional logics through which it operates.

[2] A fuller periodisation of musical mediation, tracing the trajectory from notational mediation through mechanical reproduction, electronic and electroacoustic construction, digital production, platform mediation, and hyperreproduction, is developed in separate work and cannot be formally addressed here due to word count constraints.

[3] These four phases, set out in *Simulacra and Simulation*, should be distinguished from the three orders of simulacra developed in *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (Baudrillard 1976/1993), which periodise the counterfeit, production, and simulation across the history of value. The present argument takes the phases of the image as its point of departure, and specifically the fourth

[4] A 2025 study commissioned by Deezer and conducted by Ipsos across eight countries found that 97% of respondents could not reliably distinguish fully AI-generated music from human-made recordings in a blind listening test (Deezer/Ipsos, 2025). Analogous results are emerging across visual and textual media. These generative systems remain, by any reasonable historical measure, in their infancy; the trajectory of improvement in output fidelity across modalities over the past twenty-four months suggests that within a short horizon the reliable perceptual distinction between generated and non-generated media objects will become functionally impossible for most listeners and viewers.

This trajectory has particular resonance for understanding generative AI. The outputs of these systems are produced through the statistical compression of enormous corpora of prior cultural material into learned distributions, and the subsequent sampling of those distributions to generate new instances. A generated track does refer to something: its sonic surface carries the spectral traces, or *spectremes*, of the countless human recordings absorbed into its training corpus.[5] What changes is the character of that tether. The generated object is a sign whose coherence is determined primarily by its statistical proximity to patterns abstracted from other signs, and whose authority derives from its alignment with the learned distribution. Its legibility as music, image, or text is largely a function of systemic consistency with the training corpus. In this sense, generative AI operationalises the logic of the simulacrum at the level of technical infrastructure: what the system produces are, by design, signs whose primary anchor is the field of other signs from which they were statistically derived.

In the musical domain, the trajectory toward this condition is legible across the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Digital reproduction (including remixes) collapsed the distinction between original and copy: a digital audio file can be duplicated without degradation, and platforms distribute identical bitstreams to millions of simultaneous listeners. Yet a residual logic of the discrete, traceable object persisted. The digital file carried metadata, an upload date, a credited author; the recording, however widely circulated, retained a forensic link to the specific act of its making. What was reproduced, recombined, and circulated remained, in some identifiable sense, *an object that someone made*.[6]

2.3 Hyperreproduction: From Reproduction to Generation

Hyperreproduction marks the point at which the residual logic of the discrete, traceable cultural object gives way. Generative AI systems trained on vast corpora of recorded music do not reproduce existing works in any conventional sense, nor do they simply recombine discrete samples extracted from identifiable sources. Through the statistical compression of millions of recordings into high-dimensional latent spaces and the subsequent probabilistic traversal of those spaces in response to textual prompts, these systems produce entities that were *latent before they were actual*: distributed potentials across learned statistical distributions, called into being at the moment of generation. There is no "original" to refer to, no singular act of composition to recover, no discrete source material to identify forensically.[7] What there is, instead, is a latent condensation of collective musical memory, actualised through stochastic processes whose outputs are simulacral from the outset.

This constitutes a rupture with preceding regimes. Benjamin's mechanical reproduction multiplied copies of an original and transformed its aura in the process; Baudrillard's simulacral circulation detached the sign from its referent while preserving the logic of the discrete cultural object. Hyperreproduction generates stylistically legible sonic entities whose material substrate is the sedimented history of digitised recorded music and whose authorship is distributed, intermittent, and structurally ambiguous. The prompt-writer, the platform, the works absorbed into the training corpus, the model's learned weights, and the user's behavioural profile all participate in producing an object whose competing claims of authorship remain legally and culturally unresolved. What follows is the structural dissolution of authorship as a coherent category within the productive apparatus itself, a condition distinct from the Barthesian death of the author, which liberated the text for plural interpretation while leaving the apparatus of production intact.

The rupture extends from the ontology of the individual object to the media environment as a whole. Every output is a potential input. The distinction between production and reproduction dissolves into a continuous infrastructural operation, and the object assumes the properties of a *liquid medium*: endlessly mutable, contextually unstable, resistant to the forms of fixity (the definitive recording, the authorised version, the bounded work) upon which prior regimes of musical meaning depended. Under these conditions, the media environment itself becomes hyperreproductive, functioning as an active generative infrastructure in which objects multiply, recombine, and proliferate according to logics of platform incentive, engagement optimisation, and recursive model training that are largely indifferent to aesthetic intention or cultural grounding.

[5] *Spectreme*: a neologism combining *spectre* (after Derrida's hauntology) and *spectrum* (in the acoustic-analysis sense), formed on the model of *phoneme* and *morpheme*. Spectremes designate the traces of prior musical material that compose every AI-generated output: latent presences that structure the generated object without being individually identifiable or recoverable as source. The concept is developed in greater depth in separate work and cannot be elaborated here due to word-count constraints.

[6] Made is used here in its traditional sense, denoting the human authoring of a discrete cultural object through composition, performance, recording, or analogous craft-bound practices. The term can of course be extended to processes of prompting and curation, but that extension raises distinct questions about the limits of authorship under hyperreproductive systems and lies beyond the scope of the present paper.

[7] Forensic identifiability is partial and asymmetric across model scales. Smaller, narrowly trained, or overfitted models can occasionally produce outputs in which fragments of the training corpus remain discernibly traceable, and ongoing litigation involving artist-voice and likeness reproduction demonstrates that specific artist identifiers can sometimes be elicited from these systems. The vast generative platforms addressed here, including Suno and Udio, have absorbed corpora of sufficient scale that the relationship between any individual training instance and any individual output becomes statistically diffuse rather than indexically recoverable.

3. DEFINING HYPERREPRODUCTION: THE LATENT OBJECT AND THE CONVERGENCE OF GENERATION AND CIRCULATION

Hyperreproduction names a media-ecological condition in which generative AI becomes an increasingly dominant mode of cultural production. Cultural artefacts are no longer primarily composed or recorded but generated as endlessly variable instantiations from learned representational spaces, under conditions that privilege abundance, circulation, and low-friction production. Across music, text, image, and video, the regime is defined by the convergence of generative AI infrastructures with the economic imperatives of behavioural extraction and content abundance that structure contemporary digital platforms, producing cultural content at scales and velocities that outpace the perceptual and evaluative horizons of any individual, institution, or archive.

Central to this regime is the *latent (hyperreproductive) object*: the generated entity whose defining ontological characteristic is its structural mutability and its openness to endless reconfiguration.[8] Such objects are actualised from latent space through a prompt, but their actualisation is never structurally final. They carry no definitive version or stable identity that resists transformation. Every instantiation exists alongside an open field of further actualisations that the system can produce from it: the same object can be reprompted, re-steered, extended, or extracted as a seed for entirely new generations whose stylistic, formal, or affective character can depart sharply from the original. The latent object is structurally available for endless reconfiguration, including reconfigurations that resemiotise it into something materially distinct. In this sense, the latent object is best understood as a momentary actualisation of a virtual field, a crystallisation that is always already available for further actualisation.

The term *reproduction* is retained here in a deliberately metaphorical register. These systems produce emergent entities actualised from latent spaces whose combinatorial potentialities extend beyond the recombination of discrete prior works. Hyperreproduction names a paradoxical condition: the cultural logic of reproduction has been absorbed into a regime whose defining operation is the spawning of new entities from compressed statistical distributions of prior cultural material. The "reproductive" character now extends from the cultural object to the cultural subject: the same infrastructures that spawn content also reproduce, through interface design and recommendation logics, the listening habits, prompt vocabularies, and aesthetic horizons of their users.

A media ecology is taking shape in which the generative apparatus and the circulatory apparatus converge into a single integrated infrastructure. The same platforms that distribute content increasingly also produce it, and the content they produce feeds back into the systems that generate further content, in recursive loops that progressively subsume the conditions of musical culture into the operational logic of the generative infrastructure itself. Suno's announced expansion into streaming and social functions signals this convergence explicitly (Robinson, 2025), as does Udio's development of a licensed subscription service integrating generation with distribution and fan engagement following its settlements with the major labels (UMG, 2025; WMG, 2025). As artists in the streaming era adapted their aesthetic and structural choices to the algorithmic incentives of platform-driven distribution, a further and more consequential adaptation is now underway. The cultural production of music is being progressively reshaped by the prosumer dynamics of generative platforms: by the millions of users spawning, sharing, and circulating content within and beyond these platforms, by the cumulative weight of mass-generated material as it permeates streaming catalogues, social feeds, advertising pipelines, and everyday listening, and by the ambient acclimatisation of audiences to a sonic environment in which a substantial share of what circulates was made under this apparatus.

Hyperreproduction thus names both a condition and a tendency. As a condition, it designates the structural saturation of cultural production by generative systems and their outputs: latent floods of spawned content, infrastructures optimised for extraction, media ecologies in which synthetic and human-created content circulate indistinguishably. As a tendency, it names the vectors along which this condition intensifies: the erosion of differential meaning under conditions of endless instantiability, the dissolution of authorial coherence, the progressive undoing of the contextual grounds upon which cultural objects acquired cultural weight, and the displacement of authenticity as an operative category.

The regime operates simultaneously at the level of the individual user, whose creative and receptive practices are reshaped by generative interfaces; the platform, whose architectures encode aesthetic and commercial constraints into the generative substrate; the cultural substrate, whose accumulated archive is ingested, compressed, and rendered available as generative material; and the media ecosystem as a whole, in which generative and circulatory infrastructures are converging into a self-reinforcing apparatus.

The sections that follow anatomise this regime through its interlocking mechanisms.

4. THE INTERLOCKING CONDITIONS OF HYPERREPRODUCTION

The regime is anatomised here through ten interlocking conditions. They are presented in the order in which they operate, from the scalar rupture that establishes the volumetric ground, through the semiotic and ontological

[8] A fuller account of the latent object as a media-theoretical category, including its definition, internal structure, and ontological status, is developed in another paper on the latent sound object, which examines the entity at the object level rather than at the level of the regime treated here.

consequences that follow from it, to the infrastructural arrangements that secure them and the condition of reception they produce. The conditions are analytically separable and empirically entangled, and each intensifies the others. Table 1 summarises them.

Table 1: The interlocking conditions of hyperreproduction.

Condition	Operative description
Latent floods	Volumetric saturation of the media environment by spawned content, at a scale that restructures the attentional ecology through which all music circulates.
Semiotic deflation	The hollowing of connotative content within the sign, as stylistic markers become instantiable on demand and forfeit their differential weight.
Liquefaction of the cultural object	The loss of fixity in the musical object, which becomes structurally available for endless reconfiguration from the moment of its generation.
Infrastructural capture	The embedding of generation within platform architectures whose economic imperatives shape what can be made and how it circulates.
Recursive loops	Feedback between modelled listener behaviour and generative output: listeners are embedded as vectors within the system, and the system's distributions are progressively embedded within the aesthetic horizons of its users and the substrate on which subsequent models are trained.
Latent enclosures	The confinement of generative possibility within proprietary affordances, and the conversion of the shared musical archive into a corporate asset.
The autosimulacral turn	The folding inward of the sonic sign, whose primary referent becomes the apparatus of its own production.
Contextual voids	Reception stripped of social and historical thickness, as objects are actualised without passage through the milieus that formerly grounded them.
Dead Internet dynamics	The saturation of content and engagement alike by automated systems, shifting the default texture of online cultural life toward the synthetic.
The post-authentic condition	The displacement of authenticity as an operative category, as the question of provenance ceases to condition reception.

4.1 Latent Floods and the Scalar Rupture

The most immediately legible feature of hyperreproduction is the sheer volume of what is generated. Suno's investor materials indicate roughly seven million songs produced per day, equivalent to the entirety of Spotify's catalogue every two weeks (Robinson, 2025). This figure reflects prosumer dynamics alone, generated by users through informal prompts, often with minimal investment in the resulting object's longevity or cultural weight. The entry of major labels, social media platforms, advertising networks, and autonomous agentic frameworks into this generative infrastructure in the coming years will intensify these dynamics by several orders of magnitude.

The term *latent floods* names the spawning of content at volumes that outpace any individual or institutional horizon of absorption, permeating catalogues, feeds, and archives until generated material forms the sediment through which all other music must surface. The condition is already legible across charts, streaming catalogues, social feeds, advertising pipelines, and background music services. Much of what constitutes a latent flood is, by any conventional evaluative standard, undifferentiated and disposable, as popular discourse has begun to register through the term "AI slop." The descriptor captures the present moment but is unlikely to remain adequate as the apparatus matures: generative systems remain in early stages of development, the fidelity of their outputs is improving rapidly, and their capacity to track emerging stylistic trends is advancing, at which point the verifiability of content as AI-generated will become increasingly uncertain.

The quality of individual outputs is, in a structural sense, beside the point. What defines the latent flood is the apparatus's indifference to the quality/non-quality distinction altogether. Content is spawned without regard for whether it succeeds or fails by aesthetic criteria, because the apparatus does not operate according to such criteria. It operates according to the imperatives of volume, engagement, and platform throughput. As this sediment deepens, it reshapes the ecology itself, altering the conditions of visibility, discoverability, and economic viability for all music circulating within it.

The consequences extend well beyond what circulates and what does not. As Herbert Simon (1971) observed, "a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention." Under hyperreproductive conditions, each additional generated object dilutes the attentional share available to any other, and the proliferation of content renders each individual track less absorbable and less capable of sustaining the prolonged engagement from which cultural and economic value has traditionally emerged. Latent floods restructure the attentional ecology through which all musical objects must now circulate, whether generated in seconds through a prompt or produced over months in a studio.

4.2 Semiotic Deflation and Symbolic Exhaustion

The scalar rupture produces consequences that are qualitative as well as quantitative. *Semiotic deflation*[9] names a distortion in the meaning-making relation: the process by which a sign loses the deeper, contextually accumulated significance it carries through use (its connotation) and is reduced to a more literal or conventional surface meaning (its denotation). The

[9] *Deflation* is used here in the sense of a loss of volume rather than in its monetary sense, where deflation raises the value of each remaining unit. The term names the collapse of connotative content within the sign. It stands alongside Berardi's semiotic inflation rather than in opposition to it, since the proliferation of signs and the hollowing of each are the same movement described from opposite ends.

contextually rich and historically embedded significance that gathers around a sign through its participation in social and aesthetic life is hollowed out, mostly leaving the immediately recognisable markers that allow a system to classify it or generate within its stylistic category. The concept stands in close kinship and conversation with Franco Berardi's (2018) account of *semiotic inflation* under cognitive capitalism: where Berardi names the proliferation of signs that drives the per-sign value of meaning down, semiotic deflation names the corresponding hollowing of connotative content within the individual sign that this proliferation produces.

When any stylistic idiom, any genre, any timbral signature, any affective register can be instantiated on demand through a textual prompt, remix, or autonomous generation, the cultural markers that once conferred differential meaning on musical objects are progressively eroded. Rarity, authorial intention, community of origin, historical embeddedness: each has traditionally grounded musical choices within systems of value and distinction. Under hyperreproductive conditions, the operative weight of these markers wanes. A generated bossa nova track does not emerge from the social milieu of 1950s Rio de Janeiro. A generated punk song carries no relationship to the specific class antagonisms and subcultural formations from which punk derived its force. The signifiers remain.
The conditions that gave them meaning do not.

Berardi's earlier work on *symbolic exhaustion* under semiocapitalism (2012) frames the longer-running version of this dynamic, in which the acceleration and proliferation of signs progressively depletes the capacity for meaningful semiotic exchange. Hyperreproduction intensifies this. The differential weight of musical choices collapses when all choices are equally and instantaneously instantiable; every style or sonic reference becomes available with negligible friction, and in becoming universally available, forfeits the specificity and constraint that once made it meaningful.

A further consequence follows. When the field of available music expands without limit and the markers that once guided listening lose their force, listeners default to familiar and stylistically stable forms; cognitive and choice-paralysis research has documented that abundance beyond certain thresholds produces retreat toward the familiar (Schwartz, 2004; Iyengar and Lepper, 2000).
This tendency is amplified by recommendation systems that reward predictability, and by the fact that differentiation requires effort in an environment where content is effectively endless. The result is a flattening of aesthetic variety as both generative systems and listener behaviour converge on established sonic templates.

4.3 The Liquefaction of the Cultural Object

Under hyperreproductive conditions, the musical object undergoes a fundamental transformation in its ontological character. It ceases to behave as a bounded, stable artefact, with a definitive recorded form and a fixed identity, and assumes the properties of a *liquid medium*. Any sonic object generated through Udio or Suno is structurally open to reprompting, re-steering, extension, remixing, and re-embedding into new contexts, all with the same ease and speed with which it was first spawned. Every output is a potential input, and the distinction between producing and reproducing dissolves into a continuous infrastructural operation.

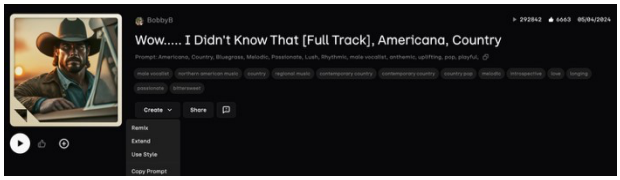

Figure 1. The interface of any Udio track exposes a menu of generative operations that can be applied to it directly: *Remix*, *Extend*, *Use Style*, and *Copy Prompt*. Every output is structurally available as a generative input, and the boundary between consumption and production dissolves into a single interface gesture.

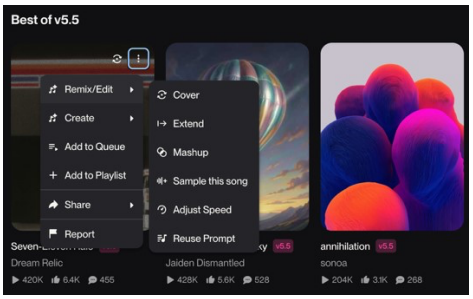

Figure 2. The same logic on Suno is more elaborated. Any track on the platform offers a *Remix/Edit* menu through which the object can be covered, extended, reconditioned into a *Mashup*, sampled, speed-adjusted, or have its prompt reused as the seed of further generations. The musical object arrives already configured as a node within a generative network. The object is configured for further actualisation as much as for playback.

Gilles Deleuze's (1968/1994) account of virtuality and actualisation offers a productive framework for theorising this condition. For Deleuze, the virtual is fully real: a field of differential potentials actualised through specific processes without being exhausted by any single actualisation. The hyperreproductive object exists precisely in this mode. Each generated track is an actualisation of virtual potentials distributed across a latent space, and those potentials remain available for endless re-actualisation through subsequent prompts. The object has no final form because its conditions of production are inexhaustible. It is always available for further becoming, carrying no definitive version, unbound from fixity.[10] It participates in what Wendy Hui

[10] In this respect, the hyperreproductive object shares a structural logic with the meme as theorised within digital culture studies (Shifman, 2014): a unit of cultural circulation that can be iterated, remixed, recaptioned, and recontextualised across an indefinite number of instantiations. The meme has no authoritative original; it exists as a distributed field of variations whose coherence lies in family resemblance rather than identity. The hyperreproductive musical object extends this logic from

Kyong Chun (2016) has described as the fundamental condition of digital media: the constant updating, the habitual refreshing, the inability of digital objects to remain what they are. Under hyperreproductive conditions, this updateability becomes totalised. The musical object is, from its inception, a node in a generative network whose default state is transformation.

4.4 Infrastructural Capture, Recursive Loops, and the Platform Dispositif

The generative systems that produce hyperreproductive objects are embedded within platform architectures whose economic imperatives, including engagement maximisation, behavioural data extraction, and content proliferation, actively shape what can be generated, how it circulates, and what aesthetic possibilities remain available to users. This marks a critical intensification beyond the streaming era. Platforms such as Spotify and Apple Music shaped what was *heard* through recommendation algorithms and engagement-driven curation. Generative platforms now also shape what is *made*. Training corpus selection, content filtering, fine-tuning priorities, prompt interface design, and the structural affordances of systems like Suno and Udio encode specific aesthetic and commercial preferences directly into the generative substrate. Users navigate these affordances without transparency about the constraints they operate within.

Michel Foucault's (1980) concept of the *dispositif* is instructive here. The generative platform constitutes a dispositif in Foucault's sense: an arrangement of technical, economic, and discursive elements that produces specific subjects (the prompt-user, the prosumer), specific objects (the generated track, the latent entity), and specific relations of power, while the arrangement itself recedes from view behind the language of democratisation and creative empowerment. Giorgio Agamben (2009) extends the concept to anything with the capacity to capture and orient the conduct and discourse of living beings, a description the generative platform satisfies with unusual precision.These arrangements rest on an economic operation. Nick Srnicek's (2017) analysis of platform capitalism identifies data extraction as the platform's constitutive business model, and Shoshana Zuboff's (2019) account of surveillance capitalism describes how behavioural surplus is rendered into predictions and sold on. Generative platforms extend this logic into a further register. What is captured now includes the prompts and revisions through which users specify what they want to hear, and that specification becomes training material for the system that will supply it. The platform's structural incentive is accordingly to generate more. More generations, more data, more engagement signals, more training material. The logic of scaling admits no operational distinction between a million generated tracks and a million meaningful ones. Quality, meaning, and cultural value are bypassed as irrelevant variables in a system whose metric of success is throughput and “growth”.

Recursive feedback loops sustain this dynamic. Platform architectures shape users' affective responses through recommendation systems, engagement-optimised interfaces, and hyper-personalised feeds. These systems are beginning to evolve from curatorial interfaces that select from an existing catalogue into agentic content-production frameworks capable of generating or selecting content calibrated to individual behavioural profiles in real time.[11] At this threshold, the feed ceases to surface music and begins to produce it. Users whose tastes are modelled, predicted, and reinforced through these loops find themselves reproducing the patterns the system has optimised for their consumption. There is a resonance here with Deleuze's (1995) account of societies of control, in which individuals are continuously adjusted rather than confined, embedded within loops whose terms they did not set. The word embedding here carries a double sense worth holding onto. It names a technical object, the vector into which a system compresses a track or a pattern of listening, and it names a relation of enfolding. Generative systems embed the accumulated archive as weights and their users as behavioural profiles, and the distributions they return become embedded in turn in the listening habits and prompt vocabularies through which musical culture is now formed. To be a listener under hyperreproductive conditions is, increasingly, to inhabit someone else's modelling of what one wants to hear.

4.5 Synthetic Data and Latent Enclosures

A further recursive register concerns training data. As the volume of AI-generated content uploaded to streaming platforms, social media, and the open web continues to grow, generative models will increasingly ingest their own synthetic outputs. Subsequent models will be trained on distributions shaped by prior generative systems, producing a tightening recursive spiral in which machines are trained on machine outputs, with the most pessimistic scenarios suggesting progressive displacement of the human-created material that originally trained these systems. This is a hauntological horizon in Mark Fisher's (2014) sense: a future in which culture regurgitates itself through increasingly synthetic loops, and the conditions

the visual-textual register to the sonic, and intensifies it through its generative apparatus. Where memes are transformed through successive acts of human appropriation and reinterpretation, the hyperreproductive object can be transformed automatically, at scale, and through the same infrastructure that produced it.

[11] Suno's "Radio" feature already instantiates this logic in nascent form: an endless stream of AI-generated music based on a seed song, tailored to the user's listening behaviour. Suno's "My Taste" feature, introduced with version 5.5, goes further, adapting the model's outputs over time to match the genres and moods a given user gravitates toward. Spotify's "Prompted Playlist" feature, launched in beta in late 2025, enables users to describe a mood, memory, or scenario in natural language and receive a personalised playlist (Spotify, 2025). The feature presently selects from existing recordings, but it operates on an infrastructure that could, with minimal architectural adjustment, generate music too. In the visual domain Meta's "Vibes" feed, launched in September 2025, instantiates this model through a short-form video feed in which every piece of content is AI-generated. The further horizon that can be speculated is a feed in which content is generated *de novo* for each individual user at the moment of encounter, with no prior existence.

under which genuinely new aesthetic material might emerge become harder to locate (Figures 3 and 4).

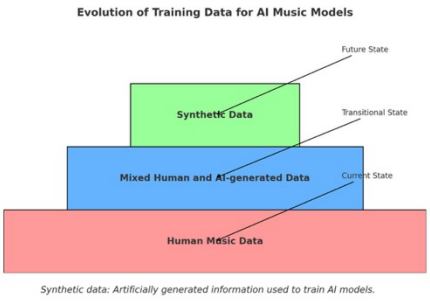

Figure 3. A speculative schema of training-data composition under hyperreproductive conditions. The pyramid stratifies the trajectory across three temporal states: a current state in which human-created musical material remains the dominant component of training corpora, a transitional state in which human and AI-generated material circulate in mixed proportions, and a future state in which synthetic material progressively displaces the human substrate.

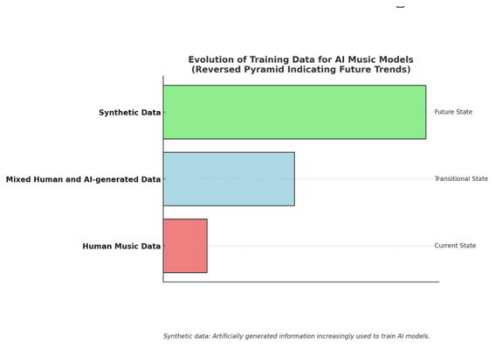

Figure 4. The same trajectory rendered as a relative-volume projection across the three states. As the share of synthetic material in training corpora rises and the share of original human-created material falls, the conditions for genuinely new aesthetic emergence narrow correspondingly. Content is increasingly composed of recursive returns to its own prior outputs, and the substrate of human creative material on which generative systems were originally trained is progressively displaced by their own synthetic residue.

A further consequence deserves naming: *latent enclosures*. The conditions of generative possibility are increasingly confined within the affordances of the platforms through which generation occurs. To generate within Suno or Udio is to operate within a system whose training corpus, fine-tuning priorities, and permissible outputs have been determined by the platform itself. What appears to users as a field of creative freedom is, in practice, a bounded topology shaped by the platform's aesthetic and commercial logic. The accumulated human musical archive undergoes its own form of enclosure: absorbed into proprietary training corpora and compressed into model weights held by private corporations, this shared heritage is transformed from a commons into a corporate asset.

Additionally, reports from Suno-related platform forums describe users who spend hours generating tracks for personal consumption, curating private libraries of outputs no one else will ever hear, and treating the act of generation as a form of consumption in its own right (r/SunoAI, 2025). Under these conditions, what appears to be creative production may increasingly function as a mode of self-addressed consumption: users generate ephemeral, feed-like streams of content tailored to their own preferences, sustaining an illusion of creative agency while participating in a structurally consumerist relationship with the generative apparatus.

4.6 Autosimulacra, Contextual Voids, and Dead Internet Dynamics

The preceding mechanisms converge toward what I term the *autosimulacral condition*. As generated music grows perceptually indistinguishable from human-made recordings and floods the same platforms, feeds, and archives, the sonic sign begins to fold inward. Its primary referent becomes the system of its own production: the latent distributions from which it was sampled, the training incentives that shaped those distributions, the platform logics that governed its generation and circulation. The autosimulacral is a simulacral order that has become automated and increasingly self-referential, in which the generated object's authority derives from its alignment with the apparatus of its own making.

The autosimulacral departs from the fourth phase of Baudrillard's (1981/1994) image in a specific way. The operative coherence of Baudrillard's pure simulacrum is no longer organised primarily around representing an external referent; the sign circulates among other signs and draws its authority from that circulation. The autosimulacral object retains a more substantial tether to its substrate: its sonic surface carries the spectremes of the countless human recordings compressed into its generative material.[12] It sounds like music, feels like music, behaves like music in every perceptible dimension, but its

referential structure has been folded back into the apparatus that produced it.

Additionally, generated content also circulates through what might be called *contextual voids*: spaces of reception stripped of social, historical, and relational thickness. The generated object has no biography, no community of origin, no embeddedness in a lived

[12] The spectral residue carried within the latent object is theorised in separate work through the concept of spectremes; see note 5.

practice. It arrives fully formed from a latent space, actualised from statistical distributions without passage through any of the social processes that traditionally ground musical meaning. Drawing again on Deleuze (1968/1994), this can be described as a condition of *radical virtuality*: content actualised directly from the virtual without the mediating passage through social, material, and historical milieus that has characterised all prior forms of musical production. The result is a progressive *context collapse*, a term borrowed from media studies (Marwick and Boyd, 2011) and here extended to describe the structural erosion of the contextual grounds upon which musical objects acquire and sustain cultural significance.

Extended to the media environment as a whole, this condition approaches what popular discourse calls *Dead Internet theory*: the claim, originating in online forums around 2021, that a growing proportion of online content and interaction is generated by bots and automated systems. As a factual claim about the totality of the internet, the theory has been overstated; as a structural tendency, the data increasingly vindicates its core intuition.[13]

The condition extends from content production to the entire ecology of online interaction: the comments, shares, likes, and engagement signals that shape what human users encounter and which platforms gravitate toward are themselves increasingly generated by automated systems. In the musical domain, the tendency is empirically observable: AI-generated tracks proliferate across streaming platforms (Bakare, 2025; Down, 2025); synthetic artists with millions of streams climb the charts (Simpson, 2026); established artist profiles are flooded with unauthorised AI-generated uploads (Lopatto, 2024); and streaming services struggle to distinguish the generated from the recorded while managing the fraudulent engagement that accompanies this content, with Deezer reporting that up to 85% of streams generated by fully AI-generated tracks were fraudulent across 2025 (Deezer, 2026). The automated traffic recorded across the wider web and the automated listening recorded here are distinct phenomena, and they converge in the musical domain. Fraudulent streams are machines listening to machines. Where the track is generated by a system and its plays are supplied by another, the circuit of production and reception closes with no human at either end, and the engagement signals that result are fed back into the recommendation architectures that determine what human listeners subsequently encounter. The escalation is continuous and shows no indication of plateauing.

When feeds, playlists, recommendation streams, and archives are progressively saturated with generated content and synthetic engagement, the conditions under which music might function as shared experience or collective memory become correspondingly harder to sustain. Reframed through hyperreproduction, Dead Internet theory ceases to be a conspiracy theory and increasingly describes an operative reality of contemporary media ecosystems: the synthetic has begun to constitute a default texture of online cultural life, and the burden of proof has shifted quietly from demonstrating that content is machine-generated to demonstrating that it is not.

4.7 The Post-Authentic Condition

The boundary between generated and non-generated cultural objects is eroding, and a generalised condition of doubt is beginning to settle across the media environment. This doubt extends retroactively to all cultural objects, including those made entirely by human beings: the studio recording, the captured performance, the DAW-composed song each now circulate under a penumbra of suspicion. Authenticity is increasingly difficult to verify under these conditions, and as the fidelity of generative outputs continues to advance, the technical means of distinguishing the human-made from the machine-generated will only become more unreliable in most everyday contexts. Both the generated and the non-generated become objects of doubt, and the cultural weight that once attached to human authorship and craft is eroded from two directions: by the flood of synthetic content that dilutes it, and by the suspicion that even apparently human work may not be what it claims.

Yet perhaps the deeper concern is that doubt will eventually dissipate, and the question of whether something was human-made or generated will, for most listeners in most contexts, simply cease to matter.[14] The early stages of this habituation are already visible. Users engage daily with AI-generated text, imagery, and audio across social media and content feeds with diminishing curiosity about provenance. The distinction between generated and non-generated is, increasingly, becoming structurally irrelevant through repetition and normalisation. This is what a *post-authentic* condition looks like in practice. The category of authenticity loses its grip on attention gradually, eroded by the cumulative

[13] A March 2026 report by the cybersecurity firm HUMAN Security, analysing over one quadrillion digital interactions, found that automated traffic now grows eight times faster than human traffic online, with AI-driven traffic surging 187% over the course of 2025 and traffic from autonomous AI agents increasing by nearly 8,000% year over year (HUMAN Security, 2026). Imperva's 2025 *Bad Bot Report* documented that automated activity surpassed human-generated web traffic for the first time, accounting for 51% of all global web activity (Imperva, 2025). These figures measure the automation of traffic rather than the automation of content, and the two should be held apart. Taken together with the automated listening documented on streaming platforms, they describe an environment in which a growing share of both what circulates and what registers as engagement is machine-produced.

[14] Empirical evidence of this habituation is already visible in cases such as the viral "I Run" track that made it into the Spotify U.S. and Global 50, widely shared and engaged with on TikTok and X despite being identified as AI-generated, suggesting that for many contemporary audiences AI provenance has already ceased to condition reception.

weight of an environment in which generated content is ubiquitous, functional, and, for most practical purposes, sufficient. The consolidation of post-authentic normality may arrive without conscious decision, through soft power and the gradual normalisation of platform-mediated media environments: through habits of engagement that no one explicitly chose, installed through the quiet accumulation of design decisions, interface defaults, and feed logics that shape attention before any question of decision arises.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper has theorised the *age of hyperreproduction* as a framework for understanding the present condition of AI-mediated cultural production. The framework advanced here is a work in progress. Its concepts are offered as a first vocabulary for a regime that is still consolidating, and the paper sketches the conditions through which hyperreproduction operates in the contemporary media landscape and is likely to intensify in the one now forming.It has situated the regime within a genealogy extending from Benjamin's mechanical reproduction through Baudrillard's simulacral circulation, formally defined its operative coordinates, and anatomised the constellation of interlocking conditions, including latent floods, semiotic deflation, the liquefaction of the cultural object, infrastructural capture, recursive loops, latent enclosures, the autosimulacral turn, contextual voids, Dead Internet dynamics, and the post-authentic condition, through which it operates.

Hyperreproduction names a structurally accelerating tendency whose conditions, mechanisms, and consequences are only beginning to be understood. Several of the conditions described here are legible today in partial or emergent form, and the framework is offered as much for the trajectory it identifies as for the present it describes. By providing a formal vocabulary and an integrated theoretical framework, this paper offers a starting point from which the regime's specific manifestations across music, sound, and adjacent cultural domains can be more rigorously examined. Future work will extend the framework to the latent object as a media-theoretical category, to specific platforms and practices, and to the perceptual and compositional logics through which hyperreproductive systems operate.

AUTHOR DECLARATIONS

The author declares no conflicts of interest. The research involved no human participants and raised no ethical issues requiring institutional review. The author used Anthropic's Claude as an editorial assistant during the preparation of this paper. The tool was used for copy-editing, structural revision, and proofreading of author-written text, including the trimming of an extended draft to conference word-count requirements, the refinement of phrasing and sentence-level clarity, and the surfacing of stylistic inconsistencies for author review. The conceptual framework, theoretical claims, genealogical argument, empirical analysis, and all substantive scholarly contributions are the author's own and were developed independently across graduate teaching, conference presentations, and ongoing doctoral research from 2023 onwards. All editorial decisions, citations, and final wording were verified and approved by the author.

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