

## **“I Got Pictures In My Mind”: Exploring Hyperpop’s Construction of Queer Future-Oriented Thinking**

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Hyperpop is a music movement often characterized by maximalist sensibilities, heavy processing of vocals and instruments, excessive distortion, and more. The use of technology in hyperpop is intrinsic to the movement’s sound, but its influence extends beyond sonic elements. Digitality and its futuristic capabilities permeate throughout hyperpop, opening the movement to avant-garde ways of creating and thinking. In this way, hyperpop exemplifies how music in the digital age can take advantage of technology not only to produce novel sounds, but also to resist the ideas informed by social structures such as heteronormativity and make space for other, queer understandings.

In my personal experience with hyperpop, I noticed the predominantly queer and transgender demographics of both its artists and its listeners. This intrigued me to further inquire the queer work that hyperpop seemed to be taking on, particularly exploring the methods through which it achieves its visions. At the earlier stage of my research, I engaged with multiple queer theoretical readings and discovered a connection between hyperpop’s queer effort and the queer futurity ideas of José Esteban Muñoz, thus inspiring me to frame my project through this lens.

In this project, I demonstrate how hyperpop fosters queer future-oriented thinking hinged upon alternative envisionings of bodies, kinship, and desire in Western contexts. I examine hyperpop’s methods as pertaining to excess, taste, remixing, and relationality to reveal how hyperpop constructs its approach to these matters. I apply various queer theoretical frameworks, including queer utopia and queer affect, as well as incorporate ideas from posthuman and technological discourse, particularly in relation to music. Moreover, I bring in sonic studies and employ close reading tactics analogous to Bo Ruberg’s analysis of video games to investigate the formalistic elements of hyperpop.

From my research, I conclude that the undertaking of hyperpop is motivated by a discontent with the present state of music and of society as a whole, where the institution of heterosexuality enforces standards on all modes of behaviour and rejects queer lives. In particular, the organization, display, and orientation of bodies are highly regulated, their effects especially discernable for queer folks whose identities are deemed wrong, too much, too different. Amidst this context, hyperpop stands staunchly against these normative and suppressive ideologies. Through its methods and areas of excess, taste, remixing, and relationality, hyperpop cultivates a world in which matters of bodies, kinship, and pleasure are reformulated under a queer and posthuman framework. Technology is integrated into the essence of the movement, its capabilities unlocking possibilities for an upgraded future that addresses the issues in which hyperpop is interested. Simultaneously, grounding its efforts in corporeal experiences and more conventional contemporary music, hyperpop takes on a rectifying method that is constructive rather than destructive, thus making its futuristic visions feel even more tangible and feasible. The attitude of hyperpop is congruent with the project of queerness itself, at least in José Esteban Muñoz’s terms; hyperpop strives towards a collective utopian horizon and consistently demands itself and others to be more and be better. It is through these approaches and reimaginings that hyperpop serves as a meaningful space-making effort for queer bodies to find comfort, pleasure, and community without restriction.

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