

THE PSEUDO HAPPINESS AS SONG STRATEGY'S SIMULACRA VERSUS PANOPTIC: BTS'S SONGS AND BTS MEMBERS

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Abstract: The reflections of joy in the lyrics are part of the singer's message tactic in his songs. Even so, with the overall packaging of the singer's appearance. The problem is when world-class singers sing self-motivating songs for their listeners, at the same time, life's troubles become familiar to the singer. Many articles also reported how severe depression, mental health, and suicide occurred in the lives of these artists. Demi Lovato, Shia, and Ariana Grande are some Western artists claiming to have experienced mental health problems. In the ranks of Korean artists, names such as Twice Jeongyeon, AOA Kwon Mina, HyunA, Red Velvet Wendy, and Super Junior Heechul are artists who have also experienced mental health problems and severe depression. The same thing happened to the BTS members. RM and Suga are two members who have admitted to experiencing depression and seeing life as an uphill struggle. This study aims to describe how BTS songs with the theme 'Love yourself' do not reflect the lives of BTS members under strict agency rules and fans' supervision. Ultimately, the theme of 'love yourself' is just a simulation strategy that generates 'false joy' for the members but has a substantial economic impact on the agency. This study uses the concepts of simulacra, panopticon, and duality reflection. At the same time, the research method is qualitative, with document study as a data collection technique. The unit of analysis is the text, namely the BTS song lyrics with the theme 'love yourself' and media reports about the members' lives. These two data are then compared and produce a simulacra picture because there is no reflection on what is being sung and what the members are experiencing. A life full of surveillance from fans and companies removes the privacy boundaries of the members who are – in the end – just a commodity for business turnover. It is where the irony occurs. The pseudo-happiness experienced by these members generated many economic benefits for the agency. Increasing the number of listeners, purchasing merchandise, selling concert tickets, traffic on social media, and brand endorsements are essential aspects that can be monetized by the agency, which accompanies the fame of the songs sung by BTS. While living without romantic relationships, solitude, and loneliness, the prohibition of direct interaction via social media with fans are some things that fence off the members' lives and make them even more alienated from social life.

Keywords: reflection, simulacra, panopticon, love yourself, song lyrics

INTRODUCTION

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Imperialism's grudge is one of the reasons for Korea's revolutionary rise. The spirit of decolonization is so strong in the colonizing countries that it even makes Korea choose two paths in its economic development trajectory: Liberalist South Korea and Socialist North Korea³. Rising quickly in six decades⁴. South Korea has established itself as the economic node of ASEAN countries, its primary market. Korea is also very aware that economic improvement will mean nothing if accompanied by improvements in the quality of its human resources as social capital⁵.

Skills are put forward to produce ready-to-work human resources in capitalist-oriented industries. Therefore, vocational education institutions and the job market growth aimed at industrial advancement increase. On the other hand, South Korea is not the leading actor in technological innovation. Therefore, simultaneously, the development strategy dualism is carried out by strengthening the cultural industry as soft power diplomacy⁶.

Strengthening markets in all parts of the world, South Korea has built a famous cultural empire that 'goes side by side' with the Western cultural industry. With the strategy of adjusting to mainstream Western culture, Korean popular culture is 'easily' accepted by almost all countries through digital dissemination⁷, which tends to be egalitarian. Later, this will become the primary key to the duality of Korean popular culture, which adopts local cultural peculiarities and hybrid in its transnational market⁸.

The problem is that Korean popular culture that is worldwide exists at the same time as the spirit of big capitalism, which is also supported by the gigantic power behind it. Returning to the historical trail of defeating Japan, Korea is overshadowed by supporting players who are the main actors of capitalism. Maintaining conformity as a right-wing team then becomes the keyword in the development vision of Korea, which is 'subject' to the spirit of liberalism and maintenance of the capitalist market, which is maintained through its cultural and manufacturing products (Yang, 2021).

As a globally known *supergroup*, BTS even spoke Korean in many interviews with local and international media. Later, BTS also inserted a moral message in the lyrics. Besides talking about love and heartbreak, BTS also conveyed the life of '*love yourself*' that made this *supergroup* top the Billboard charts for three weeks with the song *Dynamite*⁹. It is reasonable, and the '*love yourself*' message has also become a kind of approval by this group for various social problems many teenagers experience. It ranges from rejection, marginalization due to their choice of sexual orientation, the appearance that did not meet beauty standards, rejection of talking about sex, incompetence, and so on, which resulted in a *niche* that the Western world

³ Martin Andersson, Montserrat López Jerez, and Luka Miladinovic, "Divergence before the Division: The Colonial Origins of Separate Development Paths in Korea.," *Journal of Institutional Economics*, 2023, 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1744137423000188>.

⁴ Gil Eunsun, "The Contribution of Industries over Sixty Years of Economic Growth in South Korea.," *KIET Industrial Economic Review* 26, no. 5 (2021).

⁵ Yeji Kim, "Global Citizenship Education in South Korea: Ideologies, Inequalities, and Teacher Voices," *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 17, no. 2 (2019): 177–93, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2019.1642182>.

⁶ Timo Fleckenstein, Soohyun Christine Lee, and Jaehyoung Park, "Skills and Training in Hierarchical Capitalism: The Rise and Fall of Vocational Training in South Korea," *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 2023, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2023.2168207>.

⁷ D. Y. Jin, and H. Yi., "Transnationality of Popular Culture in the Korean Wave.," *Korea Journal* 60, no. 1 (2020): 5–16, <https://doi.org/10.25024/kj.2020.60.1.5>.

⁸ Y. L. Lee et al., "Cross-National Study on the Perception of the Korean Wave and Cultural Hybridity in Indonesia and Malaysia Using Discourse on Social Media .," *Sustainability* 12, no. 15 (2020): 60–72, <https://doi.org/doi:10.3390/su12156072>.

⁹ K. H. Kim, *BTS and the World Music Industry*. In Y. K. (Ed), *THE SOFT POWER OF THE KOREAN WAVE Parasite, BTS and Drama* (London: Routledge, 2022).

has not considered as the primary narrative holder. Therefore, when the social media world is filled with Justin Bieber's *Stay* song containing many unkind words, BTS's *Permission to Dance* provides a counter-narrative to 'believe in yourself—especially during a pandemic. It then generates the *hashtag* #BTSsavedme on many social media accounts.

The problem is that this virtual blind love also causes a lot of conflict and tension, especially between fans. This virtual fandom does not hesitate to threaten those who disagree with them through social media and 'hurt with words.' It is where the panopticon phenomenon is very likely to occur. Panopticon is a term from the post-structuralist figure Michel Foucault, who describes a discipline that develops due to constant social control. Instead of getting the artist's attention, this virtual love and chaos between fans increased the artist's popularity because public attention was diverted to the issue and became a new monetization engine for producers. It is the essence of this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE PANOPTICON AS A NEW RELATION FORM IN DIGITAL ERA

Parasocial is defined as a quasi-relationship built unilaterally by--usually--fans and their idols. Parasocial includes perception, (pseudo) interaction, joy, sadness, and loneliness of the artist reflected on his fans¹⁰. It is an emotionally tinged relationship between people and media characters, similar to the affective bonds formed in real social relationships¹¹. Profound and soluble parasocial results in a possessive relationship felt by one party. As a result, this misery of longing results in 'supervision' to keep the idol as their only 'property.' It is the panopticon that often goes unnoticed. In the digital world, this panoptic is then affirmed by other community members, resulting in networked surveillance¹².

In the digital world, obedience to authority in data colonialism is promoted through a quasi-paranoid self-monitoring feeling that "we live in public" but that we need not worry too much about it because everyone else is also being watched. We need not worry, that is, as long as we have "done nothing wrong"¹³. Foucault's concept of "Panopticism" and Marx's analysis of capitalism intertwine the economic and political realms as they explore the interplay between the generation of value and the structuring of power. In any endeavor to modernize theories of power, it is imperative to acknowledge that the generation, acquisition, and dissemination of value are inherently intertwined with the exercise and manifestation of power. These activities necessitate existing power imbalances to transpire while simultaneously engendering novel power dynamics¹⁴.

The massive business world- including KPOP as an industry- feels the most positive and negative impacts from using this digital media. Its interactive nature and fast access make it easier for producers to get to know their consumers more closely and streamline promotional costs by utilizing a diverse database¹⁵. On the other hand, fans also become active actors in

¹⁰ P. Copley and P.J. Schulz, *Theories and Models of Communication* (Boston: De Gruyter Mouton., 2013).

¹¹ G. L. Reville et al., *Technology Support for Adults and Children Reading Together: Questions Answered and Questions Raised*. In J. E. Kim, & B. H.-D. (Eds), *Reading in the Digital Age: Young Children's Experiences with E-Books*. (NY: Springer International., 2019).

¹² N. Dyer-Witthoford, *The Global Worker and the Digital Front*. In C. Fuchs, & M. Sandoval, *Critique, Social Media and the Information Society*. (NY: Routledge, 2014).

¹³ N. Couldry and U. Mejias, *The Costs of Connection: How Data Is Colonizing Human Life and Appropriating It for Capitalism*. (California: Stanford University Press, 2019).

¹⁴ R. Prey, *The Network's Blindspot: Exclusion, Exploitation and Marx's Process-Relational Ontology*. In C. Fuchs, & V. M. (Eds.), *Marx in the Age of Digital Capitalism*. (Boston: Brill, 2015).

¹⁵ L. Safko, *The Social Media Bible: Tactics, Tools, and Strategies for Business Success*. (Canada: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2010).

finding and customizing various content about the idol according to their needs¹⁶. Thus, producers and marketers are no longer the center because fans are in control because of their activities. A dialectic of relations and interdependence on an equal level (Jenkins, 2006). It is the implication of the digital panopticon.

HYPER-REALITY AND A NEW LIFEWORLD OF DIGITAL CONTEXT

Hyper-reality is a concept by a French philosopher, Jean Baudrillard, used in cultural theory to describe the paradox in today's reality. He argues that people in contemporary Western culture, surrounded by all kinds of visualizations and a world of glitter, find more excellent value in the images than any reference to their reality. A plastic Christmas tree, as in a beautiful Christmas card, is preferable to an irregular spruce. The Las Vegas version of Venice appears to answer people's curiosity about Venice as portrayed by the media. It is where Baudrillard believes that the mass media is the leading actor that makes the reality simulation produce forms of hyper-reality that people prefer¹⁷.

Umberto Eco (1987) and Jean Baudrillard (1983b) defined hyper-reality as a broader contemporary condition in which simulacra, copies lacking original referents, have replaced both representation and reality. The assumption is not made that the significance of hyperreality remains constant or unattainable; instead, it regards these meanings and the corresponding reactions as objects of inquiry. Generally, hyperreality is commonly associated with broad concepts such as 'late capitalism' or 'consumerism' (Perry, 1999, p. xiii). In the contemporary era characterized by postmodernity, the connection between the tangible reality and its symbolic representations has been severed. Consequently, individuals are immersed in a hyper-real environment whereby the inhabitants engage in communication and collectively construct an artificial realm¹⁸.

METHOD

This study uses the critical constructivism paradigm with a qualitative approach. Researchers used document studies as data collection and text analysis to analyze various data sources. The unit of analysis used is text, namely various media articles, posts on social media, and multiple comments. The data validity used the source triangulation model, where the researcher would look at the intertextuality of the texts that had been collected.

FINDINGS

JOY AND SADNESS ARE COMMODITIES

Having a fan base of up to four million people in almost all countries makes BTS the biggest supergroup ever. Winning almost all world awards, BTS reaps many benefits apart from album sales, including brand endorsements, brand collaboration memberships, merchandise sales, and daily video clips activated on social media by nearly 13 million social media users worldwide¹⁹

The enormous profits recorded by BTS for more than nine years have allowed Hybe Entertainment, the agency that houses this supergroup, to have an Initial Public Offering

¹⁶ Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: NYU Press, 2006).

¹⁷ D. Matheson, *Media Discourses: Analysing MediaText* (McGraw-Hill: New York, 2005).

¹⁸ J. Falkheimer and M. Heide, *Strategic Communication in Participatory Culture: From One and Two Way Communication to Participatory Communication Through Social Media*. (London: Routledge, 2014).

¹⁹ Brandwatch, "99 Amazing Social Media Statistics and Facts," Marketing, 2023, <https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/amazing-social-media-statistics-and-facts/>.

(*Market Capitalization*, 2023). No doubt the profits are even more multiplied. Fan membership in the recorded fanbase even demands an inexpensive annual fee with the lure of up-to-date information regarding the artist's activities.

The problem is not all activities contain fun things. Allegedly, every song sung by BTS reflects their heart and life experiences. They were starting from the struggles of life during the training period to the dynamics of the world of youth that they cannot fully enjoy. In 2017, the appearance of BTS, which often delivers songs about life's experiences, changed and appeared 'more colorful' after appearing in monochrome. The superior songs that are sung are entirely in English, upbeat, and have the theme of self-acceptance or 'love yourself' after previously their songs used Korean with the insertion of rock music nuances in it. Here is the table of BTS album songs in a decade;

Table 1. BTS Album Themes and Addition

Year of Published	Album	Song Lists (Bolded = MV)	Theme
June 12, 2013	Mini Album 2 Cool 4 Skool	1. Into: 2 Cool 4 Skool 2. We are Bulletproof Pt. 2 3. Skit: Circle Room Talk 4. No More Dream 5. Interlude 6. Like 7. Outro: Circle Room Cypher 8. Skit: On the Start Line 9. Road/Path	<i>In general, this album contains about youth life as well as social criticism in South Korea. As seen in the lyrics of We Are Bulletproof, this song criticizes the lack of courage of young people in Korea to pursue their dreams. They seem to have no plans because their goals were shaped by previous generations or their parents, such as becoming government employees. And they must go to school and spend extra time studying at night without understanding their goal. The condition of the young generation there is also reflected in the song No More Dream lyrics. The lyrics tell about young people's struggles and sacrifices to become idols in South Korea. To make their dreams come true, they must be willing to sacrifice their youth, including their school. There is a satire in it, such as, in the KPOP industry, there is an opinion that idols signed to significant labels become rappers because they cannot sing. Because the rappers there are mostly indie singers, like Suga and RM, before joining BTS. And in these lyrics, it seems like they want to answer this innuendo; it says they worked very hard to get to this position. And they are not afraid of people's sarcasm.</i>
September 11, 2013	Mini Album O!Rul8,2?	1. Intro: O!Rul8,2? 2. NO. 3. We On 4. Skit: R U Happy Now? 5. If I Ruled The World 6. Coffee	<i>This album also criticizes parents who force their children, Korean youth, to focus more on school and studying. And this makes these young people forget their real dreams. And it's like they are forced</i>

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				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. BTS Cypher Pt. 1 8. Attack on Bangtan 9. Paldo Gangsan 10. Outro: Luv in Skool 	<p><i>to become learning machines who only spend time at school and internet cafes (additional study places after school hours).</i></p> <p><i>In this album, BTS also describes themselves as young people who dare to achieve their dreams and enter the K-POP world. They also encourage Korean youth to dare to achieve their goals, just like they did.</i></p>
February 12, 2014	Mini Album	Skool Luv Affair		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro: Skool Luv Affair 2. Boy In Luv 3. Skit: Soulmate 4. Where Did You Come From 5. Just One Day 6. Tomorrow 7. BTS Cypher Pt. 2: Triptych 8. Spine Breaker 9. Jump 10. Outro: Propose 	<p><i>On this album, BTS' songs started to include many romantic lyrics. About teenage romance, how they want to do anything for their women.</i></p> <p><i>However, in several songs, they still criticize people attacking them (BTS) regarding their abilities as rappers, singers, and musicians.</i></p>
May 14, 2014	Repackage Full Album	Skool Luv Affair		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Miss Right 2. I Like It 3. Intro: Skool Luv Affair 4. Boy In Luv 5. Skit: Soulmate 6. Where Did You Come From 7. Just One Day 8. Tomorrow 9. BTS Cypher Pt. 2: Triptych 10. Spine Breaker 11. Jump 12. Outro: Propose 	<p><i>This album contains old BTS songs from previous albums, with the addition of 2 songs, namely Miss Right and I Like It.</i></p>
July 4, 2014	Japanese Single	No More Dream		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No More Dream (Japanese Ver.) 2. Attack On Bangtan (Japanese Ver.) 3. Like (Japanese Ver.) 	<p><i>This album contains old BTS songs from previous albums but made in Japanese versions.</i></p>
July 16, 2014	Japanese Single	Boy In Luv		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Boy In Luv (Japanese Ver.) 2. NO (Japanese Ver.) 3. Just One Day (Japanese Ver.) 	<p><i>This album contains old BTS songs from previous albums but made in Japanese versions.</i></p>
August 20, 2014	Full Album	Dark & Wild		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro: What Am I To You 2. Danger 3. War of Hormone 4. Hip Hop Phile 5. Let Me Know 6. Rain 	<p><i>On this album, BTS' songs contain more lyrics about romance and male and female relationships.</i></p> <p><i>However, in some songs, they still write lyrics about their struggles as musicians.</i></p>

			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. BTS Cypher Pt. 3: KILLER 8. Interlude: What Are You Doing Now 9. Could You Turn Off Your Cellphone 10. Embarrassed 11. 24/7 = Heaven 12. Look Here 13. So 4 More 14. Outro: Does That Make Sense? 	
November 14, 2014	Japanese Single	Danger	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Danger (Japanese Ver.) 2. Attack On Bangtan (Japanese Ver.) 3. Miss Right (Japanese Ver.) 	<i>This album contains old BTS songs from previous albums but made in Japanese versions.</i>
November 21, 2014	Taiwan Single	Danger	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Danger (Chinese Ver.) 	<i>This album contains old BTS songs from previous albums but made in Chinese versions.</i>
December 24, 2014	Japanese Full Album	Wake Up	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro 2. The Stars 3. Jump (Japanese Ver.) 4. Danger (Japanese Ver.) 5. Boy In Luv (Japanese Ver.) 6. Just One Day (Japanese Ver. Extended) 7. Like (Japanese Ver.) 8. I Like It Pt. 2 ~At That Place~ 9. No More Dream (Japanese Ver.) 10. Attack on Bangtan (Japanese Ver.) 11. NO (Japanese Ver.) 12. Wake Up 13. Outro 	<i>This album contains old BTS songs from previous albums but made in Japanese versions, with the addition of 4 songs in Japanese, namely: The Stars, I Like It Pt. 2 ~At That Place~, Wake Up, and Outro. The new songs still have the same themes as the previous ones, such as their struggle to achieve their dreams and encouraging Korean youth to keep fighting to pursue their dreams.</i>
April 29, 2015	Mini Album	The Most Beautiful Moment in Life Pt. 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro: Blooming Youth 2. I NEED U 3. Hold Me Tight 4. Skit: Expectation! 5. DOPE 6. Boyz With Fun 7. Converse High 8. Moving On 9. Outro: Love is Not Over 	<i>On this album, BTS's songs contain many lyrics about romance, such as their hopes for their women. However, in several songs, they still include lyrics about their struggles and hopes as BTS.</i>
June 17, 2015	Japanese Single	For You	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For You 2. War Of Hormone (Japanese Ver.) 3. Let Me Know (Japanese Ver.) 	<i>This album contains old BTS songs from previous albums but made in Japanese versions.</i>
November 30, 2015	Mini Album	The Most Beautiful	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro: Never Mind 2. RUN 3. Butterfly 	<i>The extended version. Like their previous albums, this album also tells the expression of the youth</i>

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		Moment in Life Pt. 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Whalien 52 5. Ma City 6. Silver Spoon 7. Skit: One Night In A Strange City 8. Autumn Leaves 9. Outro: House of Cards 	about their life, their passionate love. And also they criticized the old generation
December 8, 2015	Japanese Single	I Need U	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I Need U (Japanese Ver.) 2. Dope (Japanese Ver.) 3. Boyz With Fun (Japanese Ver.) 	<i>This album contains old BTS songs from previous albums but made in Japanese versions.</i>
March 15, 2016	Japanese Single	Run	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Run (Japanese Ver.) 2. Butterfly (Japanese Ver.) 3. Good Day 	<i>This album contains old BTS songs from previous albums but made in Japanese versions.</i>
May 2, 2016	Repackage Album	The Most Beautiful Moment in Life: Young Forever	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro: The Most Beautiful Moment in Life 2. I Need U 3. Hold Me Tight 4. Autumn Leaves 5. Butterfly (Prologue Mix) 6. RUN 7. Ma City 8. Silver Spoon 9. DOPE 10. FIRE 11. Save Me 12. Epilogue: Young Forever 13. Converse High 14. Moving On 15. Whalien 52 16. Butterfly 17. House Of Cards (Full Length) 18. Love Is Not Over (Full Length) 19. I Need U (Urban Mix) 20. I Need U (Remix) 21. RUN (Ballad Mix) 22. RUN (Alternative Mix) 23. Butterfly (Alternative Mix) 	<i>Taken from previous Korean albums (The Best of), several songs have been rearranged/remixed.</i>
September 7, 2016	Japanese Full Album	Youth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction: Youth 2. Run (Japanese Ver.) 3. Fire (Japanese Ver.) 4. Dope (Japanese Ver.) 5. Good Day 6. Save Me (Japanese Ver.) 7. Boyz With Fun (Japanese Ver.) 8. Silver Spoon (Japanese Ver.) 9. Wishing On A Star 10. Butterfly (Japanese Ver.) 	<i>This album contains old BTS songs from previous albums but made in Japanese versions, with three new songs in Japanese added (Youth, Wishing On A Star & For You). The themes of the songs on this album are still the same as the previous ones: about love, the struggle to achieve dreams, and social criticism.</i>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. For You 12. I Need U (Japanese Ver.) 13. Epilogue: Young Forever (Japanese Ver.) 	
October 10, 2016	Full Album	Wings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro: Boy Meets Evil 2. Blood Sweat & Tears 3. Begin 4. Lie 5. Stigma 6. First Love 7. Reflection 8. MAMA 9. Awake 10. Lost 11. BTS Cypher pt. 4 12. Am I Wrong 13. 21st Century Girl 14. 2! 3! 15. Interlude: Wings 	This album also tells us about the young love, the struggle to achieve dreams and social criticism
January 6, 2017	Japanese Repack Album	The Best of BTS -Japan Edition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No More Dream (Japanese Ver.) 2. Boy In Luv (Japanese Ver.) 3. Danger (Japanese Ver.) 4. Attack On Bangtan (Japanese Ver.) 5. Miss Right (Japanese Ver.) 6. I Like It Pt. 2 ~At That Place~ 7. For You 8. War Of Hormone (Japanese Ver.) 9. I Need U (Japanese Ver.) 10. Dope (Japanese Ver.) 11. Run (Japanese Ver.) 12. Fire (Japanese Ver.) 13. Save Me (Japanese Ver.) 14. Epilogue: Young Forever (Japanese Ver.) 	Repackage from the previous album with no new song added
January 6, 2017	Repack Album	The Best of BTS -Korea Edition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No More Dream 2. We Are Bulletproof Pt. 2 3. NO. 4. Boy In Luv 5. Just One Day 6. Danger 7. War Of Hormone 8. I Need U 9. Dope 10. Run 11. Epilogue: Young Forever 12. Fire 13. Save Me 14. Blood Sweat & Tears 	Repackage from the previous album with no new song added

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February 13, 2017	Repackage Album	You Never Walk Alone	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro: Boy Meets Evil 2. Blood Sweat & Tears 3. Begin 4. Lie 5. Stigma 6. First Love 7. Reflection 8. MAMA 9. Awake 10. Lost 11. BTS Cypher pt. 4 12. Am I Wrong 13. 21st Century Girl 14. 2! 3! 15. Spring Day 16. Not Today 17. Outro: Wings 18. A Supplementary Story: You Never Walk Alone 	Repackage from the previous album with no new song added
May 10, 2017	Japanese Single	Blood Sweat & Tears	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blood Sweat & Tears (Japanese Ver.) 2. Not Today (Japanese Ver.) 3. Spring Day (Japanese Ver.) 	<i>This album contains old BTS songs from previous albums but made in Japanese versions.</i>
September 18, 2017	Mini Album	Love Yourself: Her	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro: Serendipity 2. DNA 3. Best of Me 4. Dimple 5. Pied Piper 6. Skit: Billboard Music Awards Speech 7. MIC Drop 8. Go Go 9. Outro: Her 10. Skit: Hesitation and Fear 11. Sea 	It is still about the expression of a young, passionate love. And also they criticized the old generation.
December 6, 2017	Japanese Single	MIC Drop/DNA/Crystal Snow	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MIC Drop (Japanese Ver.) 2. DNA (Japanese Ver.) 3. Crystal Snow 	<i>This album contains old BTS songs from previous albums but made in Japanese versions., with one new song in Japanese added</i>
April 4, 2018	Japanese full album	Face Yourself	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro: Ringwanderung 2. Best of Me (Japanese Ver.) 3. Blood Sweat & Tears (Japanese Ver.) 4. DNA (Japanese Ver.) 5. Not Today (Japanese Ver.) 6. MIC Drop (Japanese Ver.) 7. Don't Leave Me 8. Go Go (Japanese Ver.) 9. Crystal Snow 	<i>This album contains old BTS songs from previous albums but made in Japanese versions with five new songs in Japanese added.</i>

			10. Spring Day (Japanese Ver.) 11. Let Go 12. Outro: Crack	
May 18, 2018	Full Album	Love Yourself: Tear	1. Intro: Singularity 2. FAKE LOVE 3. The Truth Untold 4. 134340 5. Paradise 6. Love Maze 7. Magic Shop 8. Airplane Pt. 2 9. Anpanman 10. So What 11. Outro: Tear	Their critics about social life still exist here, also about young love
August 24, 2018	Repackage Album	Love Yourself: Answer	1. Euphoria 2. Trivia: Just Dance 3. Serendipity (Full Length) 4. DNA 5. Dimple 6. Trivia: Love 7. Her 8. Singularity 9. FAKE LOVE 10. The Truth Untold 11. Trivia: Seesaw 12. Tear 13. Epiphany 14. I'm Fine 15. IDOL 16. Answer: Love Myself 17. Magic Shop 18. Best of Me 19. Airplane Pt. 2 20. Go Go 21. Anpanman 22. MIC Drop 23. DNA (Pedal 2 LA Mix) 24. FAKE LOVE (Rocking Vibe Mix) 25. MIC Drop (Full Length ft. Steve Aoki) 26. IDOL (ft. Nicki Minaj)	Repackage from Korean previous album with no new song added
November 7, 2018	Japanese Single	FAKE LOVE/ Airplane Pt. 2	1. FAKE LOVE (Japanese Ver.) 2. Airplane Pt. 2 (Japanese Ver.) 3. IDOL (Stadium Remix) 4. FAKE LOVE (Japanese Ver.) (Remix)	This album contains old BTS songs from previous albums but made in Japanese versions with no new songs added.
April 12, 2019	Mini Album	Map of the Soul: Persona	1. Intro: Persona 2. Boy With Luv 3. Mikrokosmos 4. Make It Right 5. HOME	

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			6. Jamais Vu 7. Dionysus	
June 28, 2019	Soundtrack Album	BTS World: Original Soundtrack	1. Heartbeat 2. Dream Glow 3. A Brand New Day 4. All Night 5. Captain 6. Cake Waltz 7. Shine 8. Not Alone 9. Friends 10. Wish 11. Flying 12. LaLaLa 13. You Are Here 14. You Are Here (Orchestra Version)	
July 3, 2019	Japanese Single	Lights/Boy With Luv	1. Lights 2. Boy With Luv (Japanese Ver.) 3. IDOL (Japanese Ver.)	This album contains old BTS songs from previous albums but made in Japanese versions., with one new song in Japanese added
February 21, 2020	Full Album	Map of the Soul: 7	1. Intro: Persona 2. Boy With Luv 3. Make It Right 4. Jamais Vu 5. Dionysus 6. Interlude: Shadow 7. Black Swan 8. Filter 9. My Time 10. Louder than bombs 11. ON 12. UGH! 13. 00:00 14. Inner Child 15. Friends 16. Moon 17. Respect 18. We are Bulletproof: the Eternal 19. Outro: Ego	This album contain many theme inside. About love, encourage youth to be a better person, dare to tell the truth.
August 21, 2020	English Single	Dynamite	1. Dynamite 2. Dynamite (Instrumental)	It's about the young encourage others to live their life.. it contains only 1 song in many versions
	[Day Time Ver.]	1. Dynamite 2. Dynamite (Instrumental) 3. Dynamite (Acoustic Remix) 4. Dynamite (EDM Remix) 5. Dynamite (Tropical Remix) 6. Dynamite (Poolside Remix)		
	[Night Time Ver.]	1. Dynamite 2. Dynamite (Instrumental)		

				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Dynamite (Slow Jam Remix) 4. Dynamite (Midnight Remix) 5. Dynamite (Retro Remix) 6. Dynamite (Bedroom Remix) 	
November 20, 2020	Full Album	BE		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Life Goes On 2. Fly To My Room 3. Blue & Grey 4. Skit 5. Telepathy 6. Dis-ease 7. Stay 8. Dynamite 	This album tells a lot about encouraging other people to stay enthusiastic about living life
May 21, 2021	Digital	Butter (English Single)		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Butter 2. Butter (Instrumental) 	They told about themselves, who want to tease everybody (army?) with their charms. It also contains only 1 song in many versions.
	[Hotter Remix]		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Butter 2. Butter (Hotter Remix) 3. Butter (Instrumental) 		
	[Hotter, Sweeter, Cooler Remix]		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Butter 2. Butter (Hotter Remix) 3. Butter (Sweeter Remix) 4. Butter (Instrumental) 		
	[7" vinyl]		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Butter 		
	[Cassette] Side A		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Butter 		
	[Cassette] Side B		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Butter 		
June 16, 2021	Japanese Album	BTS, Best	The	<u>Disc 1 (CD & Digital)</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Film Out 2. DNA -Japanese Ver 3. Best of Me -Japanese Ver 4. Lights 5. Blood Sweat & Tears - Japanese Ver 6. Fake Love -Japanese Ver 7. Black Swan -Japanese Ver 8. Airplane pt.2 -Japanese Ver 9. Go Go -Japanese Ver 10. Idol -Japanese Ver 11. Dionysus -Japanese ver 12. Dynamite" (Bonus track; CD only) <u>Disc 2 (CD & Digital)</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Boy With Luv -Japanese Ver 2. Stay Gold 3. Let Go 4. Spring Day -Japanese Ver 	The Best of BTS Japanese Album with no new song added

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5. On -Japanese Ver
 6. Don't Leave Me
 7. Not Today -Japanese Ver
 8. Make It Right -Japanese Ver
 9. Your Eyes Tell
 10. Crystal Snow

Disc 3 (Blu-ray & DVD)

1. Film Out – music video
2. Stay Gold – music video
3. Lights – music video
4. Airplane Pt.2 -Japanese ver – music video
5. MIC Drop -Japanese Ver – music video
6. Blood Sweat & Tears (血、汗、涙) -Japanese ver – music video
7. Making of Jacket Photos
8. Film out Making of Music Video
9. Stay Gold – Making of Music Video [Additional Edition]
10. Lights – Making of Music Video [Additional Edition]
11. Airplane Pt.2 -Japanese Ver – Making of Music Video [Additional Edition]
12. MIC Drop -Japanese Ver – Making of Music Video [Additional Edition]
13. Blood Sweat & Tears (血、汗、涙) -Japanese Ver – Making of Music Video [Additional Edition]

August 27, 2021	Digital Single	Butter Megan Thee Stallion Remix	1. Butter – Megan Thee Stallion Remix	The extended version
September 24, 2021	Collaboration Single	My Universe (Coldplay & BTS)	1. My Universe 2. My Universe (Instrumental)	The extended version Tells the story of someone who finds their own world and speaks about someone's love without any restrictions.
June 10, 2022	Anthology Album	Proof	<u>CD 1</u> 1. Born Singer 2. No More Dream 3. NO 4. Boy In Luv 5. Danger 6. I Need U 7. Run 8. Fire 9. Blood Sweat & Tears	It is like the best of BTS album

-
10. Spring Day
 11. DNA
 12. Fake Love
 13. Idol
 14. Boy With Luv (feat. Halsey)
 15. On
 16. Dynamite
 17. Life Goes On
 18. Yet To Come (The Most Beautiful Moment)

CD 2

1. Run BTS
2. Intro: Persona
3. Stay
4. Moon
5. Jamais Vu
6. Trivia 轉: Seesaw
7. BTS Cypher PT.3: Killer (feat. Supreme Boi)
8. Outro: Ego
9. Her
10. Filter
11. Friends
12. Singularity
13. 00:00 (Zero O'Clock)
14. Euphoria
15. Dimple

CD 3 (CD only)

1. Jump (Demo ver.)” – 2:38
2. Boy In Luv (Demo ver.)
3. 따옴표” – 2:59
4. I Need U (Demo ver.)
5. Boyz with Fun (Demo ver.)
6. Tony Montana (with Jimin)
7. Young Forever (RM Demo ver.)
8. Spring Day (V Demo ver.)
9. DNA (J-Hope Demo ver.)
10. Seesaw (Demo ver.)
11. Still With You (Acapella)
12. For youth (available on Digital)

August 5, 2021	Collabo ration Single	Benny Blanco Bad decision (With BTS and Snoop Dogg)	1. Bad Decision (With BTS & Benny Blanco)
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May 12, 2023	Ost.	The Planet	1.	The Planet
June 9, 2023	Single	Take Two	1.	Take Two

Source: researchers data, 2023

The table above shows how BTS members' creative work in producing albums and singles is deadline-driven. In one year, at least one album or extended version or repackaged album must be published. This way of working with regularity is a picture of idols as employees rather than as artistic workers who are concerned with creativity. It shows the capitalist system of work, i.e., employee and employer, from a Marxian perspective.

In the 2020s, the themes of ‘the spirit of life’ in BTS’ songs have brought them many international awards because they are easy to listen to and accepted by many people. After all, they are easy to understand simultaneously as the pandemic conditions experienced by all countries in the world. The similarity in the context of 'downturn' increases traffic related to these BTS songs. Once again, when the economies of various countries are down, social media traffic about BTS is growing.

THE BAD DREAM IS THE SWEET DREAM: THE DESOLATE REALITY

From the digital analytics, the results imply this graph;



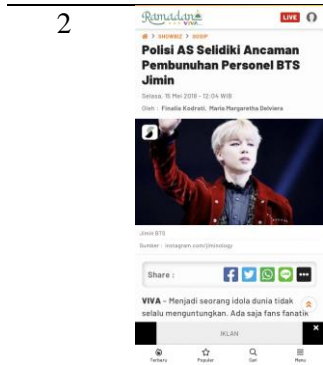
Source: mentionlytics, August 2023

From August 2022- to August 23, #btssavesmylive reached 421 mentions with 156K Social engagements and 83.5K unique reach. The engagements are still high in terms of likes and comments. Unfortunately, there are 21% negative comments (to the users' accounts), while positive ones still dominate.

The results show that the engagement—that continues to surveillance action—that fans build on KPOP ranges from curiosity to personal information. On the other hand, the tendency of fans to threaten other fans to maintain this panoptic relationship lasts. The breadth of media access (Akram & Alimuddin, 2020) is one of the main reasons the fandom members' militancy is being embodied. In 2019, the most pathetic, Sulli, committed suicide. This KPOP star experienced severe stress after being afflicted by various insults by netizens and fans. Here are some other examples;

Table 2. Quotation of Text

No.	ITEM	REMARKS
1		The desire to access and get in touch personally with the artist is the motive behind searching for the artist’s mobile phone number. The closeness of the relationship is often contested and exhibited and considered an achievement.



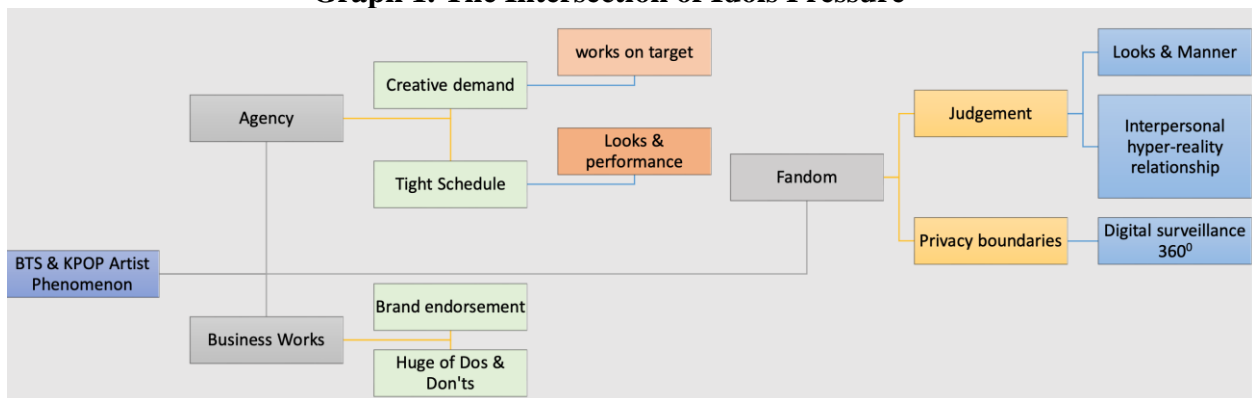
The obsession has an exaggeration: “If I can’t afford it, neither should anyone else .”Competition gets the idol’s attention, creates unhealthy relationships, and threatens the idol and other fans. It is such a love and hates to collide.

Source: researchers data, 2023

Without realizing it, the relationship full of pressure from fans to artists and other fandom members reflects the pressure artists also receive from their promoters. The number of rumors about the pressure artists receive from their management (McGay, 2021) shows a picture of this toxic relationship eventually crossing over and happening at the fan level. On the dark side, an ARMY also committed suicide. She shot her head because of her frustration and relationship with her father (Nugrahani, 2020). This fact shows how songs with motivational themes are not the only reality surrounding a person's life, both BTS members and ARMYs.

It is a complex digital relationship in which the idol and management as an entity also participate. It is indeed difficult to avoid, considering that the acceleration of technology makes it possible. At the same time, the artist must be a complete package full of perfection to continue generating profits. Here is the graph of the intersection of pressure that occurred on the idols;

Graph 1. The Intersection of Idols Pressure



Source: researchers data, 2023

The KPOP wave undeniably resulted in a new cultural invasion that entered the private sphere²⁰. It may become a new ideology that shifts—at the grassroots—the superiority of Western musicians. In the liberal public sphere model, conventional mass media plays an essential role in informing and guiding public opinion, especially since society simultaneously begins to eliminate gender/class/racial boundaries but makes direct communication difficult. On the other hand, the commercialization of mass media has made the public space an area of rhetoric and public relations and advertising missions that have been prioritized. Commercial interests, economic capitalization, and mainstream media contain the colonized and

²⁰ K. Athikho, “Globalization, Hybridization and Cultural Invasion - Korean Wave in India’s North East.,” *Asian Communication Research* 14, no. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10-35 DOI:10.20879/acr.2017.14.1.10> .

compromised public spheres and discourse, with television as the vanguard (Habermas, 2004 in ²¹).

The domination of Western media, which is so great on conventional and digital media, has caused great boredom from the public, who need many alternatives. So when digital media (controlled mainly by the West) contains all alternative channels with alternative discourses, this is the public's primary choice today. It is what enters the private spaces of the fans and creates a 'territory' reaction, which is also extraordinary. The network society—implemented on digital fandom—formed by digital media has succeeded in connecting individuals with other individuals and institutions at the macro level, which more or less reconstructs the identities of these individuals ²². Here is where hyper-reality and panoptic action are often reproduced altogether.

Although the convergent media has a capitalist nuance, it also opens the gap for media conglomeration ²³. On the other hand, this KPOP's network society also creates many social movements for minority groups who are 'silenced' in conventional media, such as gays and lesbians, women, as well as groups of young voters who provide many new perspectives in the political realm, and economics in unconsciously. Despite a broad global perspective, the network community fosters a high locality and traditional spirit ²⁴ due to the tolerance (and hate) built between users. It is the key to KPOP's success globally, while it collides hate and love as a pack for zapped.

When trends and genres are no longer determined by a massive industry ²⁵, which usually comes from the West, media users act as both source receivers. This prosumer culture had a significant impact on the idol-fandom-management relationship. The ability to present public space in the private sphere has caused convergent media to be said to offer networked deliberation to individual users. Social movements facilitated by communication technology have created real-life collective awareness, termed plurality collaboration ²⁶. It brings the spirit of empowerment and exploitation and vice versa for KPOP and its fandom phenomena.

Uniquely, the frenzy of digital relations and the response to excessive supervision of the artist who becomes panoptic actually increase his popularity and ultimately impact income. It is a natural form of digital reification 'driven' by the fandom. Moreover, because the digital platform records all the activities and digital data traffic, more and more people will simultaneously benefit (and lose). Here it describes how the Korean K-pop artists and BTS are particularly exposed to many stressors, both vertically and horizontally. The toxicity is real in the cultural industry, which uses digital platforms to disseminate it. The panoptic, on behalf of love and popularity, occurred to the idols without any niche to heal ²⁷

DISCUSSION

²¹ Z. Papacharissi, *A Private Sphere, Democracy In A Digital Age*. (USA: Polity Press., 2010).

²² M. Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society, 2nd Edition With a New Preface.*, 2nd ed. (Sussex, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010).

²³ Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*.

²⁴ Peter R Monge and Noshir Contractor, *Theories of Communication Networks* (Oxford University Press, 2003), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780195160369.001.0001>.

²⁵ Peter Bennett, Alex Kendall, and Julian McDougall, *After the Media: Culture and Identity in the 21st Century, After the Media: Culture and Identity in the 21st Century*, 2011, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203817889>.

²⁶ Papacharissi, *A Private Sphere, Democracy In A Digital Age*.

²⁷ Christ opher Zysik, "K-POP AND SUICIDE—MARGINALIZ ATION AND RESISTANCE IN THE KOREAN POP INDUSTRY," *Online Publications of the Gesellschaft Für Populärmusikforschung/ German Society for Popular Music Studies e. V.* 19, no. Special Issue (2021), www.gfpm-samples.de/Samp1es19/zysik.pdf%0A.

This BTS phenomenon then explained how persuasive diplomacy and marketing no longer rely on personnel with negotiating skills but rely on cultural products consumed continuously. There were three aspects in the packaging of BTS and Korean cultural products. *First*, a highly qualified market analysis that produced a customer-oriented strategy. *It was second*, providing optimal experience, and *third*, intense communication between cultural actors and the public²⁸.

It can be seen how this strategy of 'winning the consumers' hearts' has become a postcolonial strategy carried out by Korea in quickly disseminating its cultural products. Koreans understood very well the key to cultural studies was indeed to reject the assumption of audience passivity and instead emphasize the interpretive capabilities of an 'active audience,' productive rearrangement of cultural meanings texts by various subcultures and fans, and even interactivity to co-creation online²⁹. In this way, Korea succeeded in defining a way of thinking about communication committed to various forms of subculture and widespread communication for emancipatory praxis, emphasizing the principles of market pluralism and the supposed sovereignty of consumers³⁰.

The internalization of this 'non-frontal' resistance spirit carried out 'unconsciously' will also result in extraordinary externalization of public aspects. It ranges from preferences to holistic spending on all aspects of the culture, from consuming dramas and songs, *merchandise*, *fashion*, and local food/restaurants to technology products. In other words, Korea understands its position as a 'second-tier' country in the ranks of the world system. It is difficult to 'defeat' the superpowers that have triumphed and dominated the economic and cultural sectors first—choose to utilize the symbolic capital of the locality that developed countries do not have. It is one of the *subculture* lanes that are the main characteristics of Korea in reproducing its cultural and media praxis.

CONCLUSION

Being famous is never easy. The roadmap draws how joy and suffering come together. After being exposed to management training, KPOP idol still faces all the love and hate simultaneously. Fans or non-fans treated idols as their property. And they were giving super surveillance, named panoptic.

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²⁸ J. Kang, "Analysis of Success Factors of HYBE Based on Service Triangle Model - BTS Case Study.," *The Journal of Internet E-Commerce Research* 21, no. 5 (2021): 23–41, <https://doi.org/10.37272/JIECR.2021.10.21.5.23>.

²⁹ Jonathan Hardy, *Critical Political Economy of the Media An Introduction*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2014), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203136225>.

³⁰ F. Sierra, *Cultural Consumption and Media Power*. In L. A. (Eds), *Power, Media, Culture: A Critical View from the Political Economy of Communication*. (UK: Palgrave Macmillan., 2015).

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