

“I Should Love Myself”: An Exploratory Study of BTS Lyrics as Tools of Narrative Healing and Collective Affect

Aparna K

Kristu Jayanti Deemed to be University, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

Email: 24meng05@kristujayanti.com

Abstract

The paper purports to explore how BTS song lyrics functions as tools of narrative medicine, affective coping, and memory activation within the global fandom community, ARMY. By employing Affect Theory, Narrative Medicine, and Neuroaesthetics, the attempt throughout the paper is to argue that BTS’s music not only entertains but also operates as an affective medium for the ARMY’s to processes of personal and collective meaning -making and healing. The study aims to analyse how the narratives like loss, self-love, memory, identity, and emotional resilience are weaved into the lyrics, through the close textual analysis of selected BTS songs such as *Spring Day*, *Magic Shop*, *Love Myself*, and *Mikrokosmos*. These narrative works as external affective structure and also influences ARMY members’ self-reflection and emotional processing. Furthermore, it also examines the ARMY’s engagement with BTS’s song lyrics as form of music therapy which persuades collective listening, interpretation and thereby creating a affective connection within the community. By positioning BTS lyrics as cognitive tools that produce affect, trigger memory and sustain emotional resilience, the study highlights the significance and the therapeutic potential of popular music. The paper also extends to critique around how popular culture participates in processes of healing and identity formation in the digital age by blending notions from Neurohumanities and Fandom Studies.

Keywords: BTS, Neuroaesthetics of Music, Collective Affect, Memory and Identity, Fandom Studies, Popular Studies.

Introduction

The dimension music takes in popular culture goes beyond its’ understanding of entertainment. It shapes the social consciousness and reflects generational attitudes. Irrespective of whether it is a ‘chart-topper’, music mirrors society inducing change. It functions as a powerful medium for expressing and exploring inter-relationships. The unprecedented increase in human interaction, especially through digital means, placed music as an embodiment that narrates stories and, more importantly, outline the framework for aiding in the well-being. This tangent has attracted more attention, specifically among youth, who navigates through the complexities of mental health, identity crises, and social isolation. Within the global music industry, which now converges to focus on well-being, BTS, also known as Bangtan Sonyeondan, stand out as a transformative force who guides millions of ARMYs through their music. The band has a wide fan community known as ARMY (Adorable Representative M.C. for Youth). The band’s music is famous for its entertaining quality as well as its lyrical content as it does not regress from expressing the themes of trauma, self-love, existential

angst, and resilience. This uniqueness resonates deeply with fans. ARMYs engage with BTS lyrics through translations and streaming as a means of reflecting on personal struggles, constructing identity and finding collective belonging in the fandom.

This paper, particularly, focuses on understanding how lyrics of selected BTS songs function as tool that work for narrative healing and collective affect within the fandom. The selected songs like *Spring Day*, *Magic Shop*, *Love Myself*, and *Mikrokosmos* are used to understand how a song serve as an affective instrument that connects personal memory, emotional regulation, and the formation of affective communities. For theoretical support, the paper incorporates Affect Theory (Massumi, 2002), which states how individual emotions transforms and shapes collective experiences; Narrative Medicine (Charon, 2006) contributes to analysing how storytelling becomes a therapeutic practice for reflecting on life and trauma while Neuroaesthetics (Juslin & Västfjäll, 2008), highlights how aesthetic experiences

like music and lyrics induce affective and cognitive process in individuals. Transactional Reader-Response theory (Rosenblatt, 1938) supports to understand the dynamic interaction between the reader and the text, while Neuroaesthetics (Chatterjee, 2013) provides a lens to view how the brain processes aesthetic experiences, like music, through sensory and motor system. These, together, provide a multidimensional lens for understanding the power of BTS's lyrics.

The study employs the methodology of textual analysis of the selected songs, by focusing on their meaning, narrative structure, metaphors and lyrical content. It analyses how songs become a space of therapeutic reflections and affective resonance.

Conclusively, the paper substantially shows how popular music can be considered as a cognitive-affective tool to aid in emotional resilience and identity formation in the digitally mediated era.

Literature Review

Previous studies have extensively explored how popular music plays a significant role in emotional well-being and identity formation among people. The impact of musical identity in individual's emotional health is undeniable. Music positively improves emotional health through carrying out a self-reflective awareness of emotions within an individual; music also promotes emotion recognition, regulation and positive emotional experiences (Saarikallio, 2017). Popular music stands as a cultural space which people use to construct, perform and contest their identities and adopt the musical preferences as pointers of character and identity development (Wanjala & Kebaya, 2016). In a way, music helps people to work with their emotions, identity construction and social connectedness (Godfrey-Kaplan, 2019). The connection between music and well-being is not only applicable to individual level, but it goes to a broader social and geographical context, where it can contribute to the community well-being and collective identity formation (Andrews et al, 2014). These findings highlight music's multifaceted role in supporting psychological development and social connection.

The BTS ARMY fandom is different from the traditional fan club boundaries ever seen. Chang & Park (2018) states about the four key dimensions of ARMY which are digital intimacy, non-social sociality, transnational locality and organising without organisation. The study demonstrates how ARMY fandom transforms private fan experiences into public

cultural, political, and economic expression. ARMYs' work as a transcultural fandom through hybrid forms of content and identity. They mediate through social media which produce an affective connection between BTS and fan globally (McLaren & Jin, 2020). Saputri & Lammertz (2024), studies how the fandom is a manifestation of technology and globalisation thereby becoming an example of contemporary fan cultures within broader social processes.

Affect Theory work with different dimensions of emotional frameworks, thereby emphasizing circulation, intensity, and collective dimensions. Seyfert (2012) defines that personal feelings and collective emotions are evoked through the interaction between bodies rather than belonging to the individuals. Hillis et al. (2015) and Pybus (2015) examine show affect in digital space work by analysing the online interactions with websites, avatars, and digital platforms which produce sensations of connectivity, desire and attachment. Ahmed (2004) studies how collective feelings are created through interaction instead of through shared emotions in groups and also extends the examination into virtual communities. Ahmed explains that physical proximity is not necessary for collective formation and it can emerge through digital interactions.

Bibliotherapy can be defined as the therapeutic use of literature in the healthcare context and it is a growing interdisciplinary field that connects narrative medicine with mental and physical health. Rita Charon (2006) defines Narrative Medicine as a therapeutic practice where storytelling is made use of to help individuals reflect on their trauma, selfhood and healing. Scholars like Rosenblatt (1938) places literature as an external tool that helps in cognitive-affective processes in self-reflection and coping. These frameworks suggest that BTS lyrics have the power and provides the space for the ARMY to reflect on their personal struggles, re-write their self-narratives, and experience therapeutic emotional release.

The Neuroaesthetics of music went through a paradigm shift from traditional music cognition studies to finding aesthetic responses like liking and preference and evoking the aesthetic experiences in people. It also explains how music evokes affective responses through embodied and cognitive mechanisms. Anjan Chatterjee (2013), defines that aesthetic experience, like listening to music, can activate brain's rewarding system, memory circuits and networks and facilitating personal and embodied responses. Meanwhile Juslin and

Västfjäll (2008) describes how music can induce emotion through processes like emotional contagion, episodic memory activation and visual imagery. By connecting these frameworks, BTS lyrics such as “*I should love myself*” resonates deeply with fans, triggering their autobiographical reflection and embodied affective processing.

Methodology and Discussion

With a cultural studies approach, the study also adopts qualitative methods, integrating textual analysis to interpret the conjuncture of popular culture, collective memory and affective experiences. The purpose of this study is to understand how the selected BTS songs become cognitive-affective tools that exercise narrative healing, memory activation, and collective affective experiences in the ARMY fandom.

The primary texts of this research include selected BTS songs like *Spring Day*, *Magic Shop*, *Love Myself*, and *Mikrokosmos*, which carry core themes like trauma, healing and self-affirmation. *Spring Day* carries the metaphors of separation, longing and hope while *Magic Shop* is a track that allows ARMY to look inside their hearts and create a magic shop, where they can exchange their fear for happiness and seek the love of members for their fans. It also symbolises a therapeutic space of safety and self-care. *Love Myself* expresses the significance of wholeheartedly loving and accepting yourself, while it also emphasizes self-love as a form of personal healing. Meanwhile, the song *Mikrokosmos*, celebrates the individual significance within a vast universe, conveying hope and belonging.

The songs are selected based on their popularity, fan reception and lyrical content as they address mental health and resilience. The texts are analysed through thematic and interpretative method, guided by the theories like Affect Theory, Narrative Medicine and Neuroaesthetics. Each song is analysed for their narrative structure, that is, how the lyrics narrate a story of survival, identity or hope. It also includes analysing key metaphors and affective language which will evoke emotion, memory, belonging and self-healing.

Through close reading of the lyrics, there is an attempt to understand how BTS's songs function as therapeutic and affective tools within the fandom. This allows to view lyrics as a structured narrative that connect the processes of personal and collective healing, memory activation and identity formation. With a focus on the affective dimensions of

the selected songs, this study aims to connect the gap between Fandom Studies and Neurohumanities, contributing insights about the role of popular music in healing.

A. SPRING DAY

Spring Day is a track written by RM (Kim Namjoon of BTS), except for the part of Suga, written by himself, which carries the poetic narrative of separation, longing, and hope. The song begins with expressing the longing, “I miss you,” that symbolises the longing for loved ones or for a better future. The line “*How much snow must fall for that spring day to come, friend?*” (*Spring Day*, BTS, 2017) captures the longing for some change from the current situation and it deeply symbolises the sad phase and happy phase. Suga's part in the song, “*You left me, but I never stopped thinking of you, not even for a day,*” (*Spring Day*, BTS, 2017) expresses the separation with the loved ones.

Viewing through Brian Massumi's Affect Theory, the lyrics carries the affect, a pre-conscious intensity that travel beyond individual emotion to be felt collectively. The ARMY interprets the song as a hope for a better future and longing for love. Massumi's idea that affect operate prior to and outside of conscious interpretation helps to explain how ARMY can emotionally resonate with the song without conducting any thorough analysis. The bridge of the song, “*The morning will come again. No darkness, no season, can last forever,*” (*Spring Day*, BTS, 2017) depicts the transience of life. It gives the message that no sadness and pain can last, and good times shall come. The lyrics carry an affective intensity which allows the individual experience of loss or longing to be shared, felt and embodied collectively. The song's narrative provides a space for therapeutic healing where grief is allowed to be processed through shared effect.

Looking at the song through Juslin and Västfjäll's (2008) Emotional Contagion, the song's melancholic melody evokes a sense of shared sadness and hope. The use of visual imagery is strong in *Spring Day*. The metaphors of changing season, the winter giving way to spring, produce vivid mental picture of the cyclic nature of grief and healing. It allows ARMY to visualise their own emotional waves, deepening their connection with lyrics. Through the line “*You're here, though I'm far away,*” (*Spring Day*, BTS, 2017), episodic memory exemplifies how fans recollect personal memories of loved ones who are absent,

thereby, encouraging a reflective process that transforms personal pain into shared narrative hope.

Rita Charon's Narrative Medicine helps to view *Spring Day* as a structured narrative. The lyrics express sadness as well as guide ARMY through the process of remembering, accepting and moving towards hope. The narrative transition from winter to spring offers comfort and emotional survival to the ARMY collective.

Finally, Anjan Chatterjee's Neuroaesthetics sheds light on why *Spring Day* is deeply moving. The evocative melody and imagery activate memory and reward systems, connecting neural pathways that can help process feelings of nostalgia, connectedness and emotional catharsis. This embodied experience makes the ARMY reflect and comfort them, making them a part of the larger healing process.

Thus, *Spring Day* stands as a cognitive-affective tool, where narrative, affect, and embodied experience combine to help ARMY to process grief, reconstruct identity and find hope together.

B. LOVE MYSELF

Love Myself stands out as one of BTS's most powerful songs because it speaks directly to the listener's need for self-love and personal healing.

"I'm opening my eyes in the darkness/ When my heartbeat sounds unfamiliar/ I'm looking at you in the mirror/ The fear-ridden eyes, asking the question" (Love Myself, BTS, 2018)

The beginning lines itself sets a personal tone, portraying common human experiences of confronting one's fear and insecurities in solitude. Looking it through Brian Massumi's Affect Theory (2002), these lines activate affective intensity in the listeners. They allow ARMY to feel recognized, supported, and less alone in their struggles. As the lyrics progress, they speak to the heart of the listener who struggles:

"Loving myself might be harder/ Than loving someone else, let's admit it/ The standards you made are more strict for yourself." (Love Myself, BTS, 2018)

BTS, through this music, confronts harsh self-judgements, and societal pressure that individuals carry that make self-love and acceptance impossible. The song do not promise quick solution but offer an empathetic and realistic acknowledgment of the struggles faced in loving and accepting oneself. The part of RM (Kim Namjoon of BTS) in the song, *"It's just*

that loving myself doesn't require anyone else's permission," (Love Myself, BTS, 2018) show the act of looking, caring and loving oneself over others when the society always guided to put others' happiness and comfort over oneself. A real-world example of the song's therapeutic and collective significance is BTS's Love Myself Campaign, in partnership with UNICEF. The campaign goes beyond just promoting the song and actively encourages ARMY and people to love themselves, raise awareness about mental health, and take action against violence. This global initiative stands as an example of the affective power of the song as it functions as more than a lyrical message by becoming a social movement and collective therapeutic practice. The line from the song, *"I should love myself,"* (Love Myself, BTS, 2018) embodies a powerful declaration of self-acceptance and personal healing. Instead of prescribing self-love as an abstract ideal, the lyrics presents itself as a choice that an individual can choose, where one acknowledges one's worth without seeking external validation.

Rita Charon's Narrative Medicine (2006) provide another insight where it emphasizes how storytelling acts as therapeutic practice. In *Love Myself*, the lyric takes a narrative arc of personal struggles regarding the self-love and healing of the members which in turn encourages and make the ARMY feel supported through their own journey. Through this, ARMY also actively reflect on their experience of pain, isolation or insecurity through the lens of lyrics, gradually reshaping their own story towards self-love and acceptance.

Incorporating Louise Rosenblatt's Transactional Reader-Response Theory (1938) provides a deeper understanding of how lyrics operate within the ARMY fandom. Rosenblatt states meaning is not simply embedded in the text or created solely by the reader, but it emerges from the dynamic transaction between the two. In the context of *Love Myself*, BTS provides a narrative from their own experiences of struggles, growth and self-acceptance. Here, the lyrics works as a stimulus to which ARMY respond in their personal way. The feelings, association and memories related with the song is experienced and their responses influence the way in which the text is made sense of.

The transactional process helps ARMY to reflect their challenges with self-love, using BTS's story as a mirror for their experience. The lyric becomes more than word; it becomes an affective conversation between BTS and their listeners. The lyrics also functions as a Narrative Medicine by offering a well-crafted story, providing

space for ARMY to process their emotions. Importantly, Anjan Chatterjee's Neuroaesthetics (2013) provide insights into why *Love Myself* feels so therapeutic. The repetitive affirmations and soothing melody help activate neural pathways, making ARMY emotionally uplifted and significant. Rather than feeling isolated in pain, the lyric makes the ARMY feel supported through their healing journey, reflecting Rosenblatt's theory, Brian Massumi's notion of affect and Anjan Chatterjee's Neuroaesthetics as an intensity that circulate beyond the individual thought.

A. MAGIC SHOP

Magic Shop is a song written for the ARMY. When they are feeling down and tired and want to escape from the reality, they can open the door of the magic shop, to find the seven members waiting to support and console them. The song is inspired by James Doty's autobiography, *Into the Magic Shop: A Neurosurgeon's Quest to Discover the Mysteries of the Brain and the Secrets of the Heart* and its concept of opening up one's heart and loving oneself and others. *Magic Shop* stands for a therapeutic, metaphorical space where pain is confronted and transformed into hope or happiness. The pre-chorus part sung by Jin (Kim Seokjin of BTS) and Jimin (Park Jimin of BTS):

"On days I hate being myself / On days I want to disappear forever/ Let's make a door inside your heart/ Open the door and this place will await/ It's okay to believe, the Magic Shop will comfort you." (Magic Shop, BTS, 2018)

The lyric invites ARMY, not just to escape reality, but to engage in an affective process of self-compassion and transformation. The Magic Shop functions as an affective object that circulates emotional intensity between BTS and ARMY. The "door inside your heart" metaphor implies that emotional relief does not come from external comfort rather it emerges from within, encouraging a pre-conscious, embodied encounter with the self. The chorus lines of Jungkook (Jeon Jungkook of BTS) and Jimin (Park Jimin of BTS), "You'll be alright, oh, this here is the magic shop" (Magic Shop, BTS, 2018) is a gentle, yet firm reassurance to the ARMY that they are supported and consoled with care and love of the seven members. The lyrical space is transformed into a place of healing, where vulnerability is met with acceptance and pain with dealt with care.

From the perspective of Affect Theory, the emotional power of the lyric lies in how it creates an intensity felt directly in the body, allowing the ARMY to experience

a sense of relief and hope without the need for rational interpretation. In addition, Juslin and Västfjäll's (2008) concept of emotional contagion helps in explaining how *Magic Shop* spreads affect beyond the individual listener to the collective fandom experience. Emotional Contagion can be referred to the process whereby a listener perceives the emotional expression of the music and then "mimics" it internally.

In *Magic Shop*, the soft, soothing vocals work together with the lyrical message to evoke feelings of comfort, reassurance and calm in the listener. This experience transcends beyond a personal interpretation, thereby turning into a shared affective encounter by the ARMY. From the viewpoint of Louise Rosenblatt's Transactional Reader-Response Theory (1938), the relationship between BTS and ARMY becomes one of mutual meaning-making. ARMY do not merely listen rather they respond to it and weave metaphors into their personal narratives. The magic shop becomes a mental and affective space where ARMY turn to during moments of struggle, a symbolic refuge co-created by artist and listener. This can be seen in the line: "So, show me, (I'll show you.)" (Magic Shop, BTS, 2018)

Moreover, by applying Rita Charon's Narrative Medicine (2006), it offers a different perspective of how the lyrics of *Magic Shop* performs as therapeutic narrative. The lyrics carry the struggle of each member trying to feel comforted and finding themselves inside their magic shop, thereby guiding the ARMY to do the same to seek comfort and solace. The line: "So, show me, (I'll show you.)" (Magic Shop, BTS, 2018), shows how BTS members ask the ARMY to release their vulnerability and pain and in return, they will show their pain and vulnerability, thereby sharing their insecurities to comfort and support each other. Towards the end of the song, the lines: "You gave me the best of me, so you'll give you the best of you" (Magic Shop, BTS, 2018) shows the reciprocal care and self-empowerment. It suggests that the compassion BTS extends to the ARMY through their music gets mirrored by the ARMY themselves, inspiring them to offer the same kindness and love back to themselves.

Thus, this particular lyric reinforces the paper's core argument that BTS lyrics act as a cognitive-affective tool that support ARMY in their journey toward self-acceptance, personal healing, and collective resilience.

B. MIKROKOSMOS

Mikrokosmos is the third song on the BTS's 2019 album *Map of the Soul: Persona*. The title itself is a reference from the ancient Greek philosophy of microcosm, the perception of viewing humans as their own little world. The song celebrates the individual significance within a vast universe, with lyric, "Cause you're a big existence, Let us shine" (Mikrokosmos, BTS, 2019). This metaphor works as an affective affirmation of worth and collective belonging. Instead of focusing on the personal struggle or the self-love, *Mikrokosmos* helps the ARMY to recognise their unique significance within a broader collective, thereby creating a therapeutic space where personal meaning is discovered.

"Perhaps the reason this night looks so beautiful/ Is not because of these stars or light, but us." (Mikrokosmos, BTS, 2019).

This powerful line shifts the focus from external metaphors of stars to the idea that the light comes from the people themselves. It subtly yet profoundly suggests that hope, strength and meaning are cultivated within individual and shared across the community. From the perspective of Affect Theory, the power of *Mikrokosmos* lies in how the affect works pre-consciously through the song. The soft tone, gentle rhythm and comforting lyrics create an atmosphere of calm and reassurance that fans feel in their body without needing intellectual interpretation. The affect flows between BTS and ARMY, allowing a collective experience where feelings of hope, connection and affirmation are shared emotionally without explanations.

In the viewpoint of Louise Rosenblatt's Transactional Reader-Response Theory, the relationship between the lyrics and the listener becomes a dynamic dialogue. ARMY do not passively consume the music rather they engage with it. The metaphor of 'people are stars' becomes a personal affirmation leading every individual to reflect, "I am a star with my own light." This transactional process allows the song to be deeply personal. By viewing *Mikrokosmos* through Rita Charon's Narrative medicine offers another layer of interpretation by placing a function on the song as a therapeutic narrative that help ARMY reflect their own journey of self-acceptance. The lines, "One history in one person / One star in one person / 7 billion different worlds." (Mikrokosmos, BTS, 2019) portrays the individual life as valuable and unique. The therapeutic process goes from feeling insignificant to understanding one's own light is part of a larger constellation.

Juslin and Västfjäll's (2008) concept of emotional contagion elucidates how the mood of the song spread among the fandom. The delicate harmonies and soothing vocals evoke feelings of comfort and belonging. The song is also rich in visual imagery, which plays a key role in affective experience. Phrases such as "Twinkling starlight building with blinking light. We're shining brightly, In our rooms, in our own stars," (Mikrokosmos, BTS, 2019) paints a vivid mental picture that let ARMY perceive themselves as star in their own constellation. Moreover, the use of episodic memory is central to the song's affective power. Lines like, "I remember the night sky I saw when I was young," (Mikrokosmos, BTS, 2019) urges the listener to reflect on personal memories of wonder, innocence or moments of hope. This helps ARMY to revisit their past experience in the light of present resilience.

In through the idea of Neuroaesthetics by Anjan Chatterjee, the song also activates reward pathways and self-referential brain space reinforcing the embodied experience of being a valued part of a larger whole.

Thus, *Mikrokosmos* becomes a perfect example of how BTS lyrics moves from poetic imagery to become cognitive-affective tools that support emotional survival. By combining all the theoretical framework and analysing the song, the song becomes a therapeutic space where personal and collective narratives of hope, self-worth, and resilience are continually co-created.

Through the textual analysis of *Spring Day*, *Love Myself*, *Magic Shop* and *Mikrokosmos*, it is clear that BTS lyrics function more than just an artistic expression, instead, serve as cognitive-affective tools that facilitate personal and collective healing, memory activation, and identity formation in ARMY. The combination of Affect Theory (Brian Massumi), Narrative Medicine (Rita Charon), Transactional Reader-Response Theory (Louise Rosenblatt), emotional contagion, vivid imagery and episodic memory (Juslin & Västfjäll) and Neuroaesthetic engagement (Anjan Chatterjee) creates a dynamic space where ARMY find not only reflection but also share hope and resilience.

Each song draws a unique narrative that helps fan process their emotions, whether it be confronting separation in *Spring Day*, embracing self-worth in *Love Myself*, seeking refuge in *Magic Shop*, or discovering individual significance in *Mikrokosmos*. Instead of working as separate entity, they take part in a broader

affective circuit that flows between BTS and ARMY, producing collective belonging and emotional survival in the digital age.

This analysis thus sets the stage for the conclusion by showing how BTS's intentional storytelling fosters therapeutic engagement, placing popular music as a powerful medium for emotional resilience, self-reflection and community building.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the paper provides insights about how BTS lyrics function as cognitive-affective tools that support personal healing, identity formation, and collective resilience within the ARMY fandom. Through textual analysis of *Spring Day*, *Love Myself*, *Magic Shop* and *Mikrokosmos*, the study displays how these selected songs offer more than entertainment, like creating structured narrative spaces for ARMY, where the fans can engage in processing their self-reflection, emotional regulation, and meaning-making.

Drawing theoretical support from Brian Massumi's Affect Theory (2002), the analysis proves that the affective intensity of the lyrics flow between BTS and ARMY, creating a pre-conscious emotional experience that are felt in the body rather than just exist as thought. The concepts of emotional contagion, visual imagery and episodic memory by Juslin and Västfjäll, explains how the music with its tone, rhythm and crafted metaphors evoke feelings of comfort and hope. The soothing vocal delivery and evocative images simulate ARMY to experience a shared emotional state of calmness, reassurance and connection.

Analysing the songs through Rita Charon's Narrative Medicine reveals that these lyrics work as therapeutic narratives, offering ARMY a space or a way to re-author their self-narrative toward healing and resilience. Similarly, Louise Rosenblatt's Transactional Reader-Response Theory (1938) shows how ARMY and BTS engage with the narrative and create a space for healing and support. Most importantly, Anjan Chatterjee's Neuroaesthetics helps in explaining why these songs are so emotionally powerful, as their melodies and metaphoric language create neural pathways, reward systems and autobiographical memory networks, making the experience reflective, embodied and rewarding.

This research contributes to a deeper level of understanding of fandom practices by positioning BTS lyrics as a space where affect, narrative and cognition

intersect. The ARMY's engagement with these songs, and their popularity reflect the affective power of the lyrics, which help in emotional survival and identity reconstruction in digital spaces.

Conclusively, *Spring Day*, *Magic Shop*, *Love Myself*, and *Mikrokosmos* shows how popular music, through affective and narrative structures, becomes a therapeutic resource for millions of listeners who are navigating through mental challenges. In doing so, BTS does not just entertain people rather they co-create spaces of healing, resilience and collective hope with ARMY.

Works Cited

BTS - *Answer: Love Myself (English Translation)*. (2018, August 24). Genius. <https://genius.com/Genius-english-translations-bts-answer-love-myself-english-translation-lyrics>

BTS - *소우주 (Mikrokosmos) (English Translation)*. (2019, April 12). Genius. <https://genius.com/Genius-english-translations-bts-mikrokosmos-english-translation-lyrics>

Why is music important in pop culture? (2024, September 11). The Word Harbor. <https://thewordharbor.com/why-is-music-important-2436/>

Charon, R. (n.d.). *Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness*. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from https://api.pageplace.de/preview/DT0400.9780199759859_A23609472/preview-9780199759859_A23609472.pdf

Genius. (2018, May 18). *BTS - Magic Shop (English Translation)*. Genius. <https://genius.com/Genius-english-translations-bts-magic-shop-english-translation-lyrics>

Genius. (2017, February 13). *BTS - 봄날 (Spring Day) (English Translation)*. Genius. <https://genius.com/Genius-english-translations-bts-spring-day-english-translation-lyrics>

Hennessy, S., Janata, P., Ginsberg, T., Kaplan, J., & Habibi, A. (2025). Music-Evoked Nostalgia Activates Default Mode and Reward Networks Across the Lifespan. *Human Brain Mapping*, 46(4), e70181. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hbm.70181>

Juslin, P. N., & Västfjäll, D. (2008). Emotional responses to music: The need to consider underlying

mechanisms. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 31(5), 559–575. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0140525x08005293>

Lazore, C. (2020, January 4). “Artists for Healing”: Anxieties of Youth, Storytelling, and Healing through BTS. ResearchGate; unknown. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349104749>
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349104749>
[Artists for Healing Anxieties of Youth Storytelling and Healing through BTS](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349104749)

Mabirizi Kawuma Baluku, & Kiu Publication Extension. (2024). *Art and Neuroaesthetics: Understanding the Brain's Response to Art*. 3(2), 6–11. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383083489>
[Art and Neuroaesthetics Understanding the Brain](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383083489)

Mambrol, N. (2016, October 28). *Transactional Reader Response Theory*. *Literary Theory and Criticism*. <https://literariness.org/2016/10/28/transactional-reader-response-theory/>

Brian Massumi. (n.d.). https://monoskop.org/images/d/dc/Massumi_Brian_Parables_for_the_Virtual_Movement_Affect_Sensation_Post-Contemporary_Interventions.pdf