

General Group Notes

Random notes on participant's presentations and concerns

Alice

Following celebrity gossip... transmedia and multinarrativity, artists and their management are doing to diversify income streams and span multiple grounds. Here's the band that have done a soundtrack on a videogame; bundling things... Freer definitions of transmedia... how certain artists use celebrity gossip and media in their own songs; another form of media – performance of their own lives – form of transmedia?

Lindsay

Media musicologist; looked to film music in the past, nowadays more on video game music. Contemporary audiovisual aesthetics, looking how video games are becoming more cinematic; affective experiences instead of narrative... engagement with different forms of media becoming multiexperience

Pascal

Transmedia digital culture; understand how identities are constructed in digital culture in terms of transmedia. Pop identities, digital music cultures and transmedia worlds crossed in the development of identities, stardom...

Case studies such as video games, thinking about this format and also virtual star/idols in social media...

Joana

Convergence between video games and film from a musical and narrative perspective reaching out to the *cinematic*. Fandom, epic and music as a cinematic device on narrative-based games and other *filmic* games...

Concerned with the challenges that transmedia poses for us, musicologists and digital researchers, is everything transmedial today?

Ideas...

Looking at transmedia bottom up? All creators can be fans...

Massive blur between production, creation, overlapping of media, the abundance of stuff can be overwhelming; how people interact and engage with video games (and other media) can be useful to think about practices of engagement

Can also make sense to understand what transmedia is; the term is blurry and it can be helpful to articulate what it can be; also the idea of fans becoming personas

What is transmedia? Is it different from mixed media? Transformative fan practices; multiple readings and forms of engagements at a personal level regarding narrativity...

Should we think about (new) definitions? Can it be summarised to different prefixes? Hypermedia, multimedia?

More than the media itself, could it be the platform(s) where it is spreaded and engaged with?... Transmedia as a huge umbrella where media can be separated (and intricately interlinked) with the (repeated) platforms and ramifications

Engage with the critical side/theoretical aspects of how we understand the limits of the term *transmedia*.

Negotiating identities and (musical) personas according to the media format, the required performativity and the consequent *affective* engagement

Single person with multiple personas can be a natural consequence of the abundance of material online; fragmented presence in multiple spaces according to their identity, tastes, etc...

We're shifting towards the need of experiences, rather than single 'products' (narratives, musical, etc.), and how music plays a part in those.

Useful to think about the skillsets we're familiar with (such as audiovisual analysis rather than ethnographic research); how can we create a team of different approaches.

- **Suggestion for reaching out to 1-2 main questions on transmedia and work collaboratively toward that goal through different case studies/concerns, or the same case study from different angles.**

To do(?):

- Summarise these concerns in maybe 1-2 more questions?
- Sketch up an abstract/paragraph of these brainstorming questions to walk towards a project
- Propose case studies/your personal angles to collaborate with the team

Research Design Template

Working Project Title	IS TRANSMEDIA LIFE
Group Member Names	<i>Alice Rose, Lindsay Carter, Joana Freitas and Pascal Rudolph</i>
Background and Aims	<i>Outline the background, context, and aim(s) of the project and/or case study.</i>
Research Question(s)	How is transmediality encouraging the production of (musical) affective experiences as today's artistic paradigm? What are the challenges presented to internet researchers regarding the abundance and spread of musical content in multiple (plat)forms? How are musical personas / identities expressed/remediated / negotiated through transmedia?
Relevant Research Literature	<i>Summarize research literature relevant to the prospective project, any recurring themes/arguments/assumptions in this work, and any other general literature that might influence the development of the project.</i> <i>Think of this like a miniature literature review.</i>

Methods and Data	<i>Outline the methods and approaches you will take along with any datasets you will be working with. Explain your method(s) of data collection [interviews? surveys? web scraping? etc.?] and analysis, as well as any tools that will be used to support this. Describe your overall methodological rationale [what kind of research are you doing and why?].</i>
Preliminary or Anticipated Findings	<i>List any working hypotheses, findings, or impressions.</i>
Importance and Implications	<i>Why is this project important and what might its implications be in terms of the research area and/or the study of music and online cultures as a whole?</i>
References	Tosca & Klastrup (2020): <i>Transmedial Worlds in Everyday Life. Networked Reception, Social Media and Fictional Worlds</i> Fritsch, Melanie (2016): Beat it! – Playing the »King of Pop« in Video Games. In: <i>Music Video Games: Performance, Politics, and Play</i>. Hg. von Michael Austin. New York et al.: Bloomsbury (Approaches to Digital Game Studies, 4). S. 153–176. Hansen Kai Arne. <i>(Re)Reading Pop Personae: A Transmedial Approach to Studying the Multiple Construction of Artist Identities</i>. <i>Twentieth-Century Music</i>. 2019;16(3):501-529. doi:10.1017/S1478572219000276 Kassabian, Anahid. <i>Ubiquitous Listening: Affect, Attention, and Distributed Subjectivity</i>. 1st ed. University of California Press, 2013. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt2855s2.

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Group work

1. How is transmediality encouraging the production of (musical) affective experiences as today's artistic paradigm?
2. What are the challenges presented to internet researchers regarding the abundance and spread of musical content in multiple (plat)forms?

3. How are musical personas / identities expressed/remediated / negotiated through transmedia?

General discussion:

- Question 2 as a natural byproduct of answering the others
- Let's not get too broad with transmediality
- At the moment, we have the why? Of what we're looking at, but not the who, what & where

Pieces of media that were mentioned

Life of strange series - DJ, with comic book, podcast

Last of Us - Ellie & her guitar

Multi-species tiktok musicking

Sea of Thieves

Cyberpunk game / anime, had music come out of it

BTS mobile game - gamifying fan-artist relations

Transmedial franchises are so big, it's impossible to consume all of it, but where does the researcher start?

Do we need to consume everything?

Schedule:

1/7 getting reacquainted

2/7 searching for case studies (half hour individual research, half hour communicate/present)

6/7 preparation for group share

7/7 where are we going after this

Criteria:

Joanna, this is what we came up in terms of what would be interesting to us, and what we would like to look at, feel free to add to either group!

Low-negotiable

- Across multiple media
- Includes original music (and a 'real musician')

Bonus

- User takes on a persona, musicks
- Video game
- Active fan community

Types of music-related video games:

- Music creator games (minecraft, dreams)
- Rhythm game (guitar hero, eg)
- Industry-themed games
- Dating sims with idols
- Open world with instruments (sea of thieves, lord of the rings)
- Soundtrack/'DJ' your own game

- BTS Games:

Overview: <https://bts.fandom.com/wiki/Games>

Transmedia as a product of late-stage capitalism / intense commodification <>
parasocial relationships with a star

Literature areas:

BTS / Transmedia Storytelling:

Marketing / Production in Transmedia (& Authenticity?)

Ryan Bengtsson, Linda, and Jessica Edlom. "Mapping Transmedia Marketing in the Music Industry: A Methodology." *Media and Communication*, vol. 9, no. 3, Aug. 2021, pp. 164–74, <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v9i3.4064>.

Jenkins, Henry (2006): 'Searching for the Origami Unicorn' in *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York & London: New York University Press.

Fan - Artist Relations

Group identity in Fandom & Stan Culture

Consumption in Mass Media

Affective Economics & Idol Culture

Galbraith, P. W. and J. G. Karlin (2019) 'The Affective Economics of the Idol Industry' in *AKB48*. New York, NY, Bloomsbury Academic.

Jenkins, Henry (2006): 'Buying into American Idol' in *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York & London: New York University Press.

Possible methodologies

- Online discussion of game
- Textual reading of game itself
- YT interviews (for 'persona')
- 'BTS Become Game Developers' documentary on YT

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Musical transmedia gamification?

Online Resources:

Google play store of two available games in the UK:
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/developer?id=HYBE+IM+Co.,+Ltd>.

Rhythm Hive

NB 'Hive' = HYBE, BTS' label (pronounced the same in Korean). All the artists featured are with the label.

Korean-language wiki: <https://namu.wiki/w/Rhythm%20Hive>

YouTube account (ft videos from groups involved):

<https://www.youtube.com/@RhythmHiveOfficial>

인더섬 **with BTS / BTS Island:**

NB ‘인더섬 with BTS’ = *indeoseom* with BTS = in the island (*seom*) with BTS

Korean-language wiki for BTS Island: (includes links to a guide & development notes)

<https://namu.wiki/w/%EC%9D%B8%EB%8D%94%EC%84%AC%20with%20BTS>

Name is a reference to the HYBE television show 인더숲 시리즈 (in the forest), an idol ‘healing reality TV show’, where BTS and other HYBE-signed bands go to the forest to relax (i.e., excessive PR)

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BTS_In_the_Soop)

YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@btsislandintheseom3031>

BTS World:

Korean-language wiki for BTS world:

<https://namu.wiki/w/BTS%20WORLD>

BTS World Official YT channel:

https://www.youtube.com/@BTSW_official

BTS World Original Soundtrack:

<https://open.spotify.com/album/2SVMQ9dcWrlZj4vmKBPiE6?si=OrDS7FrrRg-O4kGjdsixJQ>

‘Heartbeat’ MV (with English captions):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKSxbt-O6TA>

BTS World Game Trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sztf6ppbqQE>

BTS Universe Story

Korean-language wiki

<https://namu.wiki/w/BTS%20Universe%20Story>

Abstract

Pascal:

Exploring Transmedial Identity Co-Construction: A Case Study of BTS Mobile Games

This paper delves into the dynamics of transmedial identity co-construction (musical persona), with a focus on the transformative impact of BTS mobile games. Employing a case study approach, our investigation scrutinizes how the intersection of ludomusicology and popular music studies elucidates to the transmedial construction of the multifaceted identities associated with the K-Pop band BTS. We engage with the tension existing between the concept of transmedia as a product of late-stage capitalism (commodification of cultural phenomena) and the parasocial relationship these games afford with the star, conveying an impression of authenticity and intimacy while simultaneously strengthening the fans' group identity. On one hand, these games enable users to interact with their idols; on the other hand, and often within the same game, they also allow users to play as their star (and to perform their personae). In this manner, these games can be understood as an intensified example of what Jenkins refers to as affective economics, wherein the ideal consumer is active and emotionally engaged. We investigate the nature of these connections, considering how they are influenced by transmedia and gaming practices, as well as the broader socio-economic landscape.

Alice:

- Idol groups in south east Asia are transmedial by definition:

- As well as releasing music, groups typically act, make TV and radio appearances, blog (both text and video) and sell a litany of merchandise
- In the past few years, HYBE (the record label who manage BTS) have begun releasing mobile games that use idols' music and image, such as BTS World, BTS Island and Rhythm Nation, a novel, match-3 and rhythm matching game respectively
- While in some ways a logical conclusion of diversifying income streams (the majority of the games have in-game purchases), these games also allow fans to interact with and as fictional versions of the BTS members, thus strengthening the affective ties between them
- Through a reading of the games and associated media, we will explore how BTS articulate their persona across media in a way that is recognisable and authentic to fans, and what role this plays in the 'affective economics' of idol culture
- Crucially, while BTS produce promotional content for the games, and sometimes help with elements of their production (whether soundtrack, or by 'becoming game developers) the personas that fans interact with are clearly fictional, and distinct from the members as people
- As such, any affective link created (or commoditised) is not between fan and idol, but between fans and the idols' constructed transmedial persona
- Adding a transmedial perspective to Galbraith & Karlin's critique of idol culture in Japan,

Lindsay:

Using the K-pop idol group BTS as case study to explore the current transmedial landscape of popular music star persona construction, imagination, and consumption. Drawing on scholarship on BTS as transmedial and transnational stars, this work will focus on the **gamification of popular music fan culture**. It will ...

Drawing on audiovisual analysis of the games **BTS Island and Rhythm Hive**, as well as associated audiovisual media including YouTube channel content related

to the games, BTS livestreaming as BTS Run, online discussion of the games etc. This work will apply ludomusicological frameworks around identity and musicking to the texts to consider the manner in which the BTS personas are remediated and negotiated through different media. The games can be understood as part of an increasingly transmedial landscape that is a product of late-capitalism, as well as vehicles for parasocial interaction contribute / articulate such affective economies.

Joana:

From plush toys to special McDonald's menus, pastel hairstyles to adventure comic books, South Korean K-pop band BTS are an inescapable presence in today's media landscape. In addition to their global commercial success as one of the most influential music groups, putting Kpop at the forefront of charts and massive sales (Lie 2022) and contributing to the ongoing phenomenon of Korean wave exports, their virality, spreadability (Jenkins 2013) and transmediality are largely due to the fandom activity that surrounds and follows them. Users play a central role in online community engagement, creative production and remediation, and are inseparable from the participatory culture that defines the current paradigm of digital sociabilities across a wide range of platforms. BTS fans are grouped in the famous ARMY, cultivating an even wider spread of recognition and popularity of the 7-man band's soft power through affective labour (Proctor 2021) and active participatory fandom (Bruns 2008, Jenkins 2006) in the most diverse range of platforms, while shaping the multiple forms of engagement with BTS's musical production (Lee and Nguyen 2020).

Across the multiple media that permeates BTS's online spheres - from documentaries to social media, music videos reactions to novels - video games are a particular example of transmedial performativity that contribute to the band's Kpop's ubiquity while gamifying yet another form of artist/user relationship as well as popular music fan culture in a broader sense.

This work will apply ludomusicological frameworks around identity and musicking to the texts to consider the manner in which the BTS personas are remediated and negotiated through different media. We engage with the tension existing between the concept of transmedia as a product of late-stage capitalism (commodification of cultural phenomena) and the parasocial relationship these games afford with the star, conveying an impression of authenticity and intimacy while simultaneously strengthening the fans' group identity. On one hand, these games enable users to interact with their idols; on the other hand, and often within the same game, they also allow users to play as their star (and to perform their personae). In this manner, these games can be understood as an intensified example of what Jenkins refers to as affective economics, wherein the ideal consumer is active and emotionally engaged. We investigate the nature of these connections, considering how they are influenced by transmedia and gaming practices, as well as the broader socio-economic landscape. Framing transmedia as a dynamic framework to analyse the co-construction of identity, star and musical persona, this paper will focus on the mobile games *BTS Island* and *Rythm Hive* - as well as associated audiovisual media including YouTube content related to the games, *Run BTS* livestreams and online discussion around both titles - as both affective commodities and vehicles of authenticity and intimacy between users and idols.

Abstract only document:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eK9He8vuJZZBNzJECIYqVDuJCo6e7gw2akVj7O4zCTM/edit?usp=sharing>