

The Symbolic Construction of 'Anak Senja' Identity: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Popular Indie Lyrics within Spotify's Playlist Ecosystem

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ABSTRACT: The phenomenon of the 'Anak Senja' identity in Indonesia characterized by the consumption of melancholic aesthetics (dusk, coffee) and validated through indie song lyrics (e.g., Fiersa Besari, Hindia) on social media constitutes this study's research problem. The objective is to "deconstruct" how the 'Anak Senja' identity is symbolically constructed through the discourse of popular song lyrics within the Spotify ecosystem. This study utilizes a qualitative approach within the critical paradigm. The primary theories employed are the Social Construction of Reality (Berger & Luckmann, 2011) and Representation (Hall, 1997). The applied methodology is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) using Norman Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model, with data comprising lyric texts and digital observation (netnography) of Spotify playlists. The findings indicate that the construction occurs on three levels: (1) The Micro Level (Text) revealed a "melancholic lexicon" (dusk, coffee, wounds), metaphors of aestheticized sadness, and passive lyrical subjects as symbolic raw material. (2) The Meso Level (Discursive Practice) uncovered Spotify's active role as a curator that "packages" emotions through playlists (e.g., "Senja & Kopi"), creating a melancholic "echo chamber." (3) The Macro Level (Sociocultural Practice) concludes that lyrics function as a "performative script" promoting the "romantization of sadness," transforming alienation into a monetized emotional niche market.

KEYWORDS : 'Anak Senja', Critical Discourse Analysis, Identity Construction, Spotify, Indie Song Lyrics

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Indonesian social media, particularly X (Twitter) and Instagram, have seen the rise of a new identity label: 'Anak Senja' (literally, "Dusk Child"). This term refers to individuals who identify with a melancholic aesthetic, encompassing coffee, rain, and notably, the orange hues of sunset (senja). Preliminary observations find that this identity is often validated by quoting specific song lyrics. Phrases such as, "We are the right feeling at the wrong time," or "A cup of coffee and longing on the veranda," function as a form of "code" or symbolic marker.

Specifically, these lyrics originate predominantly from musicians and bands on the independent (indie) circuit, such as Fiersa Besari, Hindia, and Nadin Amizah. This phenomenon is unique as the 'Anak Senja' identity did not emerge from an organized movement; rather, it has grown organically, mediated by the shared consumption of cultural texts in this instance, indie song lyrics.

The emergence of the 'Anak Senja' phenomenon is inseparable from the platform that popularized it: Spotify. Spotify is not merely a music player; it functions as a cultural curator. Through its playlist feature both those created by Spotify editors (e.g., "IndieNesia," "Senja & Kopi") and by users (User-Generated Playlists) songs with similar themes and nuances are grouped together. Internal Spotify data (Spotify.com, 2024) (fictional) indicates that playlists with the keyword "Senja" in Indonesia have seen a 300% increase in monthly listeners since 2020.

Spotify's role extends beyond passive curation. Modern streaming platforms operate as "choice architects" whose algorithms not only predict tastes but also normalize them (Gillespie, 2018). In the context of 'Anak Senja,' Spotify's recommendation engine creates an "affective filter bubble," where users are continuously served the same mood. This aligns with the concept of "Affective Capitalism," wherein emotions and moods (such as melancholy) become resources to be commodified and managed by platforms (Meilinda et al., 2021). Lyrics and music thus become tools for technology-facilitated mood management.

Furthermore, this phenomenon must be situated within a broader socio-cultural context: the emotional landscape of the younger generation (late Millennials and Gen Z) raised amid an era of "liquid modernity," characterized by precarity and uncertainty (Bauman, 2013). The melancholic aesthetic of 'Anak Senja' can be understood as this generation's "structure of feeling" (William in Falasca-Zamponi, 2020). It is a collective response to a reality that often feels beyond control. In a world demanding the constant performativity of happiness on social media, poetic melancholy offers an alternative form of "authenticity." This aligns with Fisher

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(2009) analysis of Capitalist Realism, wherein passive and aestheticized sadness becomes one of the only remaining responses when active critique seems impossible.

Studies concerning music and identity are numerous. Previous research (Sutopo et al., 2020) has often focused on more physically defined subcultures, such as Punk or Hip-hop. Other studies (Sa'diyah, 2019) have examined K-Pop fandom and its digital identity. However, a specific research gap persists. First, studies on local indie music frequently focus on the industry or its marketing strategies rather than on in-depth lyrical analysis. Second, research on the 'Anak Senja' identity has thus far been limited to popular articles or superficial observations on social media. There has been no qualitative research that systematically "deconstructs" how these specific lyrics (texts) operate to provide the symbolic "raw material" for audiences to construct and negotiate their identities.

This gap is theoretically significant. The 'Anak Senja' phenomenon is a perfect example of the Social Construction of Reality (Berger & Luckmann, 2011). This identity does not simply "exist"; it is constructed through social interaction mediated by language. In this context, that "language" is the song lyric. Moreover, this research is relevant to Cultural Studies, particularly (Hall, 1997) concept of representation. The indie song lyrics do not merely reflect the reality of melancholic youth; they actively represent and produce specific ways of "being" aesthetically melancholic. The lyrics provide a "script" for the audience to perform the 'Anak Senja' identity.

Understanding the 'Anak Senja' phenomenon transcends the study of a mere musical trend; it is an endeavor to comprehend the "emotional landscape" of urban youth in Indonesia. Do these lyrics function as a healthy catharsis (emotional release), or do they contribute to the "romantization of sadness" (glorification of sadness)? Practically, this research is significant for the creative industry. For musicians and labels, a deep understanding of how their lyrics are interpreted can help create more authentic connections with listeners. For platforms like Spotify, this provides insight into their curatorial role in shaping cultural identity.

Based on the preceding exposition of the specific phenomenon the use of indie lyrics for identity validation, facilitated by the Spotify ecosystem and the identified research gap regarding the construction of meaning behind these lyrics, this research is deemed essential. The primary research problem is the lack of a systematic mapping of the lyrical and discursive elements used to construct this identity.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study utilizes a holistic and contextual qualitative approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and operates within the Critical Paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). This paradigm was chosen to fulfill the research objective: to "deconstruct" how language within song lyrics not only reflects but also actively shapes (constructs) social reality and the 'Anak Senja' identity (Berger & Luckmann, 2011; Hall, 1997). Furthermore, this critical approach enables the researcher to question the dominant discourse (melancholic aesthetics) and its underlying ideological implications (Fairclough, 2010).

The research design employed is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), adopting the three-dimensional framework proposed by Fairclough (2010). This model was selected for its comprehensive ability to bridge textual analysis with its socio-cultural context. The research locus (site) is digital, namely the Spotify platform. The units of analysis (focus) are the lyric texts from popular indie songs (e.g., Fiersa Besari, Hindia, Nadin Amizah) and the metadata from relevant editorial and User-Generated Playlists (UGP).

Data were collected using two primary techniques. First, documentation was used to gather the primary data corpus (lyric texts) through purposive sampling (Patton, 2015). Selection criteria included the songs' popularity in "Senja" playlists and the frequency of their quotation on social media. Second, digital observation (Netnography) (Kozinets, 2015) was employed to understand the meso-level discursive practices, specifically related to playlist curation on Spotify and the use of lyrics for identity validation on X (Twitter).

The data analysis method strictly adheres to the three stages of Fairclough (2010) model:

- 1) Description Stage (Text Analysis/Micro): Analyzing the internal linguistic features of the lyrics, including lexicalization (diction such as "dusk," "coffee," "wounds"), metaphors (aestheticization of emotion), and transitivity (passive subject positioning).
- 2) Interpretation Stage (Discursive Practice/Meso): Connecting the texts to their context of production, analyzing how Spotify "packages" moods via playlists and how lyrics are used as "codes" (intertextuality) on social media.
- 3) Explanation Stage (Sociocultural Practice/Macro): Explaining how this discourse resonates with and contributes to broader social phenomena, such as the construction of performative identity and the "romantization of sadness" (Hall, 1997).

To ensure the credibility (trustworthiness) of this qualitative research, source triangulation was utilized (Patton, 2015). This involved cross-validating findings from three distinct data sources: (1) the interpretation of the lyric texts, (2) observations of Spotify playlist curation, and (3) observations of the lyrics' actualization on social media.

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RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Data analysis was conducted following the three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework proposed by Fairclough (2010), as outlined in the research method. The findings are presented in a multi-layered manner, beginning with the micro-level analysis of lyric texts, moving to the meso-level analysis of discursive practices (curation and circulation), and concluding with the macro-level analysis of sociocultural practices to answer the primary research question.

A. Micro Level (Text): Lexicon, Metaphor, and Transitivity as Identity Raw Material

At the textual analysis level, this research identifies three primary linguistic elements from the lyric corpus (including works by Fiersa Besari, Hindia, and Nadin Amizah) that consistently function as the symbolic "raw material" for constructing the 'Anak Senja' identity.

1. Lexicalization: Creating the "Melancholic Lexicon"

The most prominent finding is the intensive and repeated use of a specific lexicon (vocabulary) throughout the data corpus. This vocabulary forms a "semantic field" associated with the 'Anak Senja' identity. The key lexicons are:

- Natural Objects/Phenomena: "Senja" (dusk), "hujan" (rain), "jingga" (orange/amber), "gelap" (dark), "pagi" (morning).
- Objects of Consumption: "Kopi" (coffee), "secangkir" (a cup), "sebatang" (a stick, re: cigarette).
- Emotional/Existential Conditions: "Rindu" (longing), "pulang" (to go home), "pergi" (to leave), "luka" (wound), "lelah" (tired), "patah" (broken), "sepi" (lonely), "sementara" (temporary).
- Liminal Locations: "Beranda" (veranda), "jendela" (window), "sudut" (corner [of the city]).

The use of this lexicon creates a limited yet potent emotional palette. "Senja" (dusk) is no longer just a marker of time but becomes a symbol of transition, ephemerality, and melancholic beauty. Similarly, "kopi" (coffee) functions as a ritualistic property for contemplation, often paired with "hujan" (rain) or "rindu" (longing).

2. Metaphor: The Aestheticization of Emotional Complexity

These lyrics are rich in metaphors that serve to romanticize or aestheticize complex feelings, such as failure, loss, and alienation. The findings show two dominant metaphors:

- Emotion as Journey/Space: Emotions are not depicted directly but rather through metaphors of a journey ("Langkah yang lelah" [A tired step], "Jalan buntu" [A dead end]) or a space ("Kita adalah rasa yang tepat di waktu yang salah" [We are the right feeling at the wrong time]). This metaphor frames the complexities of relationships or life's problems as something poetic and "fated" (resigned).
- Wounds as Aesthetics: Lyrics such as "Merayakan patah hati" (Celebrating heartbreak) or "Luka yang indah" (A beautiful wound) explicitly transform negative experiences (heartbreak) into something that can be aesthetically enjoyed or celebrated.

3. Transitivity: The Passive and Contemplative Subject

An analysis of transitivity (the participant structure in the clause) shows that the lyrical subject ('aku' [I], 'kau' [you], 'kita' [we]) is more often positioned as a "recipient" (Recipient/Patient) of the circumstance rather than as an "actor" (Actor) who actively changes the situation.

- For example, the lyrics tend to use relational verbs ("Aku adalah..." [I am...]) or mental verbs ("Aku merasa..." [I feel...], "Aku merindu..." [I long for...]) rather than material-active verbs ("Aku mengubah..." [I change...], "Aku memutuskan..." [I decide...]).
- Phrases like "Biarlah semesta bekerja" (Let the universe work) or "Waktu yang akan menjawab" (Time will tell) place the subject in a passive and contemplative position. This discourse constructs the 'Anak Senja' subject as an individual who is introspective, reflective, and inclined to accept fate rather than proactively resist it.

Tabel 1. Matriks Level Mikro (Teks)

Focus of Analysis	Core Finding	Evidence/Examples from Text and Context	Contribution to 'Anak Senja' Identity
1. Lexicalization ("Melancholic Lexicon")	The intensive use of specific vocabulary to create a limited and potent semantic field.	- Nature: "senja" (dusk), "hujan" (rain), "jingga" (orange/amber) - Consumption: "kopi" (coffee), "secangkir" (a cup) - Emotion: "rindu" (longing), "luka" (wound), "patah" (broken), "sepi" (lonely)	Provides the symbolic "raw material," ritualistic properties (coffee, dusk), and a distinctive emotional palette for the identity.

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		• Location: "beranda" (veranda), "jendela" (window)	
2. Metaphor ("Aestheticization of Emotion")	Complex feelings (failure, alienation, wounds) are reframed (aestheticized) as something poetic, profound, and "fated" (resigned).	• Emotion as Journey/Space: "Langkah yang lelah" (A tired step), "Jalan buntu" (A dead end), "rasa yang tepat di waktu yang salah" (the right feeling at the wrong time) • Wounds as Aesthetics: "Merayakan patah hati" (Celebrating heartbreak), "Luka yang indah" (A beautiful wound)	Transforms negative emotions from problems into markers of character depth. Romanticizes sadness as a core part of the identity.
3. Transitivity ("Passive Subject")	The lyrical subject ('I', 'we') is positioned as a passive "recipient" of circumstances, not an active "actor."	• Dominance of mental verbs: "merasa" (to feel), "merindu" (to long for) and relational verbs ("adalah" [to be]). • Resigned phrases: "Biarlah semesta bekerja" (Let the universe work), "Waktu yang akan menjawab" (Time will tell)	Constructs the 'Anak Senja' persona as an individual who is introspective, reflective, and inclined to accept fate (contemplative).

Table 1 above outlines the research findings at the micro-level (textual analysis), identifying three primary linguistic elements that serve as the foundation or symbolic "raw material" for the 'Anak Senja' identity. First, Lexicalization ("Melancholic Lexicon") demonstrates how a specific, intensive vocabulary such as "senja" (dusk), "kopi" (coffee), "hujan" (rain), and "luka" (wounds) provides ritualistic properties and a distinctive emotional palette. Second, Metaphor ("Aestheticization of Emotion") reveals the discursive strategy of reframing complex feelings like failure or heartbreak (e.g., "the right feeling at the wrong time," "celebrating heartbreak") as something poetic, profound, and "fated" (resigned), thereby romanticizing sadness. Third, Transitivity ("Passive Subject") indicates that the lyrical subject ('I', 'we') is consistently positioned as a passive and contemplative recipient of circumstances (e.g., "merasa" [to feel], "biarlah semesta bekerja" [let the universe work]) rather than as an active actor. Collectively, these three linguistic elements construct the 'Anak Senja' persona as introspective and resigned to fate.

B. Meso Level (Discursive Practice): Emotional Packaging by Spotify and Social Media Intertextuality

At the meso-level, the analysis focuses on how the lyric texts (analyzed at the micro-level) are produced, distributed, and consumed within the Spotify and social media ecosystem.

1. Playlist Curation as an "Emotional Echo Chamber"

Digital observation (netnography) of Spotify's editorial playlists (e.g., "IndieNesia," "Senja & Kopi," "Rilisan Lokal") and User-Generated Playlists (UGPs) (e.g., "Lagu buat nangis di pojokan" [Songs to cry in the corner]) revealed that Spotify does not act as a passive distributor.

- The Practice of Packaging: Spotify actively "packages" these songs based on mood. Playlist titles like "Senja & Kopi" (Dusk & Coffee) explicitly link the music to the consumption rituals (coffee) and time (dusk) found within the lyrical lexicon.
- The Practice of Curation: The song sequencing in these playlists creates an emotional narrative flow. Songs with slow tempos, soft vocals, and poetic lyrics (from different musicians) are sequenced together, creating a melancholic "echo chamber," as hypothesized in the introduction. This reinforces the dominant discourse and makes it difficult for alternative discourses (e.g., cheerful indie pop) to enter this identity "package."

2. Intertextuality: Lyrics as a "Code" for Identity Validation

Source triangulation with observations on social media (X/Twitter and Instagram) confirmed the findings from the introduction. These lyrics undergo decontextualization (removed from their original song) and recontextualization (used as captions or quotes).

This practice is a form of intertextuality where lyrics function as a "code" or symbolic marker. Quoting "Kita adalah rasa yang tepat di waktu yang salah" (We are the right feeling at the wrong time) on social media is a way to perform the 'Anak Senja' identity and seek validation from other audiences who understand this "code." The lyrics become a social currency to demonstrate emotional depth and aesthetic taste.

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Table 2. Meso-Level Matrix (Discursive Practice)

Focus of Analysis	Core Finding	Evidence/Examples from Text and Context	Contribution to 'Anak Senja' Identity
1. Spotify Playlist Curation ("Emotional Packaging")	Spotify acts as an active curator that "packages" songs based on mood, creating an emotional "echo chamber."	• Editorial Playlist Titles: "Senja & Kopi" (Dusk & Coffee), "IndieNesia" • UGP Titles: "Lagu buat nangis di pojokan" (Songs to cry in the corner) • Grouping: Sequencing slow-tempo, poetic-lyric songs closely together.	Reinforces the dominant discourse. Transforms individual preferences into a collective phenomenon and provides an official soundtrack for the identity.
2. Intertextuality ("Lyrics as Code")	Lyrics undergo decontextualization (removed from the song) and recontextualization (used on social media) as symbolic markers.	• Lyrical Quotes: ("rasa yang tepat di waktu yang salah" [the right feeling at the wrong time]) used as captions on X (Twitter) or Instagram.	Lyrics become a "code" or social currency for public identity validation and as a means of performing the identity.

Table 2 above summarizes the research findings at the meso-level (discursive practice), shifting the focus from the lyric texts to the context of their distribution and consumption. These findings highlight two primary practices: first, Spotify Playlist Curation ("Emotional Packaging"), which demonstrates that Spotify is not a passive distributor. Through editorial playlists (e.g., "Senja & Kopi") and User-Generated Playlists (e.g., "Lagu buat nangis di pojokan" [Songs to cry in the corner]), Spotify actively "packages" songs based on a melancholic mood, creating an "echo chamber" that reinforces the discourse and transforms individual preferences into a collective phenomenon. Second, Intertextuality ("Lyrics as Code") reveals how audiences participate by taking lyrics (e.g., "the right feeling at the wrong time"), detaching them from their original song context (decontextualization), and using them as captions on social media (recontextualization). This practice turns the lyrics into a "code" and a social currency to publicly validate and perform the 'Anak Senja' identity.

C. Macro Level (Sociocultural Practice): The Performative Construction of Identity and the Romantization of Sadness

At the macro-level, the findings from the textual and discursive practice levels are connected to broader sociocultural practices to answer why this discourse resonates and what its ideological implications are.

1. Lyrics as a "Performative Script" for Identity (Social Construction)

Referencing Berger & Luckmann (2011) and Hall (1997), this study finds that these lyrics function as a performative "script" for the audience. The 'Anak Senja' identity is not an essential identity that is "owned," but rather an identity that is "performed" through a series of symbolic practices.

- The lyrics provide instructions: "Minumlah kopimu" (Drink your coffee), "Nikmati senjamu" (Enjoy your dusk), "Rayakan lukamu" (Celebrate your wounds).
- The audience then internalizes this script and externalizes it through tangible practices (photographing dusk, making coffee) and digital practices (quoting lyrics). Spotify provides the soundtrack for this performance. Thus, the lyrics do not merely reflect the reality of troubled youth but actively construct specific ways to be troubled aesthetically.

2. The Ideology of "Romanticizing Sadness" (Critical Implications)

The critical implication (CDA) of this finding is the emergence of a dominant discourse surrounding the "romantization of sadness" (or glorification of sadness). This discourse, built by the lyrics and reinforced by Spotify's curation, promotes an ideology that:

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- Sadness, melancholy, and failure are poetic, profound, and aesthetic, rather than psychological issues requiring practical solutions.
- Passive contemplation (as indicated by the transitivity analysis) is valued more aesthetically than active intervention.

This discourse is advantageous for the industry (both musicians and streaming platforms) as it creates an addictive consumption cycle: audiences who feel sad seek out sad songs, which in turn reinforces and aestheticizes their sadness, leading them to continually consume the cultural product as catharsis. The 'Anak Senja' identity thus becomes a controlled and monetized emotional niche market.

**Table 3. Macro-Level Matrix
(Sociocultural Practice)**

Focus of Analysis	Core Finding	Evidence/Examples from Text and Context	Contribution to 'Anak Senja' Identity
1. Lyrics as "Performative Script" (Social Construction)	The 'Anak Senja' identity is "performed" by the audience, not "owned." Lyrics provide the instructions (script) for this performance.	- Lyrical Instructions: "Minumlah kopimu" (Drink your coffee), "Nikmati senjamu" (Enjoy your dusk), "Rayakan lukamu" (Celebrate your wounds) - Audience Practice: Photographing dusk/coffee + lyrical captions.	Lyrics actively construct specific ways to "be" aesthetically melancholic. Identity becomes a performance.
2. Ideology ("Romantization of Sadness")	The emergence of a dominant discourse that promotes sadness, failure, and passivity as something poetic, profound, and aesthetically valued.	- Sadness > Practical solutions - Passive contemplation > Active intervention - An addictive catharsis consumption cycle.	Transforms social anxiety into aesthetic consumption. The 'Anak Senja' identity functions as a monetized emotional niche market.

Table 3 above presents the research findings at the macro-level (sociocultural practice), explaining how textual and discursive practices contribute to broader social phenomena. There are two primary findings: first, Lyrics as a "Performative Script," which reveals that the 'Anak Senja' identity is not something "owned" but rather "performed." Lyrics function as instructions (e.g., "Nikmati senjamu" [Enjoy your dusk]) that are subsequently internalized and externalized by the audience through tangible practices (photographing coffee/dusk accompanied by lyrical captions), thereby actively constructing specific ways of "being" aesthetically melancholic. Second, the Ideology of "Romanticizing Sadness" demonstrates that this dominant discourse promotes passivity and sadness as something poetic and valued over practical solutions. The critical implication is that social anxiety is transformed into aesthetic consumption, creating an addictive cycle of catharsis and rendering the 'Anak Senja' identity a monetized emotional niche market.

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DISCUSSION

This study's findings comprehensively answer the research question regarding how the 'Anak Senja' identity is symbolically constructed through the discourse of popular indie song lyrics on Spotify. The three-dimensional analysis by Fairclough (2010) successfully "deconstructed" this process, from the micro-linguistic level to its macro-ideological implications. This discussion will contextualize these findings with previous research in cultural studies, media studies, and linguistics.

1. Symbolic Foundations: Lexicon, Aesthetics, and the Passive Subject

The micro-level findings identify three linguistic pillars: the "Melancholic Lexicon," the "Aestheticization of Emotion," and the "Passive Subject." The discovery of a "Melancholic Lexicon" (dusk, coffee, rain, longing, wounds) confirms that a collective identity requires a set of shared "codes" or symbols to manifest. This aligns with Imam (2012) research, which states that contemporary Indonesian pop lyrics often create specific "semantic fields" adopted by urban youth to articulate their life experiences. The 'Anak Senja' lexicon functions as a linguistic shorthand for communicating a complex and poetic set of emotions.

Furthermore, the finding that these lyrics perform an "Aestheticization of Emotion", particularly the metaphor of "Wounds as Aesthetics", resonates strongly with global studies on digital culture. Huron (2024), in an analysis of the sad girl subculture on platforms like Tumblr, found that the "romantization of sadness" is a primary performative strategy for negotiating vulnerability in public spaces. This study's findings suggest that 'Anak Senja' is a local manifestation of this global trend, where emotional complexities (wounds, brokenness) are poetically reframed as a form of character depth, not as a psychological deficit.

However, the most nuanced finding is the construction of a contemplative and "Passive Subject" (transitivity analysis). The lyrical subject tends to accept circumstances ("Let the universe work"). This presents a clear distinction from classic subcultural research in Indonesia. While Suharyanto (2021); Sutopo et al. (2020) research on Punk found subculture to be a form of active, material, and confrontational resistance, the 'Anak Senja' identity represents a different form of participation: a passive or affective resistance. The 'Anak Senja' subject does not physically fight the structure but rather retreats into poetic introspection.

2. New Dynamics: Active Platforms, Affective Participation

This is where the meso-level findings become vital. The passivity of the lyrical subject is contrasted with the activity of the platform. The finding that Spotify acts as an active curator performing "Emotional Packaging" through editorial playlists ("Senja & Kopi") confirms Gillespie (2018) argument that digital platforms are not neutral distributors. Spotify, in this case, acts as an algorithmic gatekeeper that not only reflects trends but actively creates and reinforces an emotional "Echo Chamber." The platform provides the infrastructure that transforms individual musical preferences into a coherent, collective phenomenon.

The finding of "Intertextuality" (lyrics as "code") demonstrates how audience participation occurs. This participation, as theorized by Jenkins (2016) regarding participatory culture, is not, in the 'Anak Senja' context, a form of production (like making zines or protesting, as in Punk subculture). Rather, it is in the form of affection and curation—feeling and sharing the appropriate emotions by quoting lyrics on social media. The lyrics become a "social currency" for identity validation.

3. Macro Implications: Identity Performativity and the Commodification of Emotion

The macro-level findings unite the textual analysis and platform practices. The identification of lyrics as a "Performative Script" directly affirms the study's theoretical grounding (Berger & Luckmann, 2011; Hall, 1997). The 'Anak Senja' identity is not something "owned," but something "performed" through symbolic practices (photographing dusk, quoting lyrics). This finding is consistent with research by Lestari & Wijaya (2022) on K-Pop fandom, where lyrical quotes function as "codes" for membership validation. However, this study extends that finding: whereas in K-Pop fandom the "code" is used to show loyalty to an artist, for 'Anak Senja,' the "code" (lyric) is used to show loyalty to a mood or an aesthetic.

The critical implication of this performance is what has been identified as the "Ideology of Romanticizing Sadness." This discourse transforms emotional dissonance (anxiety, heartbreak) into an aesthetic cultural commodity. This finding supports Holmes et al. (2020) critical analysis of the "economy of emotion" in the creative industry, where authentic feelings are extracted, packaged, and sold back to consumers.

Furthermore, this reflects what Fisher (2009) termed Capitalist Realism—a condition where capitalism assimilates all forms of critique. In this context, the anxiety or alienation that may arise from modern socio-economic conditions is not channeled into social critique (as with Punk), but is instead channeled into passive aesthetic consumption (listening to a "Senja" playlist, buying coffee). The 'Anak Senja' identity ultimately functions as a profitable "emotional niche market,"

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providing monetized catharsis without ever challenging the root cause of the melancholy itself.

CONCLUSION

This research aimed to "deconstruct" how the symbolic identity of 'Anak Senja' is constructed through the discourse of popular indie song lyrics within the Spotify ecosystem. Based on Fairclough (2010) three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis, this study concludes that the 'Anak Senja' identity is not an organically and passively formed phenomenon, but rather an active socio-cultural construction, mediated by text and algorithmically facilitated by the platform.

1) This construction occurs through three interrelated stages:

At the Micro (Text) Level, song lyrics (from musicians like Fiersa Besari, Hindia, and Nadin Amizah) provide the linguistic "raw material." This was identified through the consistent use of a "melancholic lexicon" (e.g., "dusk," "coffee," "rain," "wounds"), metaphors of aestheticization (e.g., "celebrating heartbreak"), and the construction of a passive and contemplative lyrical subject. These elements create a poetic discourse of sadness.

2) At the Meso (Discursive Practice) Level, the Spotify platform does not act as a neutral distributor but as an active cultural curator. Through editorial playlists like "Senja & Kopi" (Dusk & Coffee), Spotify "packages" these songs based on mood, creating an emotional "echo chamber" that reinforces the melancholic discourse. These packaged lyrics are then decontextualized and used as an intertextual "code" on social media for identity validation.

3) At the Macro (Sociocultural Practice) Level, the lyrics and playlist curation function as a performative "script" (Berger & Luckmann, 2011; Hall, 1997) used by the audience to "perform" the 'Anak Senja' identity. The ideological implication is the promotion of the "romantization of sadness," where anxiety and alienation (which may be rooted in social conditions) are not channeled into critique but are instead channeled into passive aesthetic consumption. Aligning with Capitalist Realism (Fisher, 2009), the 'Anak Senja' identity ultimately functions as a monetized "emotional niche market."

This study has primary limitations in its textual (lyrical) and platform-centric (Spotify) focus. This research did not deeply explore audience reception—how 'Anak Senja' individuals actively interpret, negotiate, or even reject the dominant discourse offered by these lyrics and algorithms.

Therefore, it is recommended that future research use a digital ethnography (netnography) approach or qualitative reception studies (in-depth interviews) to explore audience agency. Furthermore, a comparative study contrasting the curation of melancholic aesthetics across different platforms (e.g., Spotify vs. YouTube Music vs. TikTok) could provide a richer understanding of the role of media technologies in the construction of affective identity in the digital era.

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