

# ***The Cultural Construction of NewJeans from the Perspective of Cross-cultural Communication***

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**Abstract:** The communication analysis of Korean pop culture has been the topic of academic research. NewJeans, a K-pop girl group, is a popular global pop music group of the new generation, which has the characteristics of a typical example of cross-cultural communication and strong cultural attraction. This paper attempts to explore the great innovation of the K-pop industry by analyzing its cultural construction, and conducts an empirical study on the text analysis of NewJeans music works. The study found that by establishing a common connection with the market based on the cultural narratives of East Asia and the Western market, and fully utilizing its artistic pursuit as a literary and artistic work, it can express its cultural core of companionship aimed at the young market group, combine the retro elements of the millennium with contemporary popular culture, endow Western mythological stories with contemporary metaphors and modernized expressions, and thus achieve a balance between artistic and market value. Through the analysis of the cultural construction of NewJeans, it can be seen that under the macro-guidance of global market demand, only by respecting the market characteristics of different regions, tapping the internal needs of consumers and guiding the situation in different cross-cultural perspectives can the success probability of cross-cultural communication be increased.

**Keywords:** Pop culture, Korean pop music, NewJeans, cultural construction, cross-cultural communication

## **1. Introduction**

NewJeans, a fourth-generation K-POP girl group under ADOR and HYBE, won the Group of the Year award at the 2024 Billboard Women in Music Awards, becoming the first Korean girl group to win the award, and was selected as the only K-pop artist group on Time magazine's "Next Generation Leaders 2023" list [1, 2]. As the mainstay of the new generation of K-pop music, the group maintains good commercial value and attraction without its unique cultural value and cultural connotation as a cultural commodity. In the context of the analysis of the relevant research on Korean Wave culture and K-pop music, this paper will use the relevant knowledge and theories of cross-cultural communication to deduce the internal cultural construction of NewJeans, and explore the enlightenment of its successful experience on the cross-cultural communication of cultural products.

In 2024, South Korea officially elects NewJeans as the ambassador of the Headquarters of the Korea Customs Service (Customs) Incheon Airport. The image of this generation has always been held by the representative K-pop girl group [3]. Prior to NewJeans, the globally popular Korean girl

group Girls' Generation and BLACKPINK (블랙핑크) were selected as customs ambassador respectively. The official recognition of NewJeans' market position and global influence can be seen from the side that NewJeans has a certain stage of representation in the contemporary K-pop world. This article will analyze the events with the cultural construction of NewJeans, and try to glimpse the inner cultural logic of the Korean wave culture.

## 2. Background

In the cross-cultural communication phenomenon in recent years, the Korean Wave has not been one of the most noticeable forces, and has exerted a profound influence on the world in various forms such as music, TV series, variety shows and food. Academic circles have conducted a large number of studies on the success of its cross-cultural communication:

First of all, Meng Xiangfei, Chen Guozhan, Dai Fen et al believe that the success of the cross-cultural communication of the Korean Wave is the result of many factors: the cross-cultural communication of the Korean wave cannot be separated from the strong support of the Korean government [4-6]. The South Korean government carries out the policy of building a nation through culture, regards the cultural industry as an important strategic industry of the country, and promotes the rapid development of the cultural industry through policy support and capital investment. The success of the cross-cultural communication of the Korean Wave is also inseparable from its precise market positioning and marketing strategy. In the promotion process, the Korean cultural industry pays attention to the study of cultural differences in different regions and the needs of the audience, and formulate corresponding marketing strategies. Finally, the unique charm of South Korea's cultural industry is also an important reason for the success of the Korean Wave. With its innovation, diversity and strong emotional appeal, South Korean culture has caught the attention of global audiences.

Zhang Taofu and Dong Cui's research further explored the influence of cross-cultural communication of the Korean wave [7, 8]. It promotes communication and integration among different cultures, especially among Asian countries, and enhances people's understanding and understanding of Korean culture. At the same time, it also promotes the development of South Korea's economy and improves its international image. However, the cross-cultural communication of the Korean wave also faces some challenges and problems, such as cultural homogenization and cultural conflict [9].

Korean pop music (Korea-Pop, abbreviated as K-POP) is an important part of the Hallyu culture, and scholars have focused on cultural studies from the perspective of communication theory, analyzing the success of its operational model and marketing, such as the unique operational model of Korean K-pop music industry in music production, artist training, and publicity and marketing, and it is gradually gaining a foothold in the European and American music markets, showing a new trend of globalization [10]. In terms of cultural analysis, a small number of scholars take K-pop as an example to study the relationship between idols and fans. As ICONS in consumer culture, media fans have experienced the collapse of absolute belief and grand narrative. In the Internet era, they have the opportunity to participate in the development of idol narratives, and at the same time, collective and individual values have been brought into this field of struggle [11-13]. From a feminist perspective, scholars explore the phenomenon of female self-awareness emerging in K-pop works.

Based on the above discussion, it is not difficult to see that the academic circle has fully studied cultural communication related to the analysis of K-pop culture and the reasons for its success and operation mode, and has also been involved in the analysis of cultural identity. However, it is still worth exploring the specific analysis of the characteristics of Korean Wave culture from the perspective of cultural construction. Cultural construction is a process in which social members create and accept a common symbol and value that are different from other social groups through constant

communication and communication. It covers the process of the formation and development of culture, including the production, dissemination and evolution of various cultural symbols and cultural phenomena. In the process of cultural construction, social practice, symbol system and thinking mode all play an important role. Social practice refers to people shaping and inheriting a specific culture through various activities, behaviors and practices. Sign system, on the other hand, assigns meaning and value to specific signs through forms such as language, symbols and symbols, and transmits them to other members of society. Thinking mode, on the other hand, is a process of socialization in which individuals gradually accept and internalize the thinking mode and cognitive structure of a specific culture, thus forming a common cultural cognition.

The process and result of cultural construction are closely related to social, historical, economic and political factors. It is not just an academic concept, but also relevant to everyone's life. Through cultural construction, people can better understand and appreciate different cultural expressions and spiritual cores, promote cultural diversity and exchange, and enrich cultural blending and symbiosis.

### 3. Method

This paper uses the method of text analysis to analyze the original pop music works and MV of NewJeans so far from the relevant perspectives of cultural construction, cross-cultural communication and literature and art research in cultural studies. As shown in Table 1, in addition to the collaborative songs, the paper takes three official music albums "New Jeans", "OMG" and "Get up" as the main research objects, and makes an in-depth analysis of 12 singles represented by "Hype Boy", "Ditto" and "Cool With You".

Table 1: Lists the main music works of NewJeans ( Indicating April 2024 )

Album Titles	Song title	Release time	Length of song	Winning album
"New Jeans"	"Attention" "Hype Boy" "Cookie" "Hurt"	2022/08/01	3:00 2:59 3:55 2:57	The 20th Korean Pop Music Awards Best Korean-language Pop Album
"OMG"	"OMG" Ditto	2023/01/02	3:32 3:05	"OMG," "Ditto" nominated for "Best K-POP Song" at the Billboard Music Awards, and "Ditto" won "Song of the Year" at the 65th Japan Record Awards, 2023 Korean MAMA Awards, Korea MELON Awards, and Song of the Year (Grand Prize) at the 21st Korean Pop Music Awards.
"Get up"	"New Jeans" "Super Shy" "ETA" "Cool With You" "Get Up" ASAP	2023/07/21	1:48 2:34 2:31 2:27 0:36 2:14	U.S. debut week combined sales parachuted to No. 1 on the Billboard 200 album chart, nominated for "Best K-POP Album" at the Billboard Music Awards

Table 1: (continued)

Others	"Zero(Coca Cola advertising song) " "GODS(2023 League of Legends World Championship theme song)"	2023/04/03 2023/10/04	2:34 3:40	
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## 4. Result

### 4.1. NewJeans Culture Construction System

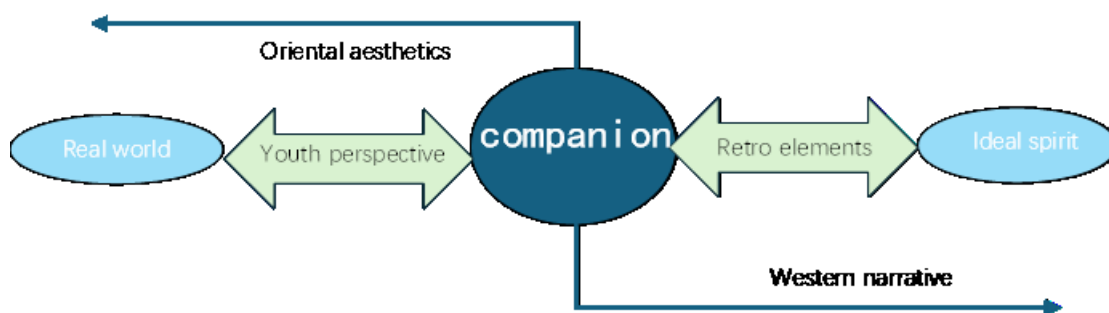


Figure 1: NewJeans culture construction system

As shown in Figure 1, always with the expectation of good things, NewJeans uses Y2K (It is called "millennial style", a trendy culture that emerged in the late 1990s to early 21st century, characterized by a fusion of fashion and vintage, a futuristic sense of technology infused with retro elements, and a blend of strong retro elements with futuristic technology). This style was not only popular in the fashion industry, but also left a deep impression in the fields of film, music, and art. It originated from the "millennium bug" problem, which was a computer date calculation bug that caused widespread chaos and people's fear of the future. However, this fear actually sparked people's optimistic and utopian fantasies about the future, thus giving birth to the millennial style, dream core and other retro elements to depict the theme of youth, with both eastern aesthetics and Western narration, and always spends life with fans and listeners. "Companionship" as the spiritual core of NewJeans culture construction runs through the whole macro structure. In the atmosphere of both Japanese and Korean youth and American high school as the expression, NewJeans uses a large number of elements of Y2K style and classical mythology, and sensitively and humanistically based on the life fragments of youth growth, extending from the youth "growing pains" to the problems of prematurity, gender differences, and the loss of individuality in postmodernity. Its cultural construction euphemistically expresses the ambition of music producers and groups to look at the world from the perspective of popular culture.

#### 4.1.1.A Mirror Projection of Dialogue with Fans

In ditto, which is developed from the first-person perspective, the heroine does not show her face throughout. What she represents is not an individual, but the common feeling eye and listening ear of the majority of listeners and fans. The shaky shooting lens in ETA brings the sense of self-portrait

and video call from the first perspective of mobile phone photography. Combination works appear constantly in the lyrics of "you" and "your", "너", "자 네", "님", "그 쪽" (There are different expressions of the second person pronoun "you" in Korean, which are used to address friends or people who are considered more intimate) such as to strengthen the interactions.

NewJeans named the fandom "bunnies," featured a large number of rabbit elements in the conception of almost all their music videos, and used bunny graphics as the covers of all their electronic music albums. As one of the important elements of European fairy tales, Bunnies also symbolize the anxiety of time passing and the rush to explore the unknown, such as Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, which fits the busy and fast-paced life of modern people. Fans are growing up, constantly facing difficulties in life, and will eventually grow up, which is the portrayal of busy running. bunnies also have the image of young rabbits, which makes them more amiable and easy to accept.

#### **4.1.2. Cultural Narrative Based on East Asian Market and European and American Market**

Ditto takes the young and melancholy East Asian youth as the key tone, with the photography color of Japanese Mono no aware aesthetics, the gray shooting picture, and the low-pixel moving camera flashes, narrating the daily scenes of an East Asian middle school -- the girl in school uniform running and playing in the dark corridor, the dim and shy gaze on the classmates of the opposite sex .The leisure time dancing freely on the sunny roof and the feeling of gazing at the rainy day under the umbrella make Ditto complete the construction of the story of East Asian high school; The other school of works represented by attention and ETA express the youth elements of American high school style, including daily youth sports style dress, superposition of a series of scenes such as sports field, pool party, lawn picnic, etc. As a teenage girl with long black hair and full of youth, the five members of the free dance together with the crowd give the market a cordial, energetic and vibrant American youth impression; Take the MV interpreted by four versions of "hype boy" as an example, the members have different encounters on campus, sometimes laughing at youthful jokes, sometimes because of conflicts and quarrels. The reality and youth issues that run through NewJeans repeatedly appear in the works. It's as if the girl next door is talking about the preciousness of friendship and the splendor of youth.

#### **4.1.3. Retro Trend of Y2k Elements and the Application of Fashion Elements**

The video game design of the landline picture quality mv, the flash of green light, and the stacking of geometric elements reflect the style of dreamcore(Dreamcore is an artistic style that combines elements of surrealism, fantasy, and the subconscious. This style typically features blurry images, distorted geometric shapes, and soft colors, creating a familiar yet unfamiliar feeling for viewers, as if they were in a dream). Jeans, one of Gen Y's most important trend items, are included in the group's name. The group name of NewJeans embodies the group's desire to become an icon of our time, just like jeans that you can find every day and never tire of, it also embodies the group's determination to become "New Genes". The group also co-signed with the popular millennial animation "The Power Puff Girls" and designed the animated image of the five members of the Power Puff Girls. The brave, optimistic, kind and lovely co-branded image has aroused wide praise in the market ("The Powerpuff Girls" is a series of animated cartoons produced in the United States from 1998 to 2005, and later released globally, which tells the story of the little superheroes, the Powerpuff Girls, using their superpowers to fight crime and protect the town from the evil villains); The deep cooperation with Coca-Cola, iPhone, Nike and other popular global brands among the youth group has proved the appeal of the market, but also the stability and emphasis of their youthful and energetic market image.



#### 4.1.4. Combination of Artistry and Thoughtfulness

Ditto explores the relationship between fans and idols. The heroine as the main body "I" and the idols represented by the five members have spent the whole time of youth together. For both of them, although time has passed, the youth accompanied by each other has become eternal, perhaps the idols and fans will no longer be young. But those who failed to open the lonely mind, melancholy gaze has become a secret between the two. "cool with you" explores the relationship between love and staring, starring "The Squid Game" star Jung Ho-yeon as Eros, Tony Leung Chiu-wai as Aphrodite, and Psyche, played by black actor Micol Vela. When Eros comes on, a man and a woman fall in love. Instead, she falls in love with Psyche, a human. In order to stay with her lover, Eros gives up being a god and becomes an ordinary human being. However, when the two were in love, Aphrodite descended from the sky, laughing silently and sneeringly, and used her divine power to make Psyche no longer love Eros. They missed it like strangers. NewJeans, as a guardian angel with God, follows the narrative in an observant way. In "get up", Eros wakes up, realizes his destiny by watching the guardian angels dance, and prepares to return to the duties of God. In the traditional ancient Greek stories, Eros is male and Aphrodite is female, and both are Mediterranean people with tall nose and deep purpose. Through the exchange of gender and the innovation of skin color, under the guise of God's will, MV tries to show that regardless of gender, skin color and age, human beings are equal before the emergence and disappearance of love. In the face of love, the biggest advantage is to keep their own "cool" heart.

"Omg" discusses the relationship between ego and superego in the age of high-speed information. The video features the members wearing patient suits as the characters in a mental hospital engage in different fantasies about their identity and communicate with the doctors about their illness. Under the strong existence of the superego and the over-functioning self, the inner needs and states are ignored and compressed. These characters who cannot distinguish between reality and delusion are like the disorganized "I" who grows up with a smartphone, and also represent the adventures of artists who lose their subjectivity in the deformed K-POP industry. Elements from director Park Chan-wook's "Love of Robots" (The film "Love for Robots" or "It Doesn't Matter If You're a Cyborg" is primarily a romantic love story between a girl who mistakenly believes she is a cyborg and a man who loves her unconditionally and believes that it doesn't matter if she is a cyborg), such as the scene shaped by mobile phone ICONS in the opening paragraph, bring fresh shock to the audience by subverting the concept of time and space and entering the bizarre fantasy world. The members imagine themselves as a mobile phone serving others, a psychiatrist who longs for the company of others, a randomly changing fairy tale character, and a cat eating cat strips. The observing male patient turns into a lonely, silent bear, who sees the members constantly changing as firefighters, clerks, health care workers, children, robbers, and so on. The final member fantasizes that they are members of NewJeans filming their latest music video, but the psychiatrist's voice calling everyone back to the ward reveals that this is not the case. In the final scene, a new male doctor picks up one of the members' paintings, and a cartoon medical van whizzes by as fantasy and reality merge. The transformation of these roles is actually the continuous division and fusion of personality. In the environment of collective repression, the existence of the individual as a functional part of the operation of society is often ignored. The rich personality and colorful personality of the individual needs people to take care of themselves and discover and explore in the harmonious dialogue within. It can be seen from the humanistic care and deep thinking of NewJeans.

#### 4.1.5. Interactive and Interesting Settings

Hype boy has set four different versions of youth from the perspectives of five members for many times. The MV of Ditto is presented with two versions A and B symbolizing the front and back of the

cassette. These mv clips from different editing perspectives enable listeners and viewers to analyze their intrinsic meanings from multiple perspectives. The clips and pictures of "cool with you" and "get up", "hype boy" and "super shy", "ETA" and other mv have upper and lower correlation and continuity, which increases the audience's expectation and enthusiasm, and makes the story line more complete. ADOR does not give an official explanation of the concept or an official definition of the connotation of the picture. In a disguised way, ADOR encourages the audience to reason and analyze the work, which makes different interpretations more interesting.

#### **4.2. The Strategic Arrangement of Cross-cultural Communication in the Global Market**

When the K-pop trend swept the Asian world and began to attract a lot of attention in the European and American markets, different from the previous K-pop group whose members are mainly Korean, NewJeans consists of three Korean members MINJI, HAERIN and HYEIN, and a Vietnam-Australian dual member HANNI. And DANIELLE, a dual Australian-Korean. The members mainly speak fluent English and Korean in their daily activities, and their musical compositions are mainly composed of these two languages. In the MV, NewJeans invited the world-famous Netflix TV(the world's largest online movie rental service provider) series "Squid Game" lead actress Cheng Hyeon and International Asian Best actor Tony Leung Chiu-wai to play the leading roles, which not only increased global attention and gained a lot of traffic, but also reflected ADOR's ambition as an operator to establish NewJeans as an Asian flag in the global pop music market. Under the market orientation of global vision, NewJeans takes nationality and region as the entry point to open the door of other countries' markets, takes other successful models of cross-cultural communication as Bridges and Windows, reduces the communication gap and magnifies the communication efficiency.

In terms of communication media, NewJeans pays attention to the media ecology of short video globalization and rapid dissemination, and pays attention to the full use of streaming media platform tools. Its music works rarely achieve that each non-commercial cooperative single is equipped with a specially shot MV version. Its music singles take light and bright as the main style, most of the tracks are often controlled in about three points, and many of them are short and bright, and the style of melody is repeated. This concise production method has achieved remarkable results. After 219 days of debut, NewJeans achieved the record of 1 billion total streams on Spotify, and was recognized by Guinness World Records as the fastest K-pop artist to break 1 billion streams on Spotify [14]. Their second mini album, Get Up, debuted at number one on the Billboard 200 on the day of its release.

#### **4.3. The Interpenetration and Figurative Metaphor of Mythological Elements from the Perspective of Literature and Art**

ASAP is based on the image of a Nymph fairy in Renaissance painting art. They live between the water and the forest. They are young and beautiful, delicate and charming, and walk together with the laughter and laughter of the flowers along the way. In the long-term study and development of art studies, such as Lolita and Agamben's theory, Nymph, as a deformed symbol of the female archetype, has shown a unique and complex charm [15]. She combines animal and plant elvish qualities to symbolize a transcendent image lost in time. The awakening and opening of this image depends on the audience's deep integration with it. In the audience's imagination, the image of Nymph gradually transforms from a static image into a vivid and fresh life. This transformation process is the product of the passionate collision between the audience and Nymph. In this collision, the audience creates unique memories that both bear the traces of history and are full of vitality. Like swinging pendulums, they move between solidified seals and fully alive life. The viewer, by infusing the love of his image, infuses the loving imagination into the process, making it all the more colorful. When the audience is closely connected with Nymph 's images, they experience more than a simple pleasure. It is a

pleasure derived from pure imagination that allows the viewer's memory to be constantly reborn and renewed. In this process, the audience can transcend the constraints of reality and enter an imaginary world full of infinite possibilities. In this world, the audience and Nife create unique memories and emotional experiences together. The artistic image of NewJeans lies in the sublimation and condensing of the audience's interaction and interaction. This artistic metaphor is thought-provoking. The purpose of NewJeans reflects the central position of companionship for the whole group concept, only the audience's gaze is constantly activated, recalled, imagined and reshaped for the combined pop culture works. Only then can the emotional value of NewJeans be maintained and even eternal. "cool with you" featured multiple scenes of the members dancing in front of a work by French painter Francois-Edouard Picot, "Eros and Psyche" (1817). Eros, the Greek god of love (known as Cupid in Roman mythology), was the son of Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty and love, and carried a golden arrow that would make anyone fall in love if they were stabbed by it. When Psyche incurred Aphrodite's wrath because of her superior beauty, Eros went to punish Psyche, but fell in love himself; The elements of forest and deer in Northern European mythology are widely used in the combined works. As the symbols of mysterious, beautiful and vibrant earth beings, they add the morpheme of agility, vitality, lightness and rich charm to the popular music.

## 5. Conclusion

NewJeans makes full use of the different cultural characteristics of the East and the West, combines the youth perspective and retro elements, and effectively connects the audience's real life with the spiritual blueprint of NewJeans. In the process of cultural communication, it always pays attention to the unity of interactivity and extensibility. Behind the great commercial success, it also reflects the humanist concern with "companionship" as the core.

The success of NewJeans is based on many factors, and its marketing attaches great importance to precise positioning and target audience segmentation. At the same time, NewJeans attaches great importance to enhancing the sense of engagement and loyalty of fans through interaction and communication with fans. From the very beginning, the group has had a clear internationalization strategy, actively expanding overseas markets and improving the quality and internationalization of its music. From the perspective of cultural construction, the success of NewJeans is more inseparable from the export and integration of culture. Through music, dance, fashion and other elements, combined with auditory and visual effects, NewJeans presents Asian culture to the world, and absorbs various international elements, making NewJeans more inclusive and global.

The organic combination of these factors enables NewJeans music works to be widely acclaimed around the world. Of course, with the development of The Times and the changes of the market, NewJeans also needs to constantly innovate and adjust its strategy, continue to deeply explore the internal cultural needs of consumers, and improve its unique cultural system to maintain its competitive advantage and sustainable development.

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