



**A Critical Discourse Analysis on the Representation of Female Idols  
in the “Idol” Song Lyric by Yoasobi  
From the Feminism Point of View**

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**ABSTRACT**

Each song lyric has a message that the writer wants to convey to the listener about what the writer feels and thinks. This research discusses how Japanese female idols are represented in the opening soundtrack of the anime song “Oshi no Ko” which is currently being discussed among Japanese idol fans. The song titled “Idol” is the work of a duo band known as Yoasobi, telling a story of anxiety and sadness in the romance of Japanese youth life but accompanied by uplifting techno music. When song lyrics are made based on commercial interests, the meaning of the text should be criticized to find out who is in a dominating position and who is not. The song “Idol” in this research is analyzed using Sara Mills’s Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (1997) with a feminist perspective to analyze the presentation of the storyteller (subject) and the told (object). The results of this study show that the position of female idols as objects is shown as a figure who does not talk about herself much, her desires and feelings are less well conveyed. Female idols are shown more from the fans’ point of view as the position of the storyteller (subject). The position of female idols in the lyrics is only shown by stereotypical idol characters who are required to have a positive image, have high loyalty to fans, are required to be perfect by covering all flaws, and are prohibited from dating. Although the song “Idol” is an anime soundtrack that discusses the other side of idol life, in this song, the opportunity to voice the thoughts and what female idols want to express is not well displayed. Thus, the lyricist only presents female idols based on what they want for the sake of desire and sexual objects. This research only uses one main data source, namely song lyrics. It is hoped that future research can use a variety of main data sources such as *anime* or *manga*.

**KEYWORDS**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA); Feminism; Idol; Representation; Song Lyrics.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, people easily read and sing-song lyrics from their favorite singers, bands, and girl/boy groups through streaming media including Spotify,

iTunes, YouTube Music, and many other media. With this convenience, song lyrics become a direct communication medium between songwriters and listeners to express feelings and provide messages and information (Wall, 2003; Medina &

Noorman, 2019). Apart from being a medium of communication, each song lyric has a distinctive characteristic depending on the songwriter's purpose, whether the song is written on his desire to express his feelings and thoughts, or there is a second party who asks or encourages the songwriter to create something based on the expectations and satisfaction of the listener (consumer) (Huaman & Idemaru, 2018).

When song lyrics are made based on commercial interests, the meaning of the text should be criticized to find out about the issue of power ideologically and which social group as a centralized controller is spread at the level of social formation so that it can determine who has a dominating position and who does not (Barker, 2018). Criticism of works in the form of texts, one of which is song lyrics, is an activity of exploring textual meaning by investigating how the world is socially constructed and displayed to and by us, this is referred to as representation (Hall, 1996; Barker, 2018). Studies on representation in song lyrics have been conducted, for example in research by Urbano et al (2021) analyzing how women are represented in song lyrics made by female and male songwriters in the rap music genre. The results of his research reveal that song lyrics written by female authors are more inviting to women to be confident in what they have, in this case, the body. Meanwhile, the lyrics written by male songwriters tell the story of inviting and tempting women to engage in sexual activities.

In addition to differences in perspective between male and female songwriters, research conducted by Kusumaningrum (2019) discusses how songs with *positive female body* themes are displayed in popular songs that enter the global Billboard sequence. It shows that there is a tendency for *songwriters* to attack the ideal image of thin women by using harsh words and tones to justify their image. In this case, women love themselves, and their bodies with the concept of the male gaze that promotes women's self-confidence through a male perspective. In addition, research conducted by Hariyana, Rasyid, Anwar, and Hum (2020) and Widjanarko (2023) discussed the representation of women in song lyrics using Critical discourse analysis by Sara Mills. The results showed that in the song lyrics they studied, the position of women is still marginalized as objects whose existence and role are displayed based on men's views. Women are shown as negative images such as fierce, flirtatious, and weak but on the other hand, are shown as

positive images attached to typical feminine attributes.

Based on the previous research above, the discussion of how song lyrics represent women as wives and mothers, then their image and position are still marginalized. From the discussion of women's representation, the author is interested in examining how women who act as idols are displayed in the lyrics entitled "Idol" by Yoasobi. Considering that there is still little research on working women as idols in song lyrics (Huaman & Idemaru, 2018), this research will analyze the lyrics of the song "Idol" by Yoasobi, an iconic song about Japanese female idols. Released in 2023, the song "Idol" is the opening soundtrack for the *anime* entitled 'Oshi no Ko', a viral *anime* whose theme is about the world of Japanese female idols. The song lyrics and anime talk about the other side of a female idol named Ai who keeps a secret behind her cheerfulness (Trust, 2023). Idols in Japan are admired based on their beauty, character, and talent on stage as well as various activities carried out on TV, and events with fans held by the agency. (Galbraith, 2012; Van-Haecke, 2020). In this case, anyone can become an idol as long as they look young and have an attractive character. Music and performance skills are considered secondary to an idol's job. This concept makes the position of idols in Japan confusing because it is in the middle between ordinary people and professional entertainers (Lin & Lin, 2007; Yamamoto, 2019; Van-Haecke, 2020).

The phenomenon of female idols in Japan that has been studied from an academic perspective and the reality of idols that are unknown to fans make the theme of 'female idols' an interesting theme to discuss. This research is conducted to find out how female idols are represented in song lyrics and how the position and image of female idols are in the lyrics entitled "Idol" from Yoasobi. The song's lyrics will be analyzed per piece of lyrics using Critical Discourse Analysis by Sara Mills (1995). The discourse is from the side of feminism that reveals gender bias, and discrimination against women by understanding who is in the position of object and subject in the text. In addition, this feminist perspective discourse from Sara Mills (1995) will discuss song lyrics from the position of songwriter and reader/listener.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Women in Song Lyrics

Lyrics in popular songs are written not from the spontaneity of the writer but are written with full consideration so that all words, phrases, and clauses in the lyrics are arranged based on the feelings displayed by the songwriter himself or adjusted based on requests from second parties (Lakoff, 2004). The contribution of the second party in writing song lyrics can influence the point of view and image that the songwriter will display in the song to conform to the agreement that is certainly related to what the market likes. In this case, although the second party influences the songwriting process, it still shows that the main control over the songwriting is the creator himself by taking some commonly known stereotypes to describe something quickly, especially representing women and men in song lyrics (Wall, 2003; Lakoff, 2004; Huaman & Idemaru, 2018).

Research on the representation of the role of women in pop music in lyrics, music videos, and media both as sexual subjects and sexual objects in examining the context of language in pop culture with a gender perspective is worth doing (Dent, 2012). As in corpus linguistic research by Kreyers (2015) and Betti, Abret, and Kaltenbrunner (2023) analyzing gender bias and sexism in song lyrics. Kreyers (2015) collected commercially successful albums from 2003 and 2011. The song lyrics were classified into two corpora namely, song lyrics sung by men and sung by women. Kreyers (2015) found that the two corpora share similarities in terms of how images and roles of men and women are presented with gender bias that portrays women in unfavorable conditions. There is evidence that “the way male and female artists refer to themselves or the opposite sex may contribute to the consolidation of unfavorable roles for women. while Betti, Abret, and Kaltenbrunner (2023) used Natural Language Processing techniques to analyze 377.808 English songs in the years (1960-20120). The results found that of the popular songs on Billboard, there is gender inequality in the English charts. Male solo singers have been more popular over the years and there is sexy content in song genres such as Hip-Hop, R&B, and Soul. Men are also represented in stereotypical ways such as superior men, success, and directing women closer to the family in this case women are often shown in the domestic sphere.

Stereotypes to describe women and men in song lyrics are very much found as in research conducted by Krasse (2019) that popular songs that enter the top music on Billboard still show how women behave, their appearance is still discussed from a male perspective. On the other hand, it was found that how women express themselves as independent women and sexual subjects in song lyrics is still a popular theme with good commercial success. This shows that when female singers contribute to songwriting, songs can be a means to express women's struggles, dissatisfaction with women's roles in the outside world, women's empowerment, and sexual liberation for women.

Hariyana, Rasyid, Anwar, and Hum (2020) and Widjanarko (2023) discuss the representation of women in song lyrics using Critical discourse analysis by Sara Mills. The results of the study show that in the lyrics of the songs they studied, women are still marginalized, only objects whose existence and role are presented based on the views of men. Women are shown as negative images such as fierce, flirtatious, and weak but on the other hand, they are shown as positive images attached to the typical feminine attributes.

Based on these previous studies, the representation of women in song lyrics should be analyzed using CDA analysis from Sara Mills (1995) to reveal how the figure of women as idols is represented through the lyrics of a song entitled “Idol” Written by a man, Ayase, from a duo band called Yoasobi. Yoasobi is known as a musician who has dark, depressive lyrics but is accompanied by upbeat music that tends to make a rhythm that seems to sway. This uniqueness may have given Yoasobi to write song lyrics based on a *manga/comic* story entitled “*Oshi no Ko*” (Idol Child) by Aka Akasaka. The song lyrics were written based on a story that reveals the life of an idol behind the scenes. The song and manga tell the story of Ai as an idol center (a term for an idol who is often in the center and visible compared to other members) in a very popular group that has a lot of fans who do not show only her cheerfulness and positive values but show the other side of AI as an ordinary woman who wants true love.

### The Concept of Female Idol in Japan

The difference between the characteristics of Japanese female idols and other countries is very noticeable. If you follow the world of J-pop music, Japanese female idols are characterized by their

physical appearance, attitude, and voice that is cute (*kawaii*), young, childish, and cheerful. In 2005, the idol concept changed to idol groups with a large number of members. This phenomenon was pioneered by a group called AKB48. At this time, idols stood in the middle of the music industry as an influence and driving commodity not only in the world of music but also in film, advertising, and other media (Galbraith & Karlin, 2012; Katsuki, 2014; Yamamoto, 2019). Since the 1970s, the Japanese music industry introduced the phenomenon of idols (female soloists with a young and cheerful image, and a distinctive sound color). Until 1980, the golden age of idols, more and more idol soloists imagined debut idols such as Seiko Matsuda. In the post-idol era, idol groups appeared with diverse images such as the idol group called Morning Musume and Speed from Okinawa with 4 idol members. In this post-idol era, the concept of idol groups diversified, not only featuring cute and beautiful female idols but also displaying the masculine side of women such as tomboy, sporty, elegant, and unique, with balanced dancing and singing abilities (Yamamoto, 2019).

The emergence of an idol group as *kokumin idol* (national idol) called AKB48 which has hundreds of female idol members with an age range of 12-30 years, making this phenomenon of idols with many members influenced other idol groups that appeared in Japan. This era is known as Sengoku Idol. AKB48 is produced by Yasushi Akimoto as well as a songwriter. The members of AKB48 are often considered to represent the ideal woman because of the media that represents them. However, the idols do not have the power of rights and freedom to be what they want. Starting from the selection of songs sung, dance styles, and images displayed must follow decisions by the agency and group producers who are usually led by men (Aoyagi 2005; Galbraith & Karlin, 2012; Katsuki, 2014; Yamamoto, 2019). In this era of *Sengoku aidoru*, there are many new idol groups with a large number of members and have the concept of idols who can join and leave easily and do not require good dancing and singing skills. The most important thing to understand as an idol is that the idol's life, image, and role belong to the public (Galbraith & Karlin, 2012; Yamamoto, 2019).

In other words, idols in the *Sengoku* era were consumed not only by their appearance but also by the products attached to them such as handshake events with idols, merch purchases, photos with idols, and voting events to support their favorite

idols to be included in the next single song by buying as many idol group CDs as possible. The number of CD purchases that determine whether or not an idol is included in the latest single was introduced by AKB48, which shows that the fate of a female idol's career is in the hands of the fans (Galbraith & Karlin, 2012). In the end, the change in the concept of idols, which was originally concerned with performance quality, made idols consumed as 'infantile capitalism' who enjoyed the process of an idol's journey as a child until it continued into adulthood (Galbraith & Karlin, 2012; Yamamoto, 2019).

Based on the explanation of the changing concept of idols in the Japanese music industry, certainly brings about changes in the view of the relationship between idols and fans. Based on research conducted by Van Haecke (2020) on the image of female idols from the fans' side how the special relationship between idols and their fans, and whether there is a romantic bond between them. The results of his research reveal that the image of idols is formed based on factors that come from internal and are influenced by external factors so that the fans ultimately shape the image of the idol they want. This makes a female idol inevitably have to follow the wishes of the fans to maintain and improve her career in the idol world. Van Haecke (2020) found that the interaction between fans and idols is driven by desire, and fantasy with the desired idol image and expected as 'love'. The interaction is only limited to supportive consumption and cannot be qualified as a love relationship. This is because the construction of the female idol image is based on what men want to see, which cannot be found in women in everyday life. The idol image is only seen by fans on stage and plays a role when becoming an idol. Thus, the relationship between female idols and their fans is considered to resemble 'courtly love' which can surpass true love (Galbraith & Karlin, 2012; Yamamoto, 2019; Van Haecke, 2020).

### **Critical Discourse Analysis by Sara Mills (1995)**

Sara Mills Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an analysis that focuses on feminist discourse and aims to show how women are represented in texts such as novels, pictures, photos, and news and in this study, song lyrics. The main goal is to reveal how the texts present women in a biased way. Some previous studies argue that women are seen as a marginalized group, and women are often

shown based on their negative image (Hariyana, Rasyid, Anwar, & Hum, 2020; Widjanarko, 2023). Mills's (1995) discourse analysis was influenced by Michel Foucault's work on the structure of discourse frameworks then he complemented discourse to find gender bias and sexist texts at the level of stereotypes used to define the type of language produced. For example, at this level, many texts use stereotypical knowledge to present information, especially about female characters who are described briefly to quickly summarize these characters in texts in the form of short stories, novels, poems, rhymes, and even song lyrics. Mills (1995) CDA treats content, the nature of the text, as a kind of agreement between textual elements, cultural codes, and forces outside the text that influence how the text is constructed and how we interpret what is written in the text. This analysis links words and phrases to larger ideological ideas that are influenced by the pattern and structure of the text. Thus, for the textual elements and cultural codes to be thoroughly understood in the text, this analysis first reveals who is positioned as the narrator object and narrator subject in the text.

Mills (1995) provides an analytical example in his book, when a female character is presented as an object, the factors that shape the image of women must be examined because the text of the story is not clearly described. Often the text describes women using different terms. In addition, when a female character is the protagonist, she is not presented as a conscious being, unaffected, and not too focused on her point of view. Thus, female fragmentation is associated with male focus, women are represented as objects, a collection of objects of the male gaze. Whereas when male characters are introduced as subjects, there is a clear element. The various terms used to describe these women all hint at sexual attraction.

In the world of work, women and men are often represented differently in work situations. Often portrayed in the printed trade. As in children's books, which have been criticized by feminists, women are presented in a certain pattern, like housewives who only care about the house. Mills (1995) also argues that in fiction, male and female characters are equally informed by stereotypes of what is appropriate according to gender norms. This makes women unemployed, unattractive and self-deprecating. These positions ultimately determine the emergence of texts that are present in the midst of the audience. The position of the subject or object in this representation contains certain content.

In addition to the position of the narrator object, the position of the reader in the discourse is also important to note in Mill's (1995) CDA. The reader's position is determined and placed in the text. For example, the narrator has a high (topical) position that is visible in the text. This will affect how he is presented and how he is presented by others. This will affect how she is portrayed and how others are portrayed. We hope that this analysis from a feminist perspective will advance our reflection from politically incorrect accusations to an analysis detailed enough to show the reader some parts of the text, which of course gives us the structure of memory as such. After interpreting the results that reveal a socio-cultural structure influenced by patriarchal thinking, we hope that readers will see it as inappropriate and based solely on interests.

## METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method by describing the data source (Djajasudarma, 2010) in the form of lyrics of the song "Idol" by the Japanese duo band Yoasobi. The song "Idol" has 2 versions, namely the version with Japanese lyrics and the English version which was released sometime after the Japanese version. In this study, the main data used is the Japanese lyrics because it was released first and went viral with 283 million views on YouTube. The English version of Yoasobi is only used as additional data because the meaning of each verse has the same meaning and even more clearly explains the meaning of the song lyrics. There are about 80 song verses that are analyzed for object-subject position and songwriter-reader/listener position using Sara Mills's (1995) CDA approach. Secondary data sources are storylines from *manga* and *anime* to better understand the meaning of the song lyrics conveyed. In data collection, the first step was to rewrite the lyrics of the Japanese and English versions of the song "Idol" in the video into text. The second step was to translate the Japanese lyrics into Indonesian. Third, writing down the fragments of lyrics that explain the image and role of idols. Fourth, determining who is the object of the storytelling and the subject of the storytelling. Fifth, put the results of the data into a diagram. Sixth, analyze the data by describing the object-subject position and the position of the writer and reader using Mills CDA (1995). Finally, conclude the results and findings of the analysis found.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the results and discussion section, the lyrics of the song “Idol” are analyzed using Critical Discourse Analysis from Mills (1995) which is inseparable from the perspective of feminism to discuss how stereotypical values underlie the choice of diction used to essentialize, exaggerate and describe the image of female idols in song lyrics (Mills, 1995). Then understand how textual symbols, as well as the influence of outside forces, can affect the way texts are constructed and the way readers/listeners interpret what is written (Hall, 1997, Barker, 2018). Thus, not only classifies who is the position of the object of discussion and who is the subject of discussion but also how the position of the reader/listener and the writer should be discussed in this research (Mills, 1995). In the lyrics of the song titled “Idol” by Yoasobi, there are 80 stanzas of lyrics that show that the female idol named AI is positioned as an object that is discussed by fans who are positioned as subjects. Female idols are mostly told by fans and we can understand that in Japan, male fans are more attracted to female idols and vice versa (Galbraith & Karlin, 2012; Van Haecke, 2020). Meanwhile, female idols do not talk about their fans, only express what they feel as idols off stage with a very limited number of lyrics. The following is an explanation of the findings related to the position of subjects and objects in the lyrics of “Idol” songs.

### Female Idol (AI) as Subject Position

Figure 1 presents a ranking of 1 to 8 characteristics or images of female idols based on the highest to lowest order that often appears in song lyrics. The loyalty that idols show to their fans is in the form of maintaining the dignity and image of the idol and obeying the wishes according to what the fans want to see. In other words, the fate of female idols’ careers is in the hands of the fans (Galbraith & Karlin, 2012; Marx, 2012). In the second place, female idols often lie to their fans to save their careers as idols with a total of 11 findings (Van Haecke, 2020). The third order is female idols as a perfect figure in any case from the viewpoint of fans with several appearances of 7 (Galbraith & Karlin, 2012). Meanwhile, the fourth order is displayed as the figure of idol motherhood, namely the mother figure from a patriarchal perspective (Rich, 1986) and the idol as a special figure displayed at a total of 6 each. The fifth order is occupied by the figure of an idol full of dreams

(dreamer) with a total of 4 appearances. Next, the sixth order is a female idol who is kind, indifferent, sparkling, and seducer with each having the same number, namely, 3. Furthermore, the seventh place is filled with idols as mysterious women, and geniuses, but are shown as lonely figures with a total of 2 each. The last rank, female idols are mostly shown as famous but greedy as much as 1. In this discussion, we will analyze the five images displayed in the song lyrics. The characters and images in the sixth to eighth rank are not included in the analysis because they appear little in the lyrics so the focus of the lyrics is taken from the number of occurrences of female idol images that can explain the hegemony of female idol images represented in song lyrics (Barker, 2018). Thus, it can be explained the reason why the image of female idols mostly displays the ideal figure of ‘loyal to fans’, ‘idols as liars’, or deviant figures that are not liked by fans.

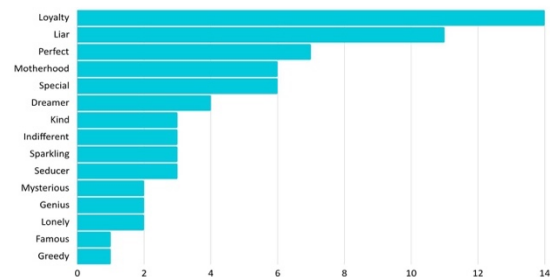


Figure 1: Female Idols as Object Positions in “Idol” Song Lyrics.

### Idols who are Loyal to Fans

Female idols are shown to have an image that is loyal to fans, which is the main theme conveyed in the lyrics of the song “Idol”. Being the opening song for the main story in the anime “Oshi no ko” which features an idol who has many secrets that must be covered up by lying to fans in public. The secret she is covering up is that Ai is an idol who has two twins. The children were born when Ai was at the peak of her entertainment career.

- (1) そう得意の笑顔で沸かすメディア  
 隠しきるこの秘密だけは  
愛してるって嘘で積むキャリア  
 これこそ私なりの愛だ  
*Tokui no egao de wakasu media*  
*Kakushikiru kono himitsu dake wa*  
*Aishiteru tte uso de tsumu kyaria*  
*Korekoso watashi nari no ai da*

Showing this smile, my own weapon boiling  
media  
Keeping everything about my secret deep inside  
**“I’m in love with you,” my career is built on  
such a lie**

It’s the way I know to show my love, without a  
doubt

(Idol, Yoasobi 2023)

The lyrics of the song in Excerpt (1) show that the idol’s nature as a liar to hide secrets and facts of life off stage is shown by continuously saying ‘*aishiteru*’ to fans. Instead of showing honest love, this activity is fanservice performed by female idols to show loyalty to their work in order to maintain their career and not disappoint fans. This love that is conveyed only for the sake of work as an idol can be understood as fake love displayed in the lyrics. The era of idol groups in the song lyrics is the era of *Sengoku aidoru*, which is the emergence of massive idol groups that the concept of idols in this era has changed, not only is the performance on stage consumed by fans, but the off-stage life of an idol (private life) has also become public consumption (Galbraith & Karlin, 2012; Katsuki, 2014; Yamamoto, 2019). Having to display an attitude of loyalty to fans through lies is an effort to form a relationship and create take and give activities related to female idols and fans that are mutually beneficial to each other (Van Haecke, 2020). An idol can maintain an ideal image in front of the public by hiding activities referred to as ‘love scandals’ or dating men, constantly giving ‘love’ and the best performance to fans, then fans will provide support until the peak point of a career in entertainment (Galbraith & Karlin, 2012; Yamamoto, 2019; Van-Haecke, 2020).

Thus, female idols in the lyrics are shown with a negative stereotype of ‘liars’ socially but this stereotype leads to a positive image as a form of loyalty to fans. Female idols are shown to be convoluted by using the terms love and lies referring to the concept of female idol loyalty that is filled with patriarchal values, demanding to be an ideal idol figure so that female idols are used as objectification of masculine desires that want a perfect figure without defects according to the masculine point of view (Mills, 1995).

### Idols as Liars

A liar is a bad image in the eyes of the public. In contrast, this image has a different view of the idol world, presented as an ideal image that female idols should have. The explanation of female idols

as liars is the point of view of fans who know what their idols are hiding. The following analysis explains that the ideal image of Japanese female idols is a liar as presented in Excerpt (2).

(2) 流れ無敵の笑顔で荒らすメディア  
知りたいその秘密ミステリアス  
抜けてるとこさえ彼女のエリア  
**完璧で嘘つきな君は  
天才的なアイドル様**

*Muteki no egao de arasu media  
Shiritai sono himitsu misuteriasu  
Nuketeru toko sae kanojo no eria  
**Kanpeki de usotsuki na kimi wa  
Tensaitekina aidoru sama***

Couldn’t beat her smile, it stirred up all the  
media

Secret side, I wanna know it, so mysterious  
Even that elusive side, part of her controlled area  
Complete and perfect

**All you say is a bunch of lies**

**Dear Miss Genius Idol, unmatched**

(Idol, Yoasobi 2023)

**The same** line from **Kanpeki de usotsuki na kimi wa Tensaitekina aidoru** shows that fans realize that what is shown in the public domain is not entirely true. Fans actually praise their idols with the term ‘genius idols’. The words of praise written in the lyrics explained that female idols are better off not showing their authenticity, which can make fans unhappy and stop making them as *oshimen* or favorite members chosen and supported by fans (Van-Haecke, 2020). This can certainly affect the idol’s career if it is considered to display a deviant idol figure. Figures that are considered deviant idols will be rejected by the fandom and the management knowing this will act not to encourage the idol’s career and even give a punishment according to the mistakes made (Galbraith & Karlin, 2012; Yamamoto, 2019; Van-Haecke, 2020). Thus, song lyrics depict female idols using unusual terms, have other meanings, and are not presented as beings who have a complete awareness of what they want to do (Mills, 1995). The ideal image displayed is influenced by demands that focus on the male point of view that wants to dominate women by the interests of desire and imagination that have been constructed such as the *kawaii* and chaste image of school age that represents typical Japanese female idols (Van-Haecke, 2020).

## The Perfect Idol

In addition to the ideal female idol figure, having high loyalty and lying for the sake of the idol's career, idols are shown as perfect idols for showing a stunning smile coupled with the phrase 'I love you' to fans (see Excerpt (3)).

- (3) 誰もが目を奪われていく  
君は完璧で究極のアイドル  
金輪際現れない  
一番星の生まれ変わり  
その笑顔で愛してるで  
*Daremo ga me wo ubawareteiku*  
*Kimi wa kanpeki de kyuuukyoku no aidoru*  
*Konrinzai arawarenai*  
*Ichibanboshi no umarekawari*  
*Ah, sono egao de aishiteru de*  
That emotion melts all hearts, all eyes on you  
**‘Cause you are perfect, the most ultimate idol**  
Unrivaled, will not appear again  
It's the brightest star reborn, yes, indeed  
Ah, using that smiling face that says “I love you” again

(Idol, Yoasobi 2023)

A smile is one of the proofs of perfection possessed by female idols. The smile felt by fans can radiate from the idol's shining eyes. A smile is associated with an expression that shows happiness at a glance, an expression that has good value. If smiling is positioned as an obligation to cover sadness, then a smile can have the meaning of a fake smile. As idealized in the figure of a female idol, idols are required to always smile not only on stage but in the public domain when she is not idol in her daily life (Van-Haecke, 2020). Sadness, resentment, and other negative emotions will harm the ideal figure of an idol. Idols are required to give up their entire lives including their bodies and feelings to melt the hearts of fans. Speaking of the female body, in the lyrics of the song “Idol” female idols are shown as beings who are not allowed to be themselves and the power over their own bodies by stereotypes from a male point of view (Mills, 1995). Thus, the figure of a female idol is considered perfect based on the assessment of the standardization created by fans about the image of a friendly idol, displaying a stunning smile without tolerating the feelings or emotions that idols actually feel.

## Idols as Motherhood and Specials

Furthermore, discussing two lyric data (4) and (5) idol as Motherhood or a maternal figure and a special idol figure. The figure of motherhood appears in the lyrics of this song related to the storyline of the *anime* and *manga* entitled *Oshi no Ko*, namely, a female idol named Ai keeps the secret that she has two twins named Aqua and Ruby. Ai's skill as an idol to keep this fact a secret is shown as a special idol figure. The lyrics of the song that portray the two figures are as seen in Excerpt (4).

- (4) 流れる汗も綺麗なアクア  
ルビーを隠したこの顔  
歌い踊り舞う私はマリア  
そう嘘はとびきりの愛だ  
*Nagareru ase mo kireina Aqua*  
*Rubii wo kakushita kono mabuta*  
*Utai odori mau watashi wa maria*  
*Sou uso wa tobikiri no ai da*  
Running down, my sweat is flowing Cleanest  
aqua, right?  
Ruby is hidden under my eyelids where it  
resides  
**I sing and dance around Look at me, I'm**  
**Maria**  
So, lying surely is the greatest kind of love  
(Idol, Yoasobi 2023)

Her second child is actually an exploration in search of the true meaning of the word love. It is said that Ai is an idol who has never felt loved and loved as a woman. From the lyrics *Utai, odori, watashi wa Maria* equates herself as an idol who can sing and dance, as well as a mother like Maria. Mary is a religious symbol that represents a holy woman, a mother full of sacrifice, a mother carrying a child who has no father. This concept of Mary is linked to what Ai experiences in the *Manga* and *Anime* storylines. Upon learning that Ai is pregnant, the audience is not told who the father of her child is. The figure of motherhood is shown as motherhood, which is a mother figure controlled by patriarchal values. Rich (1968) explains that motherhood is a mother who provides unconditional love and care, and works hard tirelessly in this context trying to work as an idol despite having a high-risk motherhood role that allows the idol's career to end.

The figure of the female idol shown is in stark contrast to the women's movement. Nowadays, women do not have to follow the traditional role of



motherhood. According to Tong (1998), the mother figure has changed over time, women do not need to be biological mothers to be a mother, there is the term social mother who can love a child even though they have no blood ties. This shows that the idol as a mother is a figure desired by men with traditional values that make women unable to consciously choose their own desires so they have to fight alone by applying good patriarchal values that can endanger women's lives. As seen from the storyline of the *manga* and *anime*, Ai died by being stabbed by her own fans because the fans found out the lie she had been hiding, namely, the 'scandal' of being an idol but having a role as a mother.

Although it has a tragic plot, the song "Idol" that opened the *anime* 'Oshi no ko' does not show the plot of Ai's death, it only shows that she can finally feel the sincere love of a mother and daughter relationship or what is called motherhood. Let alone having children or getting married, it is common knowledge that idols in Japan are prohibited from dating until caught. Of course, this is related to the business model offered by idol agencies, which not only sells the ability to dance and sing on stage, but also the idols' private lives often become public consumption. (Aoyagi 2005; Galbraith & Karlin, 2012; Katsuki, 2014; Yamamoto, 2019).

- (5) はいはいあの子は特別です  
我々はハナからおまけです  
Hai, hai, ano ko wa tokubetsu desu  
*Wareware wa hana kara omake desu*  
**Right, right, we all know she's very special,**  
**yes**  
We had lost the fight before it started, so  
impressed

(Idol, Yoasobi 2023)

The concept of idols who try to cover up scandals being called special idols is written in the lyrics in Excerpt (5) Hai, hai, ano ko wa tokubetsu desu. The idol is presented as a special figure because of her loyalty by proving the idol's ability to cover up secrets and realities that fans don't want to see. This praise is evidence of the take and given relationship between idols and fans. Idols are only seen as objects of satisfaction (Galbraith & Karlin, 2012; Yamamoto, 2019; Van-Haecke, 2020). If you do not provide services, in this case, an idol figure that is not by the wishes of the fans, you will be threatened with being replaced by another idol figure (the idol's career will decline).

## Idol as Dreamer

An exploration of the search for the meaning of love by female idols, Ai displays this as her high desire. Ai wants to have two roles at once, namely, the role of an idol and the role of a mother. More clearly, the following Excerpt (6) is an explanation of the lyrics of the song.

- (6) いつかきっと全部手に入れる  
私はそう欲張りなアイドル  
等身大でみんなのこと  
ちゃんと愛したいから  
今日も嘘をつくの  
この言葉がいつか本当になる日を願って  
それでもまだ  
君と君にだけは言えずにいたけど  
*Itsuka kitto zenbu te ni ireru*  
*Watashi wa sou yokubarina aidoru*  
*Toushindai de minna no koto*  
*Chanto aishitai kara*  
*Kyou mo uso wo tsuku no*  
**Kono kotoba ga Itsuka hontou ni naru hi wo**  
**negatte**  
One day, I will hold everything that I pursue  
Yes, I am so greedy, true voracious idol  
So, sincerely, what I'm wishing for is to love  
each of you with all my heart  
And so, today, I lie again  
**The words I vocalize inside of me**  
**I'm wishing that one day they come true**  
Up to this day,  
I've not been able to let you  
And you hear me saying those meaningful  
words

(Idol, Yoasobi 2023)

The lyrics of this song show that what *Aishiteru* has been saying easily to fans, is fake love that is used to perpetuate the idol's relationship with fans (fanservice). Ai has a dream that one day she will feel real love. This condition is the impact of demands from fans that idols need to maintain their image and behavior in public because it can result in a decrease in idol and agency income (Galbraith & Karlin, 2012). Mills (1995) argues that if women in any role are shown continuously in accordance with the stereotypical male gaze, it can slowly eliminate the independence and humanity of a person including female idols who want to feel what it feels like to be loved and love without having to think about the interests that are

only enjoyed by someone who has power (Barker, 2018).

From the explanation of how female idols are presented as the subject of the story, it is revealed that women as idols are still represented as figures based on the stereotypes of Japanese female idols in the *Sengoku jidai* era (the era of the massive birth of idol groups) (Katsuki, 2014). The stereotype of Japanese female idols is a *kawaii* image that is obedient like a school girl to rules such as the rule of no sex. To be considered a special figure in the eyes of fans, female idols are willing to lie about their true feelings and appear perfect to refrain from showing any flaws that could affect their career. The falsity displayed by female idols is influenced by patriarchal values that package it with a professional form of ‘loyalty of an idol to fans’. The professional form claims to be a universal truth that ignores female idols as whole beings, this is referred to as cultural hegemony. Cultural hegemony is produced by perpetuating an ideology continuously, in this case patriarchy, by groups that have power, namely fans as the subject of storytelling in song lyrics (Mills, 1995; Barker, 2018).

### Idol Fans as Object Position

Fans as storytelling subjects dominate how women are displayed, described, and packaged in “Idol” song lyrics. In addition to song lyrics that explicitly describe female idols, song lyrics that tell the figure of fans can explain how the figure of female idols is shown implicitly through the expressions of a fan towards his idol. The following are the findings of how fans of female idols in Japan are generally displayed in song lyrics. The fans in question are male fans because female idol groups dominate male fans and vice versa (Galbraith & Karlin, 2012; Yamamoto, 2019). Based on Figure 2, fans as nosey who want to know everything about their idols show frequent appearances as the first rank with a total of 14. Second place, fans as superior figures who feel entitled to the idol’s body and life. While the third order, fans have a bad-tempered nature when it comes to idol deviations and mistakes made by idols. The fourth order, fans have a loyal and loyal nature to the idols they like, and the last order of fans as a figure of envy and gullible when there is someone close to their idol.

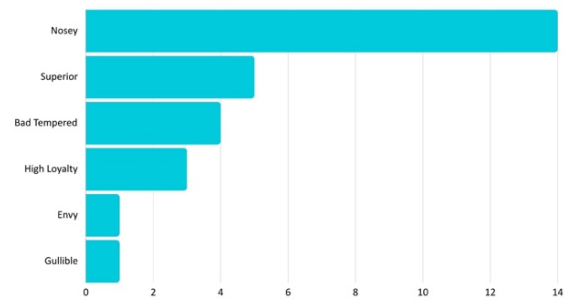


Figure 2: Fans as Subject Position in “Idol” Song Lyrics.

### Nosey fans

The Nosey nature of fans is a high sense of curiosity about what the idol does and likes. This is done of course in order to have the latest info on their favorite idol. This shows that fans are interested in women’s lives outside of idols as shown in Excerpt 7.

- (7) 今日何食べた？  
 好きな本は？  
遊びに行くならどこに行くの？  
 何も食べてない  
 それは内緒  
 何を聞かれても  
 のらりくらり  
*Kyou nani tabeta? Suki na hon wa?*  
*Asobi ni iku nara doko ni iku no?*  
*Nanimo tabetenai, sore wa naisho*  
*Nani wo kikaretemo norari kurari*  
 What did you eat today?  
 What book do you love?  
**Whenever you go out for fun, tell me, where do you go?**  
 Haven’t eaten anything  
 It’s a secret, unknown  
 Any questions you’re facing, always acting so vaguely  
 (Idol, Yoasobi 2023)

The entire lyrics are questions expressed by fans who are eager to know their idols’ likes and daily activities but female idols only heed and do not answer these questions. The questions make it clear that as a female idol, the private life is more interesting than the idol’s performance on stage. This shows that in the *Sengoku aidoru* era, compared to the previous idol concept, it is easier to achieve and it seems that the relationship boundaries between idols and their fans provide more closeness and provide the potential for fans to break them, referred to as *gachi-koi* (serious love)

(Van-Haecke, 2020). This interaction between fans and female idols is certainly related to the otaku culture from Japan who love one thing or even several things seriously (Aoyagi 2005; Galbraith & Karlin; Van-Haecke, 2020).

### Superior Fans

Superior fans are shown with lyrics that explicitly tell female idols not to show weaknesses and shortcomings because being the main star will not show all their shortcomings. This action of telling female idols shows that fans are in a more powerful position as seen in some of the song lyrics (see Excerpts 8).

- (8) 弱点なんて見当たらない  
一番星を宿している  
弱いとこなんて見せちゃダメダメ  
知りたくないとは見せずに  
*Jakuten nante miataranai*  
*Ichibanboshi wo yadoshiteiru*  
*Yowai to konante misecha Dame, dame*  
*Shiritakunai toko wa misezu ni*  
There cannot be weaknesses to find  
The brightest star is residing in you  
The gaps and shortcomings, don't show 'em  
Dammit, dammit  
Parts nobody wants to know should remain hidden  
(Idol, Yoasobi 2023)

The lyrics of *Yowai to konante misecha Dame, dame* show fans who have a higher and dominating position than female idols. Idols are arranged in such a way on the grounds of 'loyalty to fans and 'a main star does not show his flaws' this proves again that idols are shown to be perfect according to what fans want instead of achieving idol careers but to provide satisfaction for masculine desires. The lyrics imply that idols' lives cannot be separated from the power groups that entangle their lives so that they are constructed into beings who depend on (male) fans (Mills, 1995, Barker 2018).

### Bad Tempered Fans

As fans who demand everything from their idols, it shows that if a case or scandal happens to their favorite idol, fans will release anger by saying 'I will not forgive you' (see Excerpts 9).

- (9) THIS これはネタじゃない  
からこそ許せない  
完璧じゃない  
君じゃ許せない  
自分を許せない  
*Kore wa neta janai*  
*Kara koso yurusenai*  
*Kanpeki janai*  
*Kimi ja yurusenai*  
It's not a joke, you know, right?  
So, I cannot forgive you for that  
Completely deny  
Imperfect you that I sight  
(Idol, Yoasobi 2023)

In today's world, some concepts come from attractive packaging, but there are parties who feel disadvantaged by this. Just like the idol concept displayed in the lyrics of the song "Idol" is inseparable from the commodification of female idols. Values are turned into profitable things. This business concept certainly perpetuates patriarchal hegemony that creates a stereotype of the ideal figure of a female idol. As if providing universal truth values so that idols are not only required to try to look perfect in terms of dancing and singing skills, they are required to try to follow the rules of an ideal figure. As a result, if female idols are known to deviate from the ideal figure, fans as the main donors will give unflattering comments and female idols' careers will end faster (Galbraith & Karlin, 2012; Barker, 2018; Yamamoto, 2019; Van-Haecke, 2020).

### Fans Who Have a High Loyalty Attitude

The otaku culture in Japan is closely related to idol fans who have a high loyalty attitude towards their favorite idols, showing the seriousness of love for their favorite idols. The following form of high loyalty is displayed in Excerpt (10).

- (10) はいはいあの子は特別です  
我々はハナからおまけです  
お星様の引き立て役 B です  
全てがあの子のお陰なわけない  
洒落臭い  
*Hai, hai, ano ko wa tokubetsu desu*  
*Wareware wa hana kara omake desu*  
*Ohoshi sama no hikitateyaku B desu*  
*Subete ga ano ko no okagenawakenai*  
*Sharakusai*  
Right, right, we all know she's very special, yes

We had lost the fight before it started, so impressed

**Miss, I'm such a star we're serving as support to her grace**

Cannot tell me everything was because of her No, it's not right. Out of line

(Idol, Yoasobi 2023)

High loyalty is not only given by female idols but also given by fans who support their idols to the stage of being a star. Fans will provide more support if an idol can become a special person in the hearts of fans. Showing female idols who must do everything possible and get the attention of fans by the standardization of the ideal image of idols. This relationship is certainly perpetuated by various parties, especially groups in high positions who control aspects of the idol itself (Barker, 2018; Van-Haecke, 2020). Female idols in this position do not have much choice over their desires (Mills, 1995).

### Envy & Gullible

High loyalty Fans are shown as envious. Envy arises when there is someone close to the environment of their favorite idol. This sense of envy also shows a sense of insecurity towards himself who is afraid of losing the figure of the idol he supports (see Excerpts 11).

(11) 全てがあの子のお陰なわけない

洒落臭い

**妬み嫉妬なんてないわけがない**

*Subete ga ano ko no okagenai wake ga nai*

*Sharakusai*

**Netami shitto nante nai wake ga nai**

Cannot tell me everything was because of her

No, it's not right

No, it's not right

**Out of line how can we not feel jealous while being around**

(Idol, Yoasobi 2023)

This lyric in Excerpt (11) displays the murmur of a fan who is guessing whether his favorite idol is doing a scandal that fans don't want to see. It shows explicitly that fans feel envy with the presence of someone close and familiar, especially a man in their idol's life. In other words, fans understand that they are only a second role but try to bind female idols by giving praise for the lies that idols do. According to (Galbraith, 2017; Yamamoto, 2019) idols in Japan must follow special rules and regulations that must be followed

by an idol, one of which is the 'anti-love/romance rule'. Thus it can be understood that fans as storytellers present idols based on what they want for their interests based on desire and sexual attraction (Mills, 1995; Van Haecke, 2020).

(12) 嘘か本当か知り得ない

**そんな言葉にまた一人堕ちる**

また好きにさせる

*Uso ka hontou ka shirienai*

**Sonna kotoba ni mata hitori ochiru**

*Mata suki ni saseru*

"I don't seem to know what it signifies"

Cannot find out if it's true or if it's a lie

**Once again, there's someone who's fallen for the words and cues**

Made him lose his head over you

(Yoasobi, 2023)

Simply put, as seen in Excerpt (12) fans seem to be thinking about their idols' careers in the future. Praising idols who keep lying as perfect idols shows that even though fans realize there are facts hidden from their idols, fans are still stunned. So, the figure shown in the lyrics is a fan who is gullible and easily lured by falsehood. Fans don't care whether what the idol figure gives them is a real or fake feeling, fans only care about their desires being fulfilled (Barker, 2018; Van Haecke, 2020).

### Songwriter/ Author-Reader/Listener Position

The next section will discuss how the position of singer, songwriter as well as the listener understands how female idols are presented in the lyrics of the song "Idol". Although the song titled "Idol" is sung by a girl, the songwriter who wrote this song is a man named Ayase. According to Kreyers (2015), Huaman and Idemaru (2018), Urbano et al, (2021) stated that often songs written by men place women only as sexual objects and present the image of women as helpless, bound, and stereotyped beings based on feminine attributes that are only seen from a male point of view. This song wants to reveal the other side of an idol by the storyline in *manga* and *anime*. In contrast, after knowing the elements and meaning codes in the lyrics, the portion of female idols describing themselves and expressing their opinions is still small in the song "Idol". To find out how the image of female idols is displayed in the lyrics, many terms and meanings are not clearly described (Mills 1995). Whereas (male) fans are

described so straightforwardly, the proportion of opportunities to describe themselves and others (idols) is more expressed by fans (Mills 1995). Thus, "Idol" songs still show the hegemony of patriarchal ideology by presenting an ideal image of female idols that is formed and determined by the powerful, in this case, fans and lyricists

Figure 1 shows in order of highest to lowest of the idol traits and attitudes that often appear in song lyrics. Women are shown as idols who are loyal to work and to their fans, which is the first order with a total of 14 and is a trait and attitude that often appears in the lyrics. The second order is female idols who often lie to their fans to save their careers as idols with a total of 11 findings. The third order of female idols as a perfect figure in any case from the viewpoint of fans with a total of 7 appearances. Meanwhile, the fourth order is shown as a maternal and special idol figure shown as much as 6. The fifth order is occupied by an idol figure full of dreams (dreamer) with a total of 4 appearances. Next, the sixth order is a kind, indifferent, sparkling female idol and the other side is a seducer with the same number of 3. Furthermore, the seventh order is filled by idols as mysterious women, and geniuses, but shown as lonely figures with a total of 2 each. Finally, idols are mostly shown as negative figures as inferior, careless, naughty, and greedy but famous women.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study show that many texts make use of stereotype knowledge when presenting information about a briefly described character to quickly infer the character. This makes a female idol need to continue to have a positive image, have high loyalty to fans, be professional as an idol, always smiling, hide her true feelings, and be required to be perfect by covering up all her weaknesses. Female idol characters and fans are informed by stereotypes of what is appropriate according to gender norms. It is self-limiting to keep female idols inactive, not represented as conscious and whole physical beings, and not focused on her perspective as a female idol.

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