

# Innovative Supporting Approaches: Integrating Bibliotherapy, Psychodrama and AI as a Therapeutic Conversational Tool

Veronika Mattová<sup>†</sup>  
Department of Mongolian,  
Korean and Vietnamese Studies  
Faculty of Arts  
Masaryk University  
Czech Republic  
[veronika.mattova@mail.muni.cz](mailto:veronika.mattova@mail.muni.cz)

Courtney Lazore  
Independent Researcher  
National Coalition of  
Independent Scholars  
United States  
[courtneylazore@ncis.org](mailto:courtneylazore@ncis.org)

## Abstract

How can individuals deal with personal trauma or internal struggles more effectively? This is the main question of every existential crisis, closely linked with humankind's survival strategy. Finding new, innovative ways for practitioners to leverage therapeutic techniques and modern *artificial intelligence (AI) technology* is crucial to providing precision mental health support to more individuals. While looking at possible approaches, it becomes more and more important to synthesize complex ways practitioners can provide multidimensional help. This paper investigates the possibility of a new holistic treatment that integrates *bibliotherapy's* storytelling, *Magic Shop* as a *psychodrama method*, and *AI conversation tools – chatbots* to ensure that individuals receive encompassing supportive therapy and feel less isolated. The holistic method is applied to *Korean pop* music as a case study, because K-pop content has experimented with these techniques and fandoms often have strong parasocial interactions. Combining these techniques creates a holistic, accessible, and personalized mental health care option that enhances the cognitive, emotional and practical well-being of individuals in need of support.

## Keywords

Bibliography, storytelling, psychodrama, Magic Shop, AI, chatbots, K-pop

## 1 Introduction

The psychological aspect of overcoming personal issues and facing the harshness of reality is demanding for everyone. Internal cognitive mechanisms lead us to believe that individual struggles require individual approaches. This adaptation for hiding internal fights and presenting balance to the outside world

<sup>†</sup>Alumna of Comenius University, Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics, MEi:CogSci | Middle European interdisciplinary master's programme in Cognitive Science.

Permission to make digital or hard copies of part or all of this work for personal or classroom use is granted without fee provided that copies are not made or distributed for profit or commercial advantage and that copies bear this notice and the full citation on the first page. Copyrights for third-party components of this work must be honored. For all other uses, contact the owner/author(s).  
*Information Society* 2024, 7–11 October 2024, Ljubljana, Slovenia  
© 2024 Copyright held by the owner/author(s).  
<https://doi.org/10.70314/is.2024.cog.2>

is built under external pressure to achieve inner balance. However, emotional turmoil can be particularly challenging, which is why we need to explore a multimodal approach that could be a revolutionary step in interdisciplinary mental health support.

*Bibliotherapy, psychodrama, and AI* might initially seem unrelated, but there is a way to incorporate all of them within a new therapeutic framework.

## 2 Methodology

This paper uses a conceptual methodology to explore the integration of mental health techniques and *artificial intelligence* to theorize a holistic, accessible and personalized mental health care option. Based on the researchers' backgrounds and engagement with existing literature, *bibliotherapy, psychodrama* and *artificial intelligence* were chosen for further analysis. The researchers reviewed literature from databases including APA PsycInfo, Google Scholar, IEEEExplore, ProQuest, PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science and EBSCO. Only papers written in English and published after 2000 were considered, except for one foundational work (*Purpose and strategy behind the magic shop*). To build the theory, the researchers identified the prominent features of each topic (Table 1): *bibliotherapy's* storytelling, *psychodrama's* experiential model, and *AI's* real-time access, which will each be explored in subsequent sections. For an exploratory case study application, the researchers relied on new concepts (described in 6.1-6.3) provided through the *Korean pop* music industry (concretely *group BTS*), initially produced as music-related products, but nowadays perceived through a therapeutic lens, with the primary aim of merging the separate therapies together, creating a more influential impact.

Approach	Method	Examples	Therapeutic Goal
<i>Bibliotherapy</i>	Individual therapy through storytelling	BTS: "The Most Beautiful Moment in Life" book series	Promote personal reflection and healing
<i>Psychodrama</i>	Magic Shop	BTS: "Magic Shop" song (metaphorical counselling setting)	Explore and resolve emotional conflicts
<i>AI Chatbots</i>	Parasocial interaction therapy	BTS: Weverse, Replica, Mydol	Provide emotional support and companionship
<b>Integrated Approach</b>	Psychodrama and digital interaction	BTS: Integration of storytelling, psychodrama, and digital interaction	Holistic support for the healing process

Table 1: Selection & Clarification for Chosen Approaches

### 3 Bibliotherapy

Storytelling has long been a powerful means of exploring and understanding human emotions, and this concept underpins *bibliotherapy*, a therapeutic approach that uses literature to support mental health and personal growth. By engaging with carefully chosen texts, individuals can reflect on their own experiences, gain new insights, and find comfort and empathy through the narratives. *Bibliotherapy* leverages the emotional and cognitive impact of stories to address psychological challenges, offering a complementary and accessible method for fostering emotional healing and resilience [1].

Some research suggests that fictional narratives may be more effective for use in *bibliotherapy*, causing readers to empathize more with the characters and leading to better self-understanding and self-improvement [2].

Moreover, neuroscience reveals that storytelling influences brain chemistry, enhancing empathy and trust through the release of oxytocin and vasopressin [3]. This approach effectively enhances emotional experiences and trust, aiding in personal development and resilience [4].

### 4 Psychodrama and its Traits in Magic Shop

There are many ways to grasp the concept of *Magic Shop*. The first is understanding it as an in-depth training program with transformational practice, which will be discussed later in chapter 6.2 *K-POP in Magic Shop*.

On the other hand, there is a possibility to apprehend it through the concept of *psychodrama*, which will be our primary interest, within this paper. *Magic Shop* is a practice used in *psychodrama* and group therapy in which participants create a space where they can "buy" something they already want, such as confidence or peace, from what they already have internally, such as anxiety or anger. In other words, this activity helps individuals explore their deepest passions, and the sacrifices needed to achieve them, while encouraging self-reflection and personal growth, with a possibility to solve conflicts in a safe, symbolic environment [5].

The term magic can be seen in society as something that carries supernatural power. *Magic Shop* is not an exception. Thus, it has a lot of forms and names: *Magic Shop* is our deep understanding of heart and brain in harmony. We often compare ourselves to others and hope we could be better than we are. Specific traits like social ability, patience and cleverness are examples that require time and practice. But it seems that *Magic Shop* is the key [6]. This method as a *psychodramatic strategy* can offer help to anybody through the use of fantasy [7].

In general, *psychodrama* is an experiential form of therapy, allowing those in treatment to explore issues through action methods (dramatic actions) [8]. This described approach, linked with *psychodrama*, was developed by Jacob Levy Moreno as a psychotherapeutic technique useful in working with patients during individual and group psychotherapy. This method offers significant changes through role-playing and dramatization, resulting in many benefits, such as insight, abreaction, acceptance of internal impulses, confrontation with the feelings of other people and training of alternative behaviors [9]. Whether we are talking about the first or second definition of *Magic Shop*,

it can be a double-edged sword linked to maintaining one's own physiological and psychological well-being.

### 5 AI used in Therapeutic Spaces

*AI chatbots* are increasingly being used to enhance mental health care by offering real-time interactions that meet cognitive and emotional needs. These digital tools are part of a broader shift in communication, driven by the "computers-are-social-actors" paradigm, where AI significantly impacts how people engage with services [10].

In therapy, AI complements traditional methods by providing personalized interventions, making mental health support more accessible. Virtual environments facilitated by *AI* can create new opportunities for personal fulfilment and emotional connection [11].

Moreover, there is an overlap, because recent research by McAllister et al. explores the potential for *chatbots* to enhance *bibliotherapy* by supporting facilitators in mental health sessions. The study seeks to address gaps in existing literature by investigating how *chatbots* can be utilized to assist in the preparation and delivery of *bibliotherapy* [12].

In addition, in response to the high potential of technology, interviews with *bibliotherapy* facilitators have been conducted, followed by thematic analysis, to identify suitable tasks for the *chatbot*, aiding facilitators rather than directly evaluating the impact on participants of *bibliotherapy*.

This integration represents a major step towards a more comprehensive and accessible mental health framework.

### 6 K-POP as Multidimensional Tool

Although *Korean pop*, generally known as *K-pop*, seems to only overlap with music therapy, due to its main impact field, *K-pop* may also serve as a useful case application for *bibliotherapy*, the *Magic Shop* technique, and *AI* tools.

Some *K-pop* groups participate in transmedia story worlds and lyrical concepts that go far beyond "unrequited love" themes, touching the human psyche more deeply. Additionally, merging this with technology platforms like "Weverse" or "Bubble for JYPnation", not to mention fabricated interactions through apps like "Replika", "Mydol", etc., fans have never felt closer and more bonded to their idols, who are revered with boundless support and understanding.

#### 6.1 K-POP in Bibliotherapy

Many *K-pop* groups rely on some form of storytelling, but some take it a step further. In particular, *K-pop group BTS's "BTS Universe" (BU)*, functions as a multidimensional tool for emotional and psychological engagement. In *bibliotherapy*, *BTS's* books, *The Most Beautiful Moment in Life: The Notes*, provide a unique narrative that facilitates self-reflection and emotional exploration. These notes, embedded within the group's *Love Yourself* albums, as well as two books published by *BTS's* label, offer fans a form of therapeutic engagement by inviting them to interpret and relate to the fictional world, which can mirror personal experiences and foster emotional processing [13].

This can be particularly striking when we take into account individual emotional overload with a long-term inability to

restart one's own coping mechanism to underlie qualitative functioning in everyday life.

Preliminary research has suggested that the stories embedded in *K-pop* can have a positive impact on fans' ability to cope with challenges and heal. One survey found that 97% of fans ( $n=2342$ ) agreed that *BTS*'s music and lyrics were effective in this way. Additionally, 84% agreed the storylines in *BTS*'s concepts were effective, and 75% agreed the *BU* storyline was effective [14].

These numbers suggest valid proof of audience engagement techniques in fiction, described by Donald Maass as presenting novelty, challenge, or aesthetic appeal to readers, which leads to better identification with the story, while figuring out solutions for the main character's actions, reflecting in an individual's healing scheme [15].

## 6.2 K-POP in Magic Shop

There is no doubt that science plays a crucial role in our understanding of human beings, yet some phenomena, such as compassion, altruism and empathy, remain enigmatic. These concepts form the foundation of James Doty's work, particularly in his book *Into the Magic Shop: A Neurosurgeon's True Story of the Life-Changing Magic of Mindfulness and Compassion*, which inspired not only this paper but also the lyrics of the *K-pop* group *BTS*'s song "Magic Shop". The song, much like Doty's book, is perceived to have a healing effect on many individuals, resonating deeply within a therapeutic framework. Doty is not only a renowned author but also a researcher who founded the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE) at Stanford University, which supports his desire to analyze the interaction between the mind and body in relation to the concept of *Magic Shop* [16].

## 6.3 K-POP in AI Chatbots

In the *K-pop* world, *AI* enhances fan interactions by fostering *parasocial relationships (PSI)*, a term that goes back to its roots in 1956 when it was defined as the illusion of a face-to-face friendship between audience members, along with the main factor of a one-sided relationship [17] with *idols* (Korean singers within *K-pop* industry). *Chatbots* like "ChatGPT", "Replica" or "Mydol" offer more personalized conversations, deepening the emotional connection fans feel with their favorite stars [18]. This can be particularly comforting for those dealing with anxiety or low self-esteem.

*AI-driven PSI* offers new avenues for addressing anxiety, providing a controlled environment for emotional exploration. While there are risks of maladaptive obsessions, the positive impact on psychological well-being is significant when managed carefully [19]. As *AI* continues to evolve, its role in supporting mental health in niche areas like *K-pop* will likely grow, offering innovative solutions to common challenges [20].

## 7 Relevance for Cognitive Science & Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Understanding how the human brain reacts to situations, making individuals feel distressed has been already covered. Now, it is more than important to look for strategies to fight against it, apart from medicaments. Recognizing an individual's need to support

one's prosperity and healing cognitive processes, interdisciplinary cognitive science offers an opportunity to merge concepts together that might bring new ways to deepen our knowledge.

Combining different approaches, such as *AI chatbots* using *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)* with minimal *bibliotherapy* interventions, is slowly but steadily indicating that the *chatbots* are more effective in reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety [21], which is the primary desired effect.

Moreover, *fanship*, an individual's bond to their idols, plays a crucial role in enhancing happiness, self-esteem, and social connectedness, which pushes forward the application of social identity theory in the realm of *K-pop* fans and expands the psychological understanding of fandom and its extended therapeutic possibilities [22].

## 8 Findings

Combining *bibliotherapy*, the *Magic Shop* psychotherapeutic method and *AI* tools can offer a comprehensive mental health treatment model. *Bibliotherapy* provides cognitive and emotional benefits through literature and storytelling, the *Magic Shop* method engages clients in creative and transformative experiences, and *AI* tools ensure continuous support and accessibility (as shown in Figure 1).

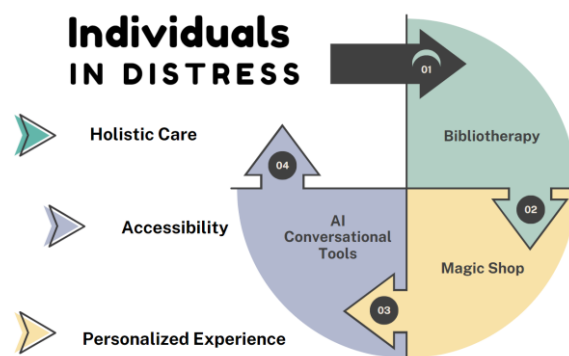


Figure 1: Infographic of Innovative Supporting Approaches

Note. Created with Canva.com

- Holistic Care:** The union offers a multidisciplinary approach to mental health, addressing cognitive, emotional, and practical needs. By considering the whole individual, this approach promotes holistic healing and improves overall well-being.
- Accessibility:** *AI* tools streamline mental health services and provide immediate support, covering a gap to traditional treatments. This ensures that more individuals can access the help they need, regardless of location or financial barriers.
- Personalized Experience:** Integrated approaches enable tailored interventions that can be adapted to individual needs and preferences. This personal involvement improves the effectiveness of treatment, leading to the best results and a more satisfying treatment experience.

Additionally, *K-pop* offers a valuable case application for this holistic program, given the rich story worlds and concepts combined with fans' love and attachment to their favorite idols, some of whom can be accessed through *AI* applications.

## 9 Study Limitations & Subsequent Research

Regarding the limitations of this paper, both authors are fully aware of the restrictive parameters linked to the exploratory case study, which was selected as a presented application. Therefore, the mentioned research gaps and possibilities of merging therapies have only an advisory nature with the need for subsequent research with possible future administration in professional-guided therapy sessions, as well as individual applications after undertaking a specialized training process provided by professionals in specialized facilities.

## 10 Conclusion

Unveiling how to provide the most appropriate care to those who need to overcome difficulties while restarting their coping mechanisms can be quite diverse and tricky. Understanding the individual treatment plan is the key. While previous research has been focused on single therapy treatment, nowadays there is a strong case for merging them. Encountering situations through the safe space of stories allows individuals to better understand actions and emotions, develop empathy and progress in their healing journeys. *Bibliotherapy* allows readers to internalize and adopt positive traits from characters they resonate with, while *psychodrama* facilitates deeper understanding and emotional growth through role-play and perspective-taking. In the realm of *AI chatbots*, this effect can be harnessed to create more empathetic and personalized interactions by mirroring users' language and emotional tone. With *K-pop's* use of *AI*, there is untapped potential for precision mental health care. Overall, these techniques underscore the importance of storytelling in fostering empathy, engagement, and therapeutic outcomes across these diverse fields.

## Acknowledgements

We want to thank *Mgr. Michal Schwarz, Ph.D.* from *Masaryk University* for his support during the process of writing this paper.

## References

- [1] M. C. Pino and M. Mazza, "The Use of 'Literary Fiction' to Promote Mentalizing Ability," *PLoS One*, vol. 11, no. 8, 2016. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0160254>.
- [2] K. Oatley, *Such Stuff as Dreams: The Psychology of Fiction*. John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2011.
- [3] E. R. Kandel, *The Age of Insight: The Quest to Understand the Unconscious in Art, Mind, and Brain: From Vienna 1900 to the Present*. Random House, 2012.
- [4] M. E. Langeberg, "Bibliotherapy: A Systematic Research Review with Social-Emotional Learning Applications," *Illinois Reading Council Journal*, vol. 51, no. 4, pp. 32-45, Fall 2023. DOI: 10.33600/IRCI.51.4.2023.32.
- [5] A. C. Barbour, "Purpose and strategy behind the magic shop," *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama, & Sociometry*, vol. 45, pp. 91-101, 1992. [Online]. Available: <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:152183218>.
- [6] R. Rautiainen, "Using the Magic Shop in a work counselling group," *Centre for Playback Theatre*, 2002. [Online]. Available: [https://www.playbacktheatre.org/playbacktheatre/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Rautiainen\\_Magic-Shop.pdf](https://www.playbacktheatre.org/playbacktheatre/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Rautiainen_Magic-Shop.pdf). [Accessed: Aug. 19, 2024].
- [7] E. Koile, "The Magic Shop: The therapist masquerades as a shopkeeper," *Voices: The Art and Science of Psychotherapy*, Spring 2011. [Online]. Available: <https://www.aapweb.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/voices-sample-koile.pdf>. [Accessed: Aug. 19, 2024].
- [8] "Psychodrama," *Types of Therapy*, GoodTherapy, 2016. [Online]. Available: <https://www.goodtherapy.org/learn-about-therapy/types/psychodrama>. [Accessed: Aug. 19, 2024].
- [9] K. Litwińska-Rączka, "Jacob Levy Moreno's Psychodrama as a Work Technique for Treating Patients in Group and Individual Psychotherapy," *Current Problems of Psychiatry*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 248-259, 2018. DOI: 10.2478/cpp-2018-0019.
- [10] M. Song, X. Xing, Y. Duan, J. Cohen, and J. Mou, "Will Artificial Intelligence Replace Human Customer Service? The Impact of Communication Quality and Privacy Risks on Adoption Intention," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, vol. 66, 102900, 2022. DOI: 10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102900.
- [11] G. Dubey, *Sociální pouto v éře virtuality*. Fra, 2020.
- [12] P. McAllister, J. Kerr, M. McTear, M. Mulvenna, R. Bond, K. Kirby, J. Morning, and D. Glover, "Towards Chatbots to Support Bibliotherapy Preparation and Delivery," in *Chatbot Research and Design - 3rd International Workshop, CONVERSATIONS 2019, Revised Selected Papers*, A. Følstad, T. Araujo, S. Papadopoulos, E. Lai-Chong Law, O.-C. Granmo, E. Luger, and P. B. Brandtzaeg, Eds., vol. 11970, pp. 127-142. Springer Nature, Switzerland, 2020. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-030-39540-7\_8.
- [13] C. Lazore, "How the BTS Universe Successfully Engages Thousands of Fans," *The BTS Effect*, 2019. [Online]. Available: <https://www.thebtseffect.com/blog/how-the-bts-universe-successfully-engages-thousands-of-fans>. [Accessed: Aug. 19, 2024].
- [14] C. Lazore, "'Artists for Healing': Anxieties of Youth, Storytelling, and Healing through BTS," *BTS Global Interdisciplinary Conference*, 2020.
- [15] D. Maass, *The Emotional Craft of Fiction: How to Write the Story Beneath the Surface*. Writer's Digest Books, 2016.
- [16] CCARE, "Mission & Vision," *Stanford Medicine*, 2019. [Online]. Available: <http://ccare.stanford.edu/about/mission-vision/>. [Accessed: Aug. 19, 2024].
- [17] D. Horton and R. R. Wohl, "Mass Communication and Para-Social Interaction," *Psychiatry*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 215-229, 2016. DOI: 10.1080/00332747.1956.11023049.
- [18] M. Pradeep, "Kpop Idol-Based Chatbots are Blurring the Lines Between Interaction and Explicit Obsession," *Screenshot*, 2022. [Online]. Available: <https://screenshot-media.com/culture/internet-culture/kpop-idol-based-chatbots-dangers/>. [Accessed: Aug. 19, 2024].
- [19] S. Ortiz, M. Shin, M. Samuels, and A. Windsor, "What is ChatGPT and Why Does It Matter? Here's What You Need to Know," *ZDNET*, 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://www.zdnet.com/article/what-is-chatgpt-and-why-does-it-matter-heres-everything-you-need-to-know/>. [Accessed: Aug. 19, 2024].
- [20] R. Kowert and E. Daniel, "The one-and-a-half sided parasocial relationship: The curious case of live streaming," *Computers in Human Behavior Reports*, vol. 4, 100150, 2021. DOI: 10.1016/j.chbr.2021.100150.
- [21] D. A. Laffan, "Positive Psychosocial Outcomes and Fanship in K-pop Fans: A Social Identity Theory Perspective," *Psychological Reports*, vol. 124, no. 5, pp. 2272-2285, 2021. DOI: 10.1177/0033294120961524.
- [22] M. Liu, H. Peng, X. Song, C. Xu, and M. Zhang, "Using AI chatbots to provide self-help depression interventions for university students: A randomized trial of effectiveness," *Internet Interv.*, vol. 27, 100495, Jan. 2022. DOI: 10.1016/j.invent.2022.100495.