

Seven Men and their Deeds: A Piece on BTS

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"No! This is not really a piece on BTS! Well in a roundabout way, it is. But this piece is really about me"

I hit an epiphany today!!!

An epiphany that gave an answer to my and your long-asked questions. An epiphany that finally put my mind to rest and hopefully will put yours. The epiphany is an answer to the question of why I am 'obsessed' with BTS? However, as opposed to obsession, I choose to refer to it as passion. I was convinced it was passion when one day I saw a post on Instagram asking if there was something I could talk about for 1 hour straight without preparation and to my disappointment, I could not think of a topic that I was that versed in. Then barely a week later, I stumbled on the question again and without giving it much thought and with confidence, BTS readily rolled out of my tongue. I knew it was passion when I hungered to research more into BTS and write the result of my research to further educate the world on what BTS stands for. I further was convinced it was passion when I could look past my shyness and talk about BTS confidently with anybody that cared (and even when they do not care) to listen. In fact, with the information gathered I could write a book about BTS (Thankfully, if I end up writing a book, I will not be the first nor second person who would have done that).

This worried me!

As a form of self-reflection, I asked myself and the people around me over and over again if it was okay to claim to be 'passionate about a boyband'. No matter how hard I thought about it, it didn't feel okay yet it felt okay. It did not feel okay because people of my age are busy being passionate about what is perceived to be of value to their lives like Jesus, their occupation, charity and many more. But deep within me, it felt okay because for the first time in a long time, I felt alive and excited. It explained why I could sit through hours of YouTube lectures on BTS and read lengths of Articles on BTS without my energy draining. But the questions lingered. Is this normal? Are these not activities that are best left for teenage girls? Why should I be passionate about an Asian boy band from across the equator? So what to do with the said passion? This was even more worrisome when I told myself that I had never felt like this over anything nor anyone in the past and that this is a first for me.

But I lied!!!

I had felt passion before! Only I did not know to call it passion and unlike today, I did not have people pointing out my 'obsession'. It was not passion for a subject or for a cause. It also was not passion for my course of study, it was rather passion for a person and what this person represented to me.

Eight years ago today, I wrote an Article that underscored my passion for this person titled "***The Man and his Deeds: A piece on SLW***" I remember the night I wrote that article like it happened only yesterday. I was burning with rage and the overwhelming desire to defend his honour. Someone I adored and respected had just been treated really badly by the very people he trusted and led. I did not care for the fact that I was not a great writer, I just wanted to set the record straight anyway I could. So, while the house slept and with a disturbing heaviness on my chest, I took my pen and notepad and scribbled angrily away while pouring out my heart regarding the situation and the person whose reputation was being unfairly maligned. Only when I finished writing and publishing did the heaviness depart from me. I knew I had not written the best literature piece but my satisfaction at having done something in defence of SLW knew no bounds.

Now, everyone around me in school and at home knew about SLW because I could not stop talking about him. I wanted to let them know how great of a person he was and how I would do almost anything he asked of me. For SLW, I participated in school politics (with the way I hate Politics, I could never have imagined that possibility). For SLW, I (as ridiculous as it may sound) prayed and fasted! Yes! just so he could win an election. He was too much of a great person to lose the elections that would pave the way for him achieving greater things and reaching bigger audience in order to touch their lives.

Why?

But why was I that passionate about SLW, a mere human? The first thought that should cross the mind of a reasonable man is that I was probably in love with him right? Yes, I absolutely loved SLW but I most certainly assure you that the love never had any form of romantic undertone to it. I did not do all I did because I thought him to be a handsome and charismatic young man whom I could someday be in a relationship with. No! I was certain of it then and I am certain of it even now (Not like it matters anymore since he is happily married). I was passionate about SLW simply because he drew me

out of my shell, gave me another chance at life in Unilag and gave me a new definition of what true leadership entails. He employed a style that highlighted the good in everyone and emphasized the strengths of the people working with him. He pretended to be in need of hands to help in his administration but in actual fact what he was doing was to deliberately target persons who hid in their shadows and helped their light shine forth. In simple terms, SLW helped me to crawl out of the shadow of inferiority complex that had taken its place in my life as a student of Unilag. One day, SLW approached me from nowhere and simply slammed me with a duty (To join a team in setting up a whole association in the faculty) and gave me no option to say no. I resented him just a little bit because I did not understand why someone who I had barely ever spoken to suddenly wanted me to do such an uphill task. I took up the task and became a better version of myself for my remaining days in Unilag. With SLW's help, I was able to gather some crumbs of my shattered confidence and I began to venture into more extra-curricular activities in the faculty. But my admiration and passion for SLW was not all about me, it started to form when I listened to other people tell the same story as me - 'SLW brought me out of my shell' and when I began to pay attention to the values he upheld as a leader. So I began to have hope for humanity and I wanted to support this person whose virtues must burst forth from the bounds of our micro society into the macro society. True to my belief in SLW, his impact began to be felt all over the university and my passion was further reinforced. I remember thinking – I will like to always have someone like SLW in my life who would always bring out the best in me.

So, BTS?

During the course of my self-reflection, I saw too many similarities between what I now feel about BTS and what I felt about SLW. Just like the constant desire to talk about them; wanting to let people know about them; my willingness to write the longest of articles or book just to achieve this end; the rage I feel when people malign them; and the urge to go to any length to defend their honour. The only difference is that BTS makes up seven **insanely talented** Asian guys who have no idea of who I am but who also at the same time know of my existence by virtue of the fact that I am their target audience. But still, what puts BTS on the same pedestal as SLW for me or maybe even a much higher pedestal? I repeat for the umpteenth time, I discovered BTS when I was at the lowest point of my life (you could say I had somehow found my way back into the shadows SLW struggled to wriggle me out from). A time I questioned everything and wondered if there was any chance at success for me. A time when I was overly hard on myself. But unlike SLW, BTS was not there to talk to me face to face or to literally drag me to do things, BTS simply spoke to me through their music, their lyrics, their

story and their lifestyle and the craziest part is that they have not stopped speaking to me. I encountered BTS when I had this constant heaviness on my chest, you may call it weariness but BTS soon replaced this weariness with another heaviness called zeal. This zeal nags at me every time I listen to their music or that I watch them do something they trained to become better at. This zeal constantly bullies me to stop shutting myself up, to speak up, to do more, to love myself and fight for what I deserve.

Also, just like SLW, I am insanely in love with the seven men that make up BTS but do I fancy myself to be romantically in love with the gorgeous and charismatic young men? No (Even if that were to be a yes, I doubt that I stand any chance with any of them) Again, just like SLW, I am not the only person BTS has placed the burden of zeal on. Millions of people around the world, regardless of language, culture, age testify daily of the impact of BTS' music, the persons and the lifestyle on their lives. This impact especially pertains to mental health- how BTS and their message have literally saved them from committing suicide and have helped them love themselves more regardless of the situation they find themselves. How BTS inspires and helped to awaken the creativity that have long been dead in them.

The Epiphany!!!

So it became clear to me why I fancy myself to be passionate about BTS. It became clear that as expected, I naturally gravitate towards people or phenomenon who help in whatever ways to make me a better version of myself. More importantly, I gravitate towards people who I perceive to simply represent HOPE. Hope in the goodness of the world. Hope in the fact that People like SLW and BTS exist for people like us to look up to in order to become the best version of ourselves. My passion or obsession, if you so choose, is not because I love staring at their handsome faces every day, it is because I feel the need to constantly talk about this phenomenon to people just in case, BTS or their message of self-love and self-worth is all they need to break free from their prisons.