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Oh, Chuyun. *K-pop Dance: Fandoming Yourself on Social Media*. London: Routledge, 2022. 194 pp. \$48.95 (paperback)

In 2011, I embarked on my BA in Korean Studies at the University of Paris, and to this day, I can recall the excitement my classmates and I shared whenever a new K-pop release hit the scene. Defining K-pop can be quite a challenge, but for the purpose of this review, it refers to the popular music from South Korea (hereafter Korea) performed by artists who have undergone specific training under entertainment companies.

In France, choosing to specialize in a language in college is a bold decision. The rigorous curriculum, which includes intensive language instruction and content-heavy courses on various aspects of the language's culture, makes it challenging to combine with a double major. Despite being one of them, I was always fascinated by the fact that most of my classmates made such a decision based on their interest in K-pop or any other Korean cultural product. This made me interested in looking closely at K-pop fans around me. A decade later, I am a Ph.D. student, writing my thesis about K-pop fandoms while TA-ing for a Korean language class. Unsurprisingly, an overwhelming number of my students are K-pop fans. Yet, most of them are STEM majors. Even if the enrollment in classes related to Korea gets bigger and bigger every year, the major still needs help finding its audience. The two main reasons behind this are, on the one hand, the fear of unemployment and, on the other, a lack of support for students who would like to look at Korean popular culture through an academic lens. In the introduction of her book—*K-pop Dance: Fandoming Yourself on Social Media*—Chuyun Oh writes that she hopes that the book inspires "the next generation of academics" to contribute to the study of K-pop, even outside of academia (6). Oh's warm words of encouragement set an optimistic tone for her outstanding contribution to the field of Korean Studies.

Oh steps out from the outdated framework of "hybridity" that was overused in the earlier stages of the Korean Wave (11). This discourse of Othering, a desperate effort at finding hybrid elements to justify the popularity of K-pop, compelled scholars to forget about those who are doing K-pop. By looking at K-pop cover dances as "intercultural performances" with issues of identity passing and imitation among K-pop fan dancers, Oh reminds us that K-pop fans "not only listen to K-pop but also perform it." Oh's effort at shifting the focus to fans there gives them back their agency (2). She highlights how "hybridity" otherizes K-pop dance and stresses the problematic nature of this theoretical framework. With the exponentially rising popularity of groups such as BTS and Blackpink, K-pop continues to gain prominence among western audiences, even if it was already very present in other parts of the world. With mainstream media framing this phenomenon as a long-overdue recognition, we see evidence of the debate regarding racial authenticity that Oh discusses in the book. Oh's discussion of racial authenticity resonates with growing concerns among K-pop fans from western countries regarding "foreign" influences in K-pop, in opposition to the celebration of an authentic "Koreanness" from the same audience.

The book is constituted of two parts. The first part focuses mainly on K-pop dance. Chapter 1 coins the term "social media dance" and theorizes TikTok dance challenges, a trend that completely changed the social media landscape of K-pop. Chapter 2 provides an extensive

history of K-pop choreography evolution from the 1980s to the 2020s. In contrast, Chapter 3 uses the musical group BTS's versatility as performers to explain how their growth follows the forty-year timeline of K-pop's development described by Oh in the former chapter. BTS is undoubtedly a dominant name in K-pop, but other groups deserve recognition for their contributions. While Chapter 3 offers a detailed and well-researched look into BTS's performances, a more holistic approach that includes other groups in comparison would add a little more perspective.

The second part of the book details Oh's work in "performance ethnography" with K-pop cover dancers. Chapter 4, following a dance team at a state university in San Diego, reveals vital elements of what Oh characterizes as intercultural performance. Chapter 5 delves into the complex world of K-pop fandom, exploring one dance team member who happens to be a white American K-pop fan-dancer. Looking at the fan's experiences of doing K-pop dance cover both in Japan and the US, the chapter raises concerns about fans' positionality when enjoying K-pop. Fans claiming to "just like the music" may perpetuate the idea of K-pop solely for entertainment, disregarding its cultural significance. This chapter is relevant to today's discussions on cultural appropriation and highlights the challenges K-pop fans face in engaging with the culture respectfully. Finally, Chapter 6 is based on Oh's experience as an educator for a refugee-service community in the state of New York. Her auto-ethnography highlights the ethical implication of staging a K-pop performance while closely reflecting the relationship between the researcher and their informants.

The book takes an interdisciplinary approach that has two main strengths. First, it helps diversify the field of performance studies by putting it in conversation with Korean cultural studies. Second, it helps the book reach a wider audience, from scholars of the three main fields of the book—critical cultural studies, popular dance studies, and performance studies—that would be interested in the issue to the undergrad students that could be part of the "next generation of academics" Oh is hoping to see emerging. The book skillfully uses performance analysis with ethnographical data, putting the theoretical framework mentioned in the introduction into perspective.

Overall, Oh's work highlights the potential of K-pop as a springboard to tremendous success. In the epilogue, she steps back from the optimistic bubble created in the book and interrogates her positionality as an educator implicated in the group she is studying. She realizes her activism's class and racial limitations while emphasizing the power of performance ethnography in "blurring the line across theory, practice, and method" (169). K-pop's lack of recognition in the field of dance is analogous to the fact that it is yet to be considered a serious topic in Korean studies, albeit on a different scale. Despite these challenges, Oh's book gives us the strength to go forward and aim for more representation and recognition of the work of the performers and those involved in their performances. It is an important reminder that much work must be done to break the glass ceiling and make K-pop a more recognized and respected type of performance and field of study.

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