

(transportation) and media (screen) throughout the twentieth century. This study helps explain the ascendancy of *hallyu* throughout the world in the twenty-first century.

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The Comfort Women of Singapore in History and Memory by Kevin Blackburn. Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2022. 208 pp.

In his nuanced yet bold study of the highly politically charged comfort women issue, Kevin Blackburn convincingly refutes the influential statement of the longest-serving, inaugural Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, that Korean comfort women had “saved the chastity of many Singaporean girls” (17), and uncovers the underexplored discourse of collective, “male-centric” (21-22) comfort women memory in Singapore. By engaging extensively with the experiences of Korean comfort women and skilfully utilizing sources—such as *Ilbon gun wianso gwanliin ui ilgi* [Diary of a Japanese military comfort station manager]—on the recruitment of Korean women and running of the comfort stations in Singapore, Blackburn brings to light the untold stories surrounding Singapore comfort women, both during and after the Pacific War. As such, the book examines the discursive production of an officially zero Singaporean comfort woman myth, and unlocks a relatively unknown world of those women, hitherto existing in parallel with their fellow comfort women, but being discursively suppressed to silence.

Revolving around three keywords—silence, diversity, and deception—the seven chapters of the book can be divided into the following parts. Chapters 1 and 2 examine how masculinist memories of the local Singapore comfort women, which were awakened firstly by Lee Kuan Yew in 1992, operated within the discourse of authority / popular memory, in spite of the fact that local women had in many ways been involved in the Japanese military sex industry. Such a “masculinist hegemony over memories of the comfort women” (13) becomes a salient reason behind local women’s silence about their past. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the diversity of the comfort women in Singapore, who came from different parts of Asia, although the majority were Korean

women; their agency in this book is empirically well-restored, based largely on the *Ilbon gun wianso gwanliin ui ilgi*. Here, the commonality of deception used to recruit young women across many parts of Asia is emphasized as arguably the key strategy in bringing, for example, Korean women and Indonesian women to Singapore. Chapters 5 and 6 comprehensively trace and analyze the root causes behind the silence of the local comfort women, from the intersections of gender and class in the wake of the war to the wide ramifications of masculinist memories after Lee's speech in 1992. Chapter 7, lastly, explores how the local Singapore comfort women are remembered in culture, as well as how the comfort women issue in the context of Singapore becomes a transnational history.

The book tactfully navigates through the processes of local framing, discursive reception, and silent outcomes of the sensitive comfort women issue. The questions framing Blackburn's book are straightforward and simple: why "local women did not feel empowered to come forward" (28) and how to interpret this silence vis-à-vis other visible, outspoken Asian comfort women, most notably Korean comfort women. The answers are surprisingly satisfying, however. Drawing on the prevailing historiography on Korean comfort women over the past two decades and adroitly utilizing vast genres of sources, Blackburn sheds light on how Lee's male-centric speech shaped the popular, collective memories of the comfort women in Singapore and how it has silenced local comfort women who would otherwise have come forward. The silence sharply contrasts with the collective movements of comfort women from other countries, again most prominently Korea. But even with Blackburn's skilful archival research and careful analysis of various sources (oral history, personal interviews, etc.), some of the comfort women issues, in particular the local Singapore comfort women, remain shrouded by time due to "masculinist memories" (30), the wide circulation of that male-centric popular discourse, and their repercussions felt in culture and heritage. And that unfolding of mystery is what makes his book such an intriguing study and paves the way for a broader understanding of the wartime experiences of comfort women in Singapore and Asia.

Notwithstanding the book title, throughout the text Korean comfort women, who are very much at the core of this book, prove to be an indispensable counterpart to the local Singapore comfort women, acting as both a point of comparison and a point of reference to ascertain the fact of, and complement the narrative of, the Singapore comfort women, whose existence as well as voices were inadvertently silenced. In addition, the book's broad treatment of Korean comfort women agency, though written with care, will potentially draw

some unwanted attention from neo-nationalists and thus be vulnerable to their exploitation and manipulation.¹

Without a doubt, *The Comfort Women of Singapore in History and Memory* greatly expands the scope of extant scholarship on the comfort women, and as such it will appeal to a wide readership, including scholars, students, and the wider public. In particular, the wider public, who are not scholars of the subject under investigation, will find it beneficial with the (perhaps intentional on the part of the editor or author) frequent repetition of various information, such as the explanation of certain words (e.g., *obasan*, pp. 70, 87), background information (e.g., William Bradley Horton, pp. 104, 150), and footnotes (e.g., Park, pp. 71, 84). Nonetheless, the book will certainly engage the reader in discussions about gender, sexual slavery, human rights, and more, both within and beyond Singapore.

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Diasporic Hallyu: The Korean Wave in Korean Canadian Youth Culture by Kyong Yoon. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022. xii, 152 pp.

Dr. Yoon Kyong's [Yun Gyeong] short book, *Diasporic Hallyu*, should be required reading for scholars of ethnic studies. Written in clear and approachable language with abundant ethnographic interview data, it will also be reader-friendly for undergraduates and non-academic audiences. Including the introduction and conclusion, the book is five chapters in length, and although some of the points are made and remade in different chapters, this (as well as chapter abstracts) facilitates reading or assigning individual chapters.

In Korean studies it is always a challenge to get people outside of Korean studies to see our scholarly work as more than a case study. I imagine this book will have a similar challenge, as people will see it as a book about Korean media (to be clear it is a book about audience interactions with media). If I could speak to scholars at large who are teaching ethnic studies, I would strongly

1. See some of the works that have enjoyed a welcome readership among certain groups: Pak Yuha [Park Yu-ha]. 2015. *Jeguk ui wianbu* [Comfort women of the empire]. Seoul: Buri wa ipari; and Ramseyer, J. Mark. 2021. "Contracting for sex in the Pacific War." *International Review of Law and Economics* 65, 105971. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.irl.2020.105971>.