

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

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

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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>.

recommend them to use this book. The thick descriptions and in-depth picture drawn in Yun's book on life as a minority youth vis-à-vis the culture of an ethnic homeland are complex and important. Furthermore, because the case is from Canada—Toronto, Vancouver, and Kelowna, instead of the United States—I feel like the experiences being shared here about growing up as “others” in the West are more widely applicable than if they were rooted in the particularity of the US case. As Yun points out, the Korean-American population has existed for longer and is more dominated by monolingual third- and fourth-generation people, while the Koreans he interviewed for this book may more typically represent a recently immigrated and racially “othered” community in almost any country. This text is ripe for consumption not as one about *hallyu* but about diasporas and ethnic identity. The only small downside to the book is that there are places where it becomes highly obvious how much time has passed between 2015 and today—some of the interviewees will be glad of the pseudonyms because they turned out to be wrong about fandom and the direction *hallyu* was going. Generally speaking, however, the book masterfully covers a key time of transition, as *hallyu* shifted from niche to mainstream.

In the introduction Yun outlines diasporic audiences of *hallyu* and their role in the growth of *hallyu*'s international spread. To treat international audiences as if all participants from a single country (Brazilian fans), continent (North American fans), or linguistic group (French-speaking fans) are identical flattens the very real differences that can impact their fandom practices and understanding of *hallyu* products including their racial, class, and ethnic origins. Undoubtedly the group that may encounter *hallyu* in some of the most complex ways are diasporic fans who come to *hallyu* with greatly elevated cultural and linguistic awareness and may find within *hallyu* fandom pride and belongingness. At the same time the rise of *hallyu* can create dissonance for some diasporic Koreans who may not want to be associated with some aspects of Korean pop culture, may be uncomfortable with a sort of “yellow fever” for Korean men that has emerged, and may have spent much of their life looking down on Korean pop culture as less developed and attractive than that in their country of citizenship. As Yun explains, “Diasporic youth have to translate and relocalize *hallyu* media from their own socio-cultural positions” (8). Furthermore, they may become part of *hallyu* performing industries, or facilitate cultural flows through translations and such. Perhaps most importantly, as Yun points out, diasporic audiences relate to music from their homeland in relation to music of their current home.

In chapter 2 we learn more about identity work of young Korean-Canadians. When I was working at the University of British Columbia and teaching classes

full of ethnically Asian students I felt the degree to which *hallyu* had opened a space for discussing Asianness and Koreanness, not just for Korean-Canadian students, but for Asian-Canadian students of other ethnic backgrounds and international students from Asia to come together and find a place for meeting. It is part of the magic of *hallyu* that it could be part of identity-making and creation of community for youth in this time period. In the book Yun explains that exposure to Korean media alone was not enough to spark interest among the young people he interviewed, many of whom had grown up with Korean media playing at home, but that it worked much more effectively when combined with trips to Korea or after *hallyu* began to rise, stirring pride in Korean things and rekindling interest. As pride and identification with Korea increase, “*Hallyu* media functions as a substitute for dominant Western media among the diasporic youth, while engagement with the *hallyu* media becomes a significant marker of their self-identity” (48). Yet at the same time, as Yun explains, coming out as Korean can involve stereotyping, even as *hallyu* gains international fans, and consequently some Korean-Canadians want to keep their consumption of *hallyu* to themselves.

Chapter 3 discusses how through *hallyu* television media texts diasporic youth can see themselves “without referring to, and being validated by, the White gaze” (64). The chapter extensively discusses the TV show *Kim’s Convenience* as one of the only Canadian representations of Koreanness but also demonstrates how that program appeared on Canadian TV in 2016 only after “Gangnam Style” created a pivotal moment for the spread of *hallyu* in 2012. In other words, for many interviewees *Kim’s Convenience* came after they had already turned to Korean media for content that did not center white stories and voices. Through a gradual process that is part of viewing Korean television, many of the interviewees learned something about presenting who they were without explaining themselves.

In Chapter 4 Yun turns his attention to K-pop and the ways that Korean-Canadian audiences experience it differently than either Korean or foreign (but not ethnically Korean) fans do (103). Yun introduces us to previous studies on music and diaspora, where music becomes a tool for understanding parents and the homeland, or alternatively, relocalizes the music in a new homeland and uses it as a tool for negotiating identity in a diasporic space. However, the case of K-pop is different because it is broadly consumed beyond diasporic populations. Further, the motivation and method of interacting with *hallyu* is different than previous generations in the diaspora who may have consumed media content for nostalgia, perhaps sticking to styles or artists from their youth. Today diasporic consumption of *hallyu* concentrates on the cutting edge, and it is not a

process of remembering the past. Yun also explains that they don't necessarily consume this media with their family as part of an ethnic homespace, but in individualized ways identical to how they consume non-Korean media. It helped that the music had hybrid elements of what was popular in the West. However, the largest turning point was a sort of "coming out as ethnic" (an idea that Yun returns to repeatedly through the book), generally when entering university and finding a diasporic community. Yun explains that for some of his interviewees K-pop was part of a process of "voluntary ethnic identification" that was more important than the actual music itself (114). Through K-pop they could connect to Korea in their own way, not the way their parents do (116). At the same time, Yun's interviewees were also keenly aware that an outsider's perspective on K-pop could lead to essentialization of Korea and Korean culture, which made them uncomfortable. They also increasingly saw K-pop as comparable, or superior to, Western pop music, and enjoyed the hybrid components, but did not appreciate K-pop or idols being too imitative of the West (125).

In the conclusion, chapter 5, Yun draws together the ways that *hallyu* is changing both media and the diasporic audiences who encounter *hallyu* and the impact of *hallyu* on the world. *Hallyu* is not inherently anti-hegemonic (because within Korea *hallyu* industries are hegemonic and commodifying), but for diasporic youth, *hallyu* "offer[s] ... an antidote to both the essentialized notion of Koreanness and the White-dominant imagination of Canada" (139). However, as Yun discusses, one barrier to diasporic audiences is their response to the Korean government's approach to *hallyu*, because the very branding of these cultural products as associated with the country of Korea continues to leave the diasporic audience in the same position of incomplete belongingness that they may hope to overcome through increased international knowledge of, respect for, and interest in Korean things. To the Korean government the diaspora and their issues with belongingness are invisible. They are not the imagined Korean audience prompted to see *hallyu* as a national triumph nor the imagined foreign audience. Yet, *hallyu* creates an opening for alternative cultural movements. Yun concludes by reminding us that diverse diasporic audiences experience and respond to *hallyu* in a multiplicity of ways.

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