

PERFORMING JAPANESENESS, PLAYING WITH KOREANNESS?: FEMALE JAPANESE K-POP ARTISTS AND STRATEGIES OF IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

Mayako Liu

Introduction

This paper brings to light the recent and ongoing phenomenon of Japanese female youth participation in the K-Pop industry as artists and performers. While scholars have examined the reception and consumption of K-Pop and Korean popular culture in Japan, few have noticed or reflected on the significance of the growing number of Japanese who not only consume but take part in K-Pop productions today.¹ Data developed by Matsutani Sōichirō demonstrates that over sixty individuals have made their debuts in K-Pop acts, excluding the many more preparing for debut as trainees in South Korean entertainment companies and the even larger number preparing to become trainees.² A number of these individuals have achieved prominent positions in the K-Pop industry. Often displaying remarkable fluency in the Korean language and cultural expressions, these Japanese K-Pop artists increasingly “identity pass” in the industry and its media space. While such identity politics have been discussed in relation to transnational K-Pop fandoms and cover dancers, I extend these perspectives to the artists themselves, looking at some of their concrete strategies of self-representation, embodiment, and identity construction in media, discourse, and performance.³

Organized in a roughly chronological manner, this essay will trace the evolution of the artist’s affective and performative strategies from the mid-2010s to the present through key moments and figures. I argue that contemporary female Japanese K-Pop artists are developing creative and effective strategies of self-representation, narrative management, and embodiment — performing Japaneseess and playing with Koreaness — to navigate the gendering and ethno-nationalistic compartmentalization of their identities in both Japanese and South Korean contexts.

Performing ‘Japaneseess’ for Korean consumption

In the early stages, Japanese K-Pop artists strategically mobilized modes of self-representation and performance to confirm and authenticate South Korean expectations of ‘Japaneseess’ and thereby, boost their popularity. These strategies were hugely successful. Marking the beginning of Korean entertainment agency’s active recruitment of Japanese members was the debut of 9-member girl-group TWICE from JYP Entertainment in 2015. The three Japanese members — Hirai

Momo (hereafter, Momo), Minatozaki Sana (hereafter, Sana) and Myōi Mina (hereafter, Mina)⁴ — quickly rose to stardom, winning the hearts of many Korean fans. It is highly likely that JYP Entertainment planned to recruit and position these members in ways that appealed to *both* the Japanese market as well as Japanese pop culture fans in Korea.⁵ This strategy is evident, for example, in the group's early music videos, where the Japanese members personified Japanese subculture archetypes popular in Korea: Sana as Japanese anime character Sailor Moon and Mina as the quintessential Japanese schoolgirl or *shōjo*.⁶

Of course, these modes of self-presentation were highly gendered. They often confirmed gendered expectations of Japaneseness from the vantage point of a male Korean fan of Japanese culture. Sana's delivery of the line "shy, shy, shy" (pronounced *sya, sya, sya* by her) in the group's performance of their 2016 song, "Cheer Up", went viral in Korea, as she performed and re-performed this affective act of cuteness, known in Korean as *aegyo*, across multiple media channels. In a popular television show for K-Pop content, *Weekly Idol*, Momo crowned the *aegyo* battle for performing the famous line, "*nikko nikko nii*" from the Japanese anime, *Love Live!*, which had a strong fanbase in Korea.⁷ These acts were given an air of authenticity in the media precisely because they were performed by members publicized and known to be coming from Japanese backgrounds. In many ways, they fueled the imaginations of male Korean fans of Japanese *anime* and *manga*, enacting the real-life versions of female characters and their affective notions of Japanese femininity.

Surely, such representational strategies played a role in popularizing TWICE. Not surprisingly, the gender make-up of the group's domestic fanbase is known to have been predominantly male in its early years.⁸ However, more recently, the group has been experimenting with their gender representations and have not been replicating these earlier modes, reflecting broader changes in Korean society and the globalizing K-Pop industry.

Manipulating the 'gaps' of expectation: *Produce 48*

2018 was a turning point in the recent history of Japanese participation in K-Pop. It was the year in which the Korean television network Mnet broadcasted the idol survival reality show, *Produce 48*. As the third season of the immensely successful *Produce 101* series, *Produce 48* was unique for its collaboration with the big-name Japanese idol producer, Akimoto Yasushi. What this collaboration entailed was the participation of members from the massive Japanese girl-group, AKB48 (and its regional subgroups), to compete with Korean trainees for a spot in the transnational girl-group to debut simultaneously in Japan and Korea.⁹ With the release of *Produce 48*, was the first time when a significant number of young Japanese females publicly participated in the K-Pop system.¹⁰

As Lee Gyu Tag (2019) has pointed out, *Produce 48* dramatically narrated the encounter of Japanese and Korean idols as a clash of cultural systems, when in reality, the hierarchical and competitive format of the program was very much modeled on the Japanese idol system.¹¹ The first few episodes set the stage. Confronting the task of ranking the group-performances of the AKB members, the K-Pop trainer-judges, Korean trainees, and the Japanese idols themselves, gasped in dismay over the embarrassingly under-performing AKB groups by K-Pop standards. The fact that the AKB members were professional idols with years of experience only made it worse, or so the program made it seem. The show narrated and reconciled this situation in a framework of

“cultural differences (*munhwa ch'a*),” which rationalized this overwhelming affect in terms of different standards in Japanese and Korean idol cultures.¹²

Whether or not such a narrative framework was fair is beside the point here. Rather, I would like to emphasize how this setup that posited two separate cultural and affective regimes despite the underlying similitude, produced a ‘gap’ in which the Japanese participants interjected their subjectivities. Miyawaki Sakura (hereafter, Sakura), one of the most popular contestants on the show, consciously manipulated this ‘gap’ of perception and constructed a new kind of “growth narrative (*sŏngjang sŏsa*)” that factored in her subjectivity. By “new,” I am contrasting with the kind of “growth” signified in the notion of “growth-type idols (*seichō-gata aidoru*)” in the context of Japanese idol culture. As Kim Mi Jin (2021) has discussed, “growth” in this context (especially regarding AKB48) was situated in the male *otaku* fan’s relationship with his favorite idol, predicated on the latter’s performance of “negative affective labor” to generate feelings of intimacy and care, like that of parent and child.¹³ Sakura, who started her idol career early and had climbed to the top of the AKB48 hierarchy by the time she joined *Produce 48*, was well aware of her position on the show and clearly understood what the K-Pop system sought to display. On *Produce 48*, she spoke of long-standing doubts she had towards her own “abilities (*jitsuryoku/sillyŏk*)” as a Japanese idol, questioning whether her popularity merely relied on context or actually stemmed from herself. By tapping into the *sillyŏk* discourse of K-Pop — a discourse positing the illusion of an “objective” standard for the measurement of an artist’s vocal/dance/rap abilities — she framed her challenges on the show as an opportunity to test her abilities vis a vis the global standards of K-Pop.¹⁴ Indeed, Sakura succeeded in demonstrating that she was perfectly capable of excelling in the K-Pop system as well, earning herself runner-up in the final selection of *Produce 48*.

This growth narrative extended its life beyond the program. Journalists raved when Sakura announced her decision to “graduate” from HKT48 — upon completion of her activities in the *Produce48*-borne girl-group IZ*ONE — to pursue a new career as a K-Pop idol. They questioned why a Japanese “top star” would come all the way to Korea only to start from the bottom as a K-Pop trainee.¹⁵ Such media exposure further contributed to Sakura’s representation in K-Pop which she continues to mobilize for her activities in the K-Pop girl-group, LE SSERAFIM, debuting from HYBE Entertainment in 2022. Recently, she hosted her own YouTube series, *Fearless Kkura* (Kkura is Sakura’s fan-produced nickname in Korea), inviting guests from diverse occupations and displaying her candid interactions with them in fluent Korean. Neither did she abandon the goofy, humorous variety-show character that she cultivated as a Japanese idol, which clearly appeals to Korean domestic audiences as well as seen in the comment sections.¹⁶ In such ways, Sakura flexibly integrates the various “Japanese” and “Korean” modes of expression to negotiate a new subjectivity.

Corporeal strategies navigating through/between ethno-nationalistic categories

As Chuyun Oh (2023) has argued in respect to international K-Pop cover dancers, the desire, dedication, and effort to emulate K-Pop idols and embody their intercultural performance necessarily factors in the performer’s subjectivity. We cannot therefore understand K-Pop cover dance merely as a form of “cultural appropriation,” which denies authenticity to the performer and the performed. Rather, Oh contends that a deep physical engagement with intercultural forms and the resulting experience of identity passing carry with them a transgressive potential, possibly a decolonizing one.¹⁷ This observation can also be applied to Japanese K-Pop artists who have physically transformed their bodies through their efforts to embody K-Pop.

A figure that requires due recognition in this respect is Honda Hitomi (hereafter, Hitomi.) Hitomi also took part in *Produce 48* where she gained recognition for her immaculate dance moves and charming character, debuting as one of the 11 members of IZ*ONE. Coming out of *Produce 48* and her activities in IZ*ONE, Hitomi displayed a remarkable transformation of her body and physical appearance that surprised many Japanese and Korean fans. While I refrain from making aesthetic judgements, it is clear from her interviews that her engagement with the K-Pop system served as a turning point in reconsidering her orientation towards her own body. Hitomi actively shaped her body through diet and exercise in ways not available or intuitive to the Japanese idol context.¹⁸ This experience of physical transformation led to newfound self-confidence as Hitomi took up the initiative in directing AKB48's performances and upgrading their choreographies upon returning to Japan, which left a significant mark not only on the history of AKB48 but of female Japanese idol groups in general.¹⁹

From the perspective of Japan-Korea relations, scholars have often characterized the Japanese reception of K-Pop in terms of an “ambivalent” or “love and hate” relationship. The presence of a massive and enthusiastic Japanese fandom is contrasted with popular anti-Korean sentiment stemming from historical and political contentions between the two nations.²⁰ These studies have tended to assess the impact of K-Pop in terms of its (in)effectiveness in mitigating such negative nationalistic sentiment.¹ However, this type of approach constructs a false dichotomy between the cultural and the political, positing K-Pop as a homogenous force to which individuals or groups can only engage and respond in limited ways. The role of embodiment — for instance, in the case of Japanese K-Pop artists or Japanese participants in the expanding enterprise of K-Pop cover dance — in mediating Japanese youth identification with Korean culture is not given due consideration.

At the same time, the Japanese music/entertainment industry has, in recent years, been emulating practices and adopting elements of the K-Pop system, although some producers blatantly deny the fact. With the global success of K-Pop, young Japanese producers have raised concerns over losing Japanese talent to Korea, foreshadowing the imminent decline and international isolation of Japanese entertainment business. A primary example is Hidaka Mitsuhiro (also known as SKY-HI,) artist and current producer/CEO of BMSG, who openly pushed forward his agenda to produce an internationally viable Japanese boy-group.²¹ Such discourses around the industry's new goal of “advancement overseas (*kaigai shinshutsu*),” however, often constructs imagery of “overseas” as frankly American or Euro-American.

Similar politics can be seen in the strange ethno-cultural positionality of the girl-group XG (short for Xtraordinary Gals,) which debuted in 2022 from Avex. Although based in Japan, the group relies heavily on Korean personnel and K-Pop resources. The main producer Jakops was also a former K-Pop artist who mobilized his connections from the K-Pop industry to produce the group. Moreover, XG utilizes K-Pop infrastructure, namely South Korean television music programs, to reach a “global” audience. The members all speak quite fluent Korean and recently released a YouTube series where they converse only in the Korean language. Despite all of this, their producers aggressively position XG as a “Japanese” group, rejecting categorization as K-Pop. Recently, the group came under fire from the Korean online community when the chairman of the Avex group, Matsuura Masato, commented in a live broadcast that XG was not like K-Pop but “more American (*Amerika-ppoi*)”²²

†

While ideological forces attempt to reinstall boundaries in response to the globalization of K-Pop, a new generation of multilingual and intercultural Japanese have begun to devise fresh ways of navigating this fraught landscape. A good example is the recent controversy over the photographic hand sign, *gyaru pīsu*, in Korea. The controversy started when some Korean online users or *netizens* began to criticize the popularity and proliferation of this “Japanese” hand sign among K-Pop stars and celebrities in early 2022. Part of the criticism stemmed from the fact that the trend started from a selfie posted on Instagram and twitter by a Japanese member of the K-Pop girl-group IVE, Naoi Rei (hereafter, Rei).²³ Netizens soon took to online forums such as *instiz* to express their dislike and discomfort at the uncritical adoption of Japanese culture by Koreans, some evoking anti-colonial stereotype of a Japanese introducing “evil” customs into Korea.²⁴

It appears to me that Rei wittily and effectively responded to this situation, neither retreating into silence nor responding through conventional means such as hand-written apologies.²⁵ Known as “Kim Rei” among her fans for her fluency in the Korean language, Rei often “passes” as a Korean in the group, presenting herself with a degree of ethno-racial ambiguity. Most fascinating is the fact that she is perfectly capable of “code-switching” between passing as a Korean on the one hand and presenting herself as a “sort of foreigner/Japanese,” depending on what kind of affective or social effects she wishes to generate. In the case of the *gyaru pīsu* incident, too, Rei did not passively wait for the controversy to subside, but swiftly responded by devising a new photographic pose and constructing a narrative to present herself as the masterful creator and disseminator of trendy poses, of which *gyaru pīsu* was only one. By devising and publicizing the *k’ongsunipose* – named after a South Korean children’s animation show -- as the next “trendy” hand sign for the Korean genZ, she wrestled herself out of the narrative of a “Japanese” introducing “Japanese” hand sign. Alongside SNS, Rei confidently presented her repertoire of fashionable hand gestures including *gyaru pīsu* on occasion of her appearances in popular variety shows such as *Knowing Brothers*.²⁶ Thereafter, the tide of public opinion online seems to have subsided and moved on towards the direction of simply considering *gyaru pīsu* as just one among many other popular hand signs.

Conclusion

IVE’s Rei represents a new generation and group of Japanese women who grew up in the digital landscape of Hallyu 2.0, cultivated their dreams in transnational careers as K-Pop artists, and are embodying the intercultural expressions of K-Pop to an unprecedented degree.²⁷ Increasingly, it is possible for these Japanese artists to “identity pass” in the K-Pop industry, effortlessly switching between sociocultural codes of “Japaneseness” and “Koreanness” according to context and modifying their meanings along the way. The implications of such developments are undoubtedly immense and would require further and continued study to fully examine their contributions and significance in such contexts as Japan-Korea relations, performance studies, gender studies, diaspora studies, among others. In this paper, I have recounted the evolution of some of the strategies of self-representation and identity construction taken up by Japanese K-Pop artists, beginning with TWICE and the group’s gendered performance of ‘Japaneseness.’ The K-Pop industry’s collaboration with the Japanese idol industry and the production of *Produce 48* provided the pretext that enabled some Japanese contestants to interject their subjectivities and construct new growth narratives. The examples of LE SSERAFIM’s Sakura and Hitomi (now graduated from AKB48) vividly illustrate how these individuals transformed their bodies through their efforts to embody K-Pop and acquired new sources of self-expression. Drawing on these

expanded resources, Japanese K-Pop artists today have begun to construct, project, and perform their gendered subjectivities in ways that productively manage regional tensions and creatively defy nationalistic forces that attempt to circumscribe their identities.

Mayako Liu is a Ph.D. student in the History and East Asian Languages program at Harvard University. She specializes in the modern histories of Japan and Korea, with a focus on the sociocultural history of Korea's colonial era. Mayako grew up watching, listening, and dancing to K-Pop. These experiences have fueled her passions in unpacking the complex historical experiences and contemporary changes that shape the nature of the relations, interactions, and identities of Japanese and Koreans.

¹ On the Korean Wave (Hanryū) and the reception of K-Pop in Japan, see: Eun-Young Jung (2015)

² Japanese culture critic, Matsutani Sōichirō, has identified the Japanese (including Japanese-Korean) members of K-Pop girl-groups and boy-groups as of December 2022. The data can be found here: Matsutani Sōichirō, "Kōhaku ni K-Pop ze wa 5 kumi, chūmoku nihonjin membā no keireki," *Bunshun onrain*, December 22, 2022, <https://bunshun.jp/articles/-/59849?page=3> (Accessed March 11, 2024.)

³ On theoretical discussions of identity passing in K-Pop cover dance fandoms, see Chuyun Oh (2023). For an example of how corporeal strategies are employed by women to manage expectations of racial/gender/class identity and navigate their positionalities within specific sociocultural contexts, see Alexis S. McCurn (2018).

⁴ In this essay, I use the McCune-Reischauer system for romanization of Korean names and terms and the Revised Hepburn system for Japanese names and terms.

⁵ For historical perspectives on the presence of Japanese pop culture fans in postwar Korea, see Sung-min Kim (2014).

⁶ JYP Entertainment, "TWICE (트와이스) "CHEER UP" M/V," YouTube video, 4:01, April 24, 2016, <https://youtu.be/c7rCyll5AeY> (Accessed October 14, 2024.)

⁷ ALL THE K-POP, "[Weekly Idol] MOMO's Nico-Nico-Ni beat the heart of a big fan (feat. Heechul) EP.261," YouTube video, 1:37, July 27, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Br2FyUvqXKM> (Accessed October 14, 2024.)

⁸ According to *Namu wiki*, the gender distribution of ticket buyers to the group's first domestic fan-meeting event in 2017 was 83.3% male and 16.6% female. "TWICE/p'aenmit'ing mongnok," *Namu wiki*, <https://namu.wiki/w/TWICE/%ED%8C%AC%EB%AF%B8%ED%8C%85%20%EB%AA%A9%EB%A1%9D#s-2.2> (Accessed August 10, 2024.)

⁹ Although the group has suffered considerable decline in popularity in recent years, AKB48 and its regional subgroups had dominated the Japanese female idol (*aidoru*) scene since the early 2000s. AKB's massive commercial success owed largely to Akimoto's production model, which

tied CD purchases to fan voting rights in the “general elections (*sōsenkyō*).” Inciting fan competition to support their favorite members (*oshi*), the system incentivized mass consumption of AKB’s merchandise. For more on this AKB system, see Yuya Kiuchi (2017).

¹⁰ A total of 96 contestants participated in *Produce 48*, of which 39 were from the Japanese idol group, AKB48 and its subgroups.

¹¹ Lee Gyu Tag (2019).

¹² This was likely a gesture on the part of the Korean producers of the show to highlight the superiority of the K-Pop system without denigrating Japanese idol culture or alienating Korean AKB48 fans. The irony was that the format of the *Produce* (italicized) series — the voting system and fan participation in the ranking of idols — was basically a reincarnation of the AKB system. *Produce 48*, episode 1, directed by An Jun-yōng, aired June 15, 2018, on Mnet.

¹³ For further discussion on the affective politics of female Japanese idols in relation to their male otaku (italicized) fans, see Kim Mi Jin (2021).

¹⁴ *Produce 48*, episode 1.

¹⁵ Yu Sōng-un, “Ilbon kōlgūrup t’opsūt’anūn wae Han’guk’aengūl t’aek’aenna?” *Chungang ilbo*, August 30, 2021, <https://www.joongang.co.kr/article/25002688#home> (Accessed October 14, 2024.); Yu Sōng-un, “kōlgūrup ch’ulsin Ilbon t’opsūt’a Miyawak’i Sak’ura Han’guk’aeng wae?” *Chungang ilbo*, August 30, 2022, <https://www.joongang.co.kr/article/25002849#home> (Accessed October 14, 2024.)

¹⁶ The first episode of *Fearless Kkura* is available here: Kōp-do ōpkkura, “[SUB] Sa’kura ūi haengbok’an shigan... ūn musūn! Paech’yu kimjang 100kg tojōn | [Kōp-do ōp-kkura] EP. 01,” YouTube video, 14:00, November 23, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXgLsPYrI4> (Accessed October 14, 2024.)

¹⁷ Oh (2023: 1-19).

¹⁸ Shimbo Megumi, “IZ*ONE deno katsudō wo oeta AKB48 Honda Hitomi Chan ga kataru, doryoku de teni ireta utsukushisa no himitsu,” *bis*, November 9, 2021, <https://bisweb.jp/interview/120412> (Accessed on October 14, 2024); Wakayama Aya, “AKB48 Honda Hitomi ‘tanoshiku daietto ga dekimashita.’ ‘kankokushiki karada zukuri,’ no hiketsu,” *anan News*, March 14, 2022, <https://ananweb.jp/news/404259/> (Accessed October 14, 2024); Yoshida Yukiko, “[Honda Hitomi] ‘Nanimo shinai ichinichi’ wa tsukuranakatta 2nenhan. IZ*ONE jidai no omoide kataru!” *Non-no plus*, September 2, 2021, <https://nonno.hpplus.jp/article/75355/01/>.

¹⁹ Under Hitomi’s leadership, AKB48 enacted drastic changes in their choreography and performance styles. AKB48’s first release after Hitomi’s return from IZ*ONE, *Nemo Hamo Rumor* (2021) — was widely acknowledged as the most difficult choreography the group attempted since debut.

²⁰ Ahn Ji-Hyun and E Kyung Yoon (2020) and Jung (2014).

²¹ SKY-HI modeled his boy-group, BE-FIRST, on the production and promotional strategies of K-Pop. Rhetorically, SKY-HI utilized K-Pop, addressing a “crisis” in which Japanese youth were seeking out artistic careers in Korea, as a way of framing his alternative-to-K-Pop “Japanese” boy-group. See some of these strategies in the audition program that debuted BE-FIRST: BMSG, “[BMSG Audition 2021 – THE FIRST -] #1-1/1st and 2nd Round,” YouTube video, 32:24, May 1, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLidZx0bpc4&list=PL520yqYAFvEedNOxFf11BjrywgkwlPUNR> (Accessed October 14, 2024.)

²² Paek Chi-ün, “Poa biha, YG iyonghan hyömhān kürup pwayahae? ... XG, nollan haemyöngedo binan p’okchu,” *Chosŏn ilbo*, February 1, 2023, https://www.chosun.com/entertainments/enter_general/2023/01/31/l60P6JZIE64VM6DUWHH4N6NP3A/ (Accessed October 14, 2024.)

²³ IVE (@IVE_twt), “♥♥♥♥♥ with my bestie,” Twitter, December 7, 2021, 7:22am, https://twitter.com/IVE_twt/status/1468194193223086084?s=20&t=k0eVv5BPo76FBxTxaAZ.RA.

²⁴ Certainly, many posters also defended the pose and Rei. For an example of an online thread engaging in a debate over *gyaru pīsū*, see: <https://www.instiz.net/name/48688286?page=11&category=1&k=가루피스&stype=9> (Accessed October 14, 2024.)

²⁵ Foreign members of K-Pop groups have often become centers of controversies mediating geopolitical issues between South Korea and other countries. In such cases, often, the agencies and the artists themselves have taken part in a “politics of apology,” as Ahn Ji-Hyun and Tien-wen Lin (2019) have discussed in the case of the ‘Tzuyu scandal.’

²⁶ Anün Hyöngnim (아는형님) Knowingbros, “yuhaeng puja Rei 🙌 yojūm MZ sedaedül Rei p’ojū morūmyōn kanch’ōbimlanün hyöngnim 347 hoe| JTBC 220827 pangsong,” YouTube video, 3:56, August 27, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nYUXIQVm3HQ> (Accessed October 14, 2024.)

²⁷ Dal Yong Jin (2016).

References

- Ahn, Ji-Hyun and Kyung Yoon E. “Between Love and Hate: The New Korean Wave, Japanese Female Fans, and Anti-Korean Sentiment in Japan.” *Journal of Contemporary East Asia*, vol. 19, no. 2 (2020): 179-196.
- Ahn, Ji-Hyun and Tien-wen Lin. “The politics of apology: The ‘Tzuyu Scandal’ and transnational dynamics of K-Pop.” *The International Communication Gazette*, vol.8, no.2 (2019): 158-175.
- An, Jun-yōng, dir. *Produce 48*. Episode 1. Aired June 15, 2018, on Mnet.
- Anün Hyöngnim (아는형님) Knowingbros. “Yuhaeng puja Rei 🙌 yojūm MZ sedaedül Rei p’ojū morūmyōn ganch’ōp’imlanün hyöngnim 347 hoe| JTBC 220827 pangsong.” YouTube video, 3:56. August 27, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nYUXIQVm3HQ>.
- ALL THE K-POP. “[Weekly Idol] MOMO’s Nico-Nico-Ni beat the heart of a big fan (feat. Heechul) EP.261.” YouTube video, 1:37. July 27, 2016.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Br2FyUvqXKM>.
- BMSG. "[BMSG Audition 2021 – THE FIRST -] #1-1/1st and 2nd Round." YouTube video, 32:24. May 1, 2021.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLidZx0bpc4&list=PL52OyqYAfVEedNOxFf11BjrywgkwlPUNR>.
- Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal*, vol. 40, no. 4 (1988): 519-531.
- IVE (@IVE_twt). "♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥ with my bestie." Twitter, December 7, 2021, 7:22am.
https://twitter.com/IVE_twt/status/1468194193223086084?s=20&t=k0eVv5BPo76FBxTxaAZ.RA.
- Jin, Dal Yong. *New Korean Wave: Transnational Cultural Power in the Age of Social Media*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016.
- Jung, Eunyung. "Hallyu and the K-Pop boom in Japan: Patterns of consumption and reactionary responses." In *K-Pop: The International Rise of the Korean Music Industry* (book title italicized), edited by JungBong Choi and Roald Maliangkay, 116-132. London: Routledge, 2014.
- JYP Entertainment. "TWICE (트와이스) "CHEER UP" M/V." YouTube video, 4:01. April 24, 2016.
<https://youtu.be/c7rCyll5AeY>.
- Kim, Ju Oak. "Despite Not Being Johnny's: The Cultural Impact of TVXQ in the Japanese Music Industry." In *K-Pop: The International Rise of the Korean Music Industry*, edited by JungBong Choi and Roald Maliangkay, 66-80. London: Routledge, 2014.
- Kim, Mi Jin. "Sad and Angry for *Moe*. Examining the Gender Affective Labor of the Otaku Industry." Master's Thesis, National University of Singapore, 2021.
- Kim, Sung-min. *Sengo Kankoku to Nihon Bunka: Washoku Kinshi kara Hanryū made* [Postwar Korea and Japanese Culture: From the Prohibition of 'Japanese Color' to Hallyu]. Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten, 2014.
- Kiuchi, Yuya. "Idols You Can Meet: AKB48 and a New Trend in Japan's Music Industry." *The Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 50, no.1 (2017): 30-49
- Kroo, Judit. "K-Pop Idols in Japan: The Translation of Korean Masculinities in Music Videos." *East Asian Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2020): 27-43.
- Köp-do öpkkura. "[SUB] Sak'uraüi haengbok'an shigan...ün musün! Paech'u kimjang 100kg tojön | [Köp-do öpkkura] EP.01." YouTube video, 14:00. November 23, 2022.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXgLSPYrI4>.
- Larson, Miranda Ruth. "'But I'm a Foreigner Too' Otherness, Racial Oversimplification, and Historical Amnesia in Japan's K-Pop Scene." In *Fandom, Now in Color: A Collection of Voices*, edited by Rukmini Pande, 79-92. Iowa, IA: University of Iowa Press, 2020.
- Lee, Gyu Tag. "Far Away, So Close - *Produce 48* and the Cultural-Industrial Collaboration between K-Pop and J-Pop." *Taejung umak*, vol. 24 (2019): 251-288.
- McCurn, Alexis S. "Keeping It Fresh": How Young Black Women Negotiate Self-Representation and Controlling Images in Urban Space." *City & Community*, vol. 17, no. 1 (2018): 134-149.
- Matsutani, Sōichirō. "Kōhaku ni K-Pop zei wa 5 kumi, chūmoku nihonjin membā no keireki." *Bunshun onrain*, December 22, 2022. <https://bunshun.jp/articles/-/59849?page=3>.
- Oh, Chuyun. *K-Pop Dance: Fandoming Yourself on Social Media*. London; New York: Routledge, 2023.
- Paek, Chi-ün. "Poa piha, YG iyonghan hyōmhan kūrūp pwayahae? ... XG, Nollan haemyōngedo pinan p'okju." *Chosŏn ilbo*, February 1, 2023.
https://www.chosun.com/entertainments/enter_general/2023/01/31/l60P6JZIE64VM6DUWHH4N6NP3A/.

-
- Phillips, Kathryn and Thomas Baudinette. "Shin-Ōkubo as a feminine 'K-Pop space': gendering the geography of consumption of K-Pop in Japan." *Gender, Place & Culture*, vol. 29, no.1 (2022): 80-103.
- Sakamoto, Rumi and Stephen Epstein eds. *Popular Culture and the Transformation of Japan-Korea Relations*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2021.
- Shimbo, Megumi. "IZ*ONE deno katsudō wo oeta AKB48 Honda Hitomi chan ga kataru, doryoku de teni ireta utsukushisa no himitsu." *bis*, November 9, 2021. <https://bisweb.jp/interview/120412>.
- Wakayama, Aya. "AKB48 Honda Hitomi 'tanoshiku daietto ga dekimashita.' 'Kankokushiki karada zukuri,' no hiketsu." *anan News*, March 14, 2022. <https://ananweb.jp/news/404259/>.
- Yamamoto, Shiho. "Japanese Female *Aidoru* Identities." Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Arizona, 2019.
- Yoshida, Yukiko. "[Honda Hitomi] 'Nanimo shinai ichinichi' wa tsukuranakatta 2nenhan. IZ*ONE jidai no omoide kataru!" *Non-no plus*, September 2, 2021. <https://nonno.hpplus.jp/article/75355/01/>.
- Yu, Sŏng-un. "Ilbon kŏlgŭrup t'opsŭt'anŭn wae Han'guk'aengŭl t'aek'aenna?" *Chungang ilbo*, August 30, 2021. <https://www.joongang.co.kr/article/25002688#home>.
- "Kŏlgŭrup ch'ulshin Ilbon t'opsŭt'a Miyawak'i Sak'ura Han'guk'aeng wae?" *Chungang ilbo*, August 30, 2022. <https://www.joongang.co.kr/article/25002849#home>.
- "TWICE/p'aenmit'ing mongnok," *Namu wiki*, accessed August 10, 2024. <https://namu.wiki/w/TWICE/%ED%8C%AC%EB%AF%B8%ED%8C%85%20%EB%AA%A9%EB%A1%9D#s-2.2>.