

The chapters in part 3, “Modern exchanges,” argue that we can understand what might count as a copy better by knowing more for whom it is produced and for what purpose. Within the modern context of international exhibitions, manufacturing, cultural preservation and marketing, ideas about the “original,” “tradition” and the reproductive process may all be redefined. William H. Coaldrake begins the section with “Beyond mimesis: Japanese architectural models at the Vienna Exhibition and 1910 Japan British Exhibition.” “Copying Kyoto: the legitimacy of imitation in Kyoto’s townscape debate” by Christoph Brumann is the next chapter, followed by Christopher Madeley’s “Copying cars: forgotten licensing agreements.” Rupert Cox, who provided the detailed framework in the introduction, completes this section with “Hungry visions: the material life of Japanese food samples.”

I have written elsewhere that compilations such as this are increasingly difficult to publish with academic presses yet they continue to serve useful purposes for those of us in Japan studies as well as other fields. A book such as this presents a wide range of scholarship and topics under a thematic umbrella, enabling readers to expand their knowledge and understanding of Japan and Japan’s place in the world by sampling, as it were, the scholarship of numerous specialists. One of the most appropriate things one can say to a Japanese teacher is “I learned a lot,” after a class or lecture. Indeed, I did learn a great deal from this book.

*University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, USA*

BRENDA G. JORDAN

**POP GOES KOREA: Behind the Revolution in Movies, Music, and Internet Culture.** *By Mark James Russell. Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 2008. xvi, 224 pp. (B&W and coloured photos.) US\$19.50, paper. ISBN 978-1-933330-68-6.*

Korea’s popular culture was virtually unknown outside Korea until the late 1990s and was exclusively created for and consumed by local audiences. However, as Korea’s popular cultural products, including movies, TV dramas, music, comic books, fashion, and online gaming, found popularity throughout Asia over the last decade, the local pop culture industry began to expand its scale and scope and changed its infrastructure for this extremely competitive international market. In this book Russell offers stories of some of the key players in the industry from the late 1990s and early 2000s. As he acknowledges, there can be “hundreds of stories involved in explaining the changes, challenges, and achievements that comprised that success” (xiii), but he has selected seven key players whom he believes to be the most emblematic forces behind the success of Korea’s modern pop culture.

He starts with the big question: “How did Korea’s entertainment industry grow so successfully at the end of the twentieth century?” (xiii). Russell

lists seven answers “with the intent to encompass the breadth of Korean pop culture and be symbolic of the changes the industry went through as a whole” (xiv). Yet while TV drama and pop music have dominated in the international success of Korea’s pop culture, Russell emphasizes films, devoting three chapters to them.

The first chapter addresses the multimedia conglomerate CJ Entertainment. While readers may find the coverage of the two young founders’ family background (Samsung family) and their passion for movies from early childhood to be excessively detailed, descriptions of the company’s financial challenges during the 1997 economic crisis and growing competition from the other emerging companies are important contributions.

The second chapter focuses on director Kang Je-Gyu and his hit movies *Shiri* (1999) and *Taegukgi* (2004), exemplifying Korea’s move towards the Hollywood model: big blockbusters one after another with huge budgets. Russell’s brief note on remarkable changes in the film portrayal of North Koreans during the Kim Dae-Jung administration (1998-2003) is on target, although this widely recognized change did not just simply happen as he claims: “(T)he timing was pretty much perfect” (51). Such a shift requires a more thorough explanation of the political environment and important earlier developments that led to sympathetic portrayals of North Koreans in South Korean films.

The third chapter offers a history of PIFF (Pusan International Film Festival) and its startling success since it was first staged in 1996, with ample details but little interpretive reflection.

The fourth chapter turns to TV dramas, but is devoted almost entirely to actor Lee Byung-Hun. While Lee has taken leading roles in a few hit TV dramas, it is difficult to see a strong connection between him and the TV drama industry, since there are many more important TV dramas and influential actors/actresses, including Bae Yong-Joon (from *Winter Sonata*) and Lee Young-Ae (from *Dae Jang Geum*). Russell does not completely dismiss these two examples, but his brief summaries of their plots seem like momentary asides as he continues to praise (his perhaps favourite?) actor Lee Byung-Hun.

Likewise, the fifth chapter, turning to pop music, is narrowly focused on the founder of SM Entertainment, Lee Soo-Man, praising his great achievements as one of the most successful music moguls in Korea. Indeed, his SM Entertainment has produced many pop stars, including the boy band H.O.T. and the female star BoA, but it is just a clever copy of the Japanese idol (*idoru*) music business system, Johnny’s Entertainment in particular.

The sixth chapter traces the creation of the first Korean peer-to-peer file-sharing program, Soribada (similar to Napster). Reflecting on the music industry overall, Russell critically foregrounds the lack of genre diversity and the absence of a back-catalogue market as the industry’s main problems.

The seventh chapter, on the *manhwa* (comic book) industry, covers its unique, small-scale operation system, which has allowed Korean writers and artists to control their copyrights and keep the industry from being eaten by the giant multimedia conglomerates. His comparison of the Korean and Japanese industries here is highly insightful.

The most interesting part of this book for cultural scholars is the conclusion, where Russell turns to the international dimension, boldly stating that “there never was a Korean Wave” (215) and pointing out its negative connotations. He argues, “the trouble with talking about a ‘Korean Wave’ is that it does not really explain anything... Can we really say there is anything specifically ‘Korean’ [in Korea’s pop culture]?” (212). While his argument is provocative and partially convincing, it is structurally odd that he suddenly brings up Korean Wave issues only in his conclusion. Moreover, it conflicts with some of his earlier arguments (e.g., about the Korean-ness of Korea’s online *manhwa*).

Despite some weaknesses, Russell’s book certainly deserves credit for providing new and detailed insights into Korea’s pop culture industry. It is especially useful for readers unfamiliar with Korean pop culture; the many sidebars as well as the main text are informative and accurate. Given that Russell refers to this book as a first installment, we can expect to see more stories of Korean pop culture, revealing other dimensions through his insightful analysis.

*University of California, San Diego, USA*

EUN-YOUNG JUNG