

AMBER LIU, K-POP TOMBOY

Reshaping Femininity in Mainstream K-Pop

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Abstract

South Korean mainstream pop music, known simply as K-Pop, has become such a huge phenomenon in recent years that it is playing a decisive role in reshaping Korean culture and identity. Indeed, the K-Pop phenomenon is much more than just something musical, intertwining a complexity of sound, performance, ethnicity and gender. A contextual analysis needs therefore to take all these elements into consideration. This paper aims to show how K-Pop plays a crucial role in promoting ideologies, and defining gender roles. It does so by analyzing the music and image of the Taiwanese-American originating singer Amber Liu. Liu goes against the standard gender identification and behavior that Korean society imposes on women, and by doing so she can be said to represent a shift in the portrayal and performance of femininity through K-pop. But, how is her gender behavior tolerated, and to what extent is this a stage behavior required and promoted by her management company as a way to mark out difference?

Keywords

Femininity, Gender, K-Pop, Mainstream Music, South Korea

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INTRODUCTION

“Culture,” Stuart Hall tells us, is a constant battlefield, a “war of maneuver,” a site where ideologies and meanings are constantly reshaped and reworked. This became one of Hall’s most cited comments, emanating from his 1965 text, *The Popular Arts* co-written with Paddy Whannel: “[T]he conflict is particularly marked in the field of teenage entertainments” and to some extent “to the whole area of mass entertainment in a commercial setting” (270; cited in Storey 42–43). For critical/cultural studies, such a perspective is a commonplace, challenging older anthropological perspectives stemming from Edward Tylor’s famous nineteenth-century definition of culture, as a complex of socially accepted elements. Whichever view we choose to take, an analysis of culture and hence of music cannot be abstracted from the society of which it is part. Music, and the performance arts more generally, have a profound influence on society, but music also reflects that society. Therefore, an understanding of music will be inadequate if the investigation is limited to sounds (or their notated forms): music is more than just sounds, forms and structures. The significance of music is found in “the interrelationships between musical sounds, lyrical texts, visual narratives,” and from “the localities in which music is conceived and consumed” (Whiteley xiv). Thus, aspects including performance, ethnicity and gender are intertwined. Indeed, if we accept Judith Butler’s explanation that gender is a construction, the result of being performed, and does not exist as an essence in and of itself, then music can serve as a particularly rich field for the analysis of gender (Harris & Pease 1–25); music performance constitutes a site where gender roles are continuously (re)constructed, (re)instated, and (re)negotiated.

K-Pop, South Korean popular music, has in the last two decades become a huge phenomenon both at home and abroad, and has earned for itself a decisive role in reshaping culture and identity, as has been observed in a number of recent publications (e.g., Kim and Choe; Choi and Maliangkay; Fuhr; Jin). This has been achieved not only through its musical components (that is, songs), but also and especially through the visual (music videos and live performances). The visual has come to play a crucial role in promoting ideology. While K-Pop generally populates a world where specific standards of femininities and masculinities are constructed and promoted to the public, a world where plastic surgery-enhanced, shiny-haired, doll-like women and metrosexual men reign supreme, Amber Liu goes against the hegemonic standard. Liu, a member of girl group f(x) but also a solo singer, portrays an androgynous image. This has aroused questions about femininity, beauty, sexuality and diversity, and viewed from afar she reminds us how gender roles are constantly renegotiated through music to society at large. If she truly represents a shift in the standardized representation of women, in K-Pop and in society, she deserves our attention. This is what we attempt in the following pages.

WHO IS AMBER?



Fig. 1: Amber Josephine Liu. Photo from <http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-d-uvBDqB0v8/VSxx7NhJBpI/AAAAAAAAf30/n7KNiILtSQw/s1600/fx%2Bamber%2Buniquo.jpg,%20>

Amber Josephine Liu was born on 19 September 1992 in Los Angeles, California, to Taiwanese parents. She grew up and lived in the USA until being chosen by S.M. Entertainment, the first and still one of the largest South Korean entertainment companies, through a global audition held in Los Angeles in 2008. She was 16 when she moved to South Korea and embarked on an 18-month training period before debuting on 1 September 2009 as part of a new K-Pop girl group, f(x). She was cast together with four fellow members, Victoria, Luna, Krystal and Sulli (Sulli dropped out of the group in July 2014, formally leaving in August 2015). Amber primarily serves as the group's rapper, but she has also taken part in composing and writing lyrics for some songs, such as the group's *Beautiful Stranger* (included on the album *Electric Shock*) and *Summer Lover* (from the album *Red Light*). She has also collaborated with other S.M. artists as both a rapper and dancer—for instance, she was featured in the debut track of K-pop singer Henry Lau, *1-4-3 (I Love You)*. She has also developed projects with her f(x) colleagues that sit outside the band's activities.

In February 2015 Amber released her first solo EP, *Beautiful*; in so doing, she became the first f(x) member to go solo. The lead single, *Shake That Brass*, composed and written solely by Amber, and which featured Taeyeon from *Girls' Generation*,

debuted at number 4 on Billboard's World Digital Songs chart—according to Jeff Benjamin, this was the highest debut of the week.¹ Its video, in which a number of celebrities made an appearance, reached over a million views on YouTube within 24 hours, and now (March 2017) has more than 21 million views plus a number of spinoffs.

Amber's huge popularity came not only because of her music activities but also due to her being an almost constant presence on television. She has appeared in several reality-variety shows, such as *Invincible Youth*, *One Fine Day*, and *Real Men Female Special*. She has hosted MBC's music show, *Show Champion*, the KBS *A Song for You*, and the YouTube spin-off *We Got Married—Global Edition*. Since April 2015 she has run a YouTube channel called *What the Pineapple!* with her friend Scott Kim, which had had more than four million views and had 230,000 subscribers as of March 2017. Aimed at English-speaking fans, the vlog was, according to its YouTube "home" page, "made for the sole purpose of entertaining [...] by producing a variety of fun and original content."² Being a native speaker of English who also possesses fluency in Korean and Mandarin Chinese, Amber has been able to reach fans all over the world, thereby gaining international appeal. She is not the leader of f(x), but there is no doubt that she has become the most popular among her fellow members. She has been the subject of a great many blogs and online commentaries, a number of which we have consulted here.³

AMBER'S IMAGE

When somebody watches an f(x) video for the first time, they might well wonder whether Amber is a girl or a boy. Indeed, jokes about her identity seem to be such a popular motif on Korean television that a video-collection of some of the times she has been mistaken for or compared to a guy is even popular online.⁴ In an industry "driven by the visual" (Epstein and Turnbull 316), where "the image is everything" (Willoughby 99), and female performers must adhere to precise beauty standards, Amber stands out. Her tomboyish, androgynous appearance is strikingly different from the hegemonic model imposed on and embodied by female starlets, who therefore often look interchangeable—the hegemony is superbly but controversially portrayed in the recent before-and-after-plastic-surgery of the girl group Six Bomb.⁵ Whereas any other girl in K-pop would usually be required to undergo a series of plastic surgery operations as part of the training process as they are groomed for stardom, Amber seems to have limited herself to just dying her hair.

Amber's fellow f(x) members often sport skirts and heels, tight and revealing clothing, but she is typically seen wearing loose tanks and trousers, indicating a more masculine take on the concept that is portrayed, and very much in contrast to what has become the tradition of bubble-gum girl pop through Wonder Girls, Girls Generation, 4 Minute and many more. In f(x), the girls' outfits still look coordinated, in typical K-pop fashion, but Amber is effectively the exception that proves the rule, or, the variation on the theme. In the video for *Rum Pum Pum Pum*, for instance (Figure 2), the girls wear tartan skirts but Amber sports tartan basketball shorts. On their comeback stage show on 29 October 2015 to promote the new single *4 Walls*, Krystal, Luna and the backing dancers all show their belly-buttons, and Victoria wears a dress, but Amber shows no skin, rather wearing a sweatshirt and trousers that are less tight than those of the others.⁶ Again, in the video for her solo debut single *Shake That Brass* (Figure 3) she appears wearing a man's suit and then sporty boyish clothes; Taeyeon from Girls' Generation, who is also featured, is wrapped in a dress in contrast.



Fig. 2: *Rum Pum Pum Pum* Video. Screenshot from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGL08cXOHzE>

Amber also has tattoos on her arms and her back. Although matters seem to be slowly changing, tattoos are not common nor widely accepted in South Korea, suggesting membership of gang culture to many. Tattoos are even less acceptable when it comes to women sporting them, being deemed as unladylike. If anything, they are used as a marker of masculinity, and so for Amber to have



Fig. 3: *Shake That Brass* Video. Screenshot from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYGeG11hlc>

tattoos contributes without any doubt to reinforcing the tomboyish image she has in the eyes of the East Asian public. It is notable that not only has Amber not been prevented by her label from getting new tattoos over time, but she does not hide them in some of her appearances, in the video for *Shake That Brass* for instance, or in the reality show *Real Men*. In the latter, they have been directly referenced, indicating that they have become a deliberate part of the image she is portraying, even though the point is made that she is not a “real” man because she reportedly failed a physical due to an “oversized” tattoo.⁷ Nonetheless, while Amber’s style is different to that of her female counterparts, she is not recognized by her fans as being particularly out of the ordinary. We deduce that the reason for this is because she looks not dissimilar to many of K-pop’s male stars. The majority of boy band members in K-pop have over the last decade, and beginning with Rain, sported somewhat androgynous looks: they wear make-up and unisex clothes, dye their hair, and wear jewelry to adorn themselves with, a matter that Sun Jung, taking her lead partly from observations of J-pop, has referred to as the metrosexual East Asian male. If we take this into consideration, then the image Amber portrays is less revolutionary than it first appears; she does rebel against the standard imposed on girls, but only by embracing the standard that in recent years has been imposed on boys. She is, then, allowed to break out of the mold, but this is made possible because she is integrated into another mold that is familiar and admissible. It is as if she has to reassure the public that she is not so weird and different to normative gender imaging after all.

It is male androgyny—that is androgyny occurring on and through a male body (after Bruzzi 200)—that has become widely accepted in the Korean entertainment world, not female androgyny. If there is a growing tolerance for what would typically register in Europe and America on the ‘gaydar’ as male homosexuality, witnessed in, for example, Korean fashion designers due to their costume and appearance androgyny, challenges face any male who comes out as gay in the socially conservative South Korea. This was illustrated in the case of the actor, restaurateur and politician Hong Seok-cheon, who came out in 2000. Notwithstanding this, there is circumstantial evidence of homosexuality being practiced in the past, in, for example, itinerant travelling troupes (often known under the term *Namsadang*); still, neither the country’s constitution nor civil code makes any reference to same-sex relations. Male androgyny chimes with the gender stereotyping of Asia that has existed in the West for several centuries, in which Asian female sexuality is celebrated but the Asian male is perceived to be weak and sexually unthreatening. This is witnessed in Paul Gauguin’s canvasses or in Gustave Flaubert and Richard Burton’s association of Asia with the freedom of licentious sex. Equally, though, this image is actively critiqued in K-Pop’s girl bands, particularly when their management agencies attempt, as Eun-Young Jung relates in her 2013 article, to promote them in the United States, and challenged by assertive masculinity in K-Pop, whether this is in the eroticism of Rain’s performances, or in tracks such as Gary’s *Shower Later* or YB Band’s cover of an earlier song, *Cigarette Girl* (both of which appeared in 2014). By turning these stereotypes upside down—as illustrated in Figure 4, showing clockwise from left to right, Amber, EXO-K’s Kai, SuperJunior’s Eunhyuk, and B.A.P’s Zelo—Amber is a pioneer and, potentially, a game changer.

MUSICAL STYLE

As already mentioned, Amber is the rapper of f(x). She occasionally sings the melodic parts of songs and ballads, but is best known and most recognized as the rapper of the group. Nowadays, almost every K-Pop girl group will include a rapper, because, ever since Seo Taeji and Boys burst onto South Korea’s television screens in March 1992, rap has been subsumed as an integral part of Korean pop simply as a vocal genre. In the process of becoming part of the local musical landscape, rap has lost its ties to African American culture (Jung, “Articulating Korean Youth Culture”; Yang). However, whereas female rappers such as Bora of SISTAR or Wonder Girls’ Yoobin are portrayed as girly and sexy, just as the other members in their groups are, in the case of Amber her rapping reinforces the masculine identity, or rather the elements of masculinity, and makes more stark the juxtaposition between her and her fellow group members. This is all the more so since rap is a genre that for

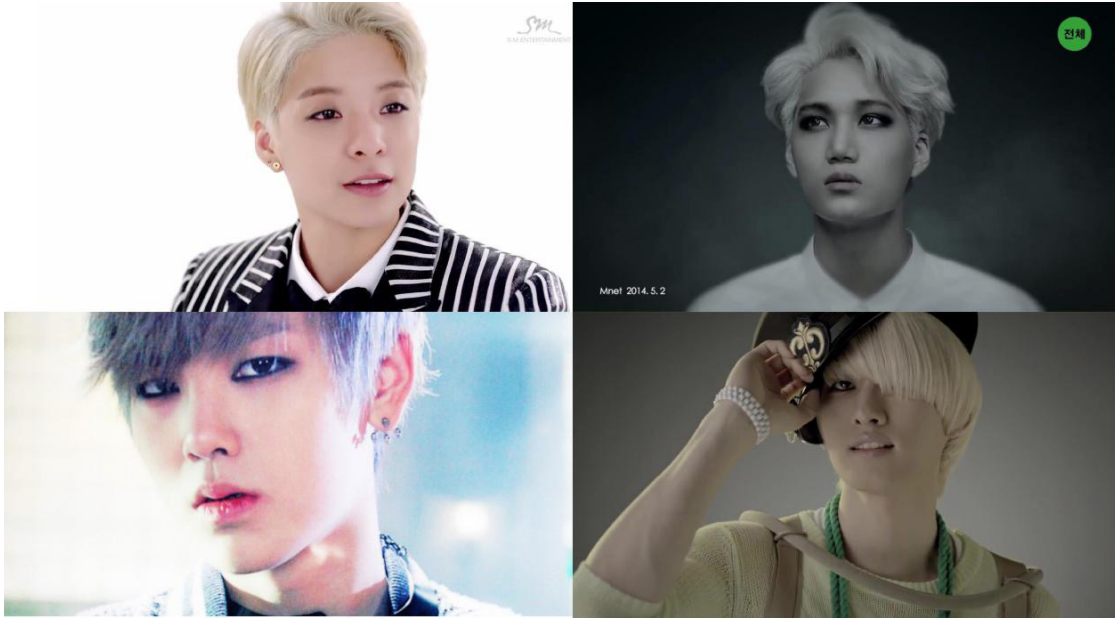


Fig. 4: Amber Liu and other K-pop Stars. Photos from (clockwise from top left): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYGeG11hlc>; EXO Kai, <https://i49.vbox7.com/o/777/777454359c0.jpg>; Lee Teuk, SuperJunior, at http://contents.syncl.jp/khi000074/img/upload/up_1344333.png; Zelo from BAP, http://www.ciaokpop.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/zelo_Regalo_fan-656x325.jpg

most of its history has been associated primarily with men. As Cusick has noted, the voice is a medium through which gender is performed, and is itself the result of a cultural construction, so by choosing and adding her own interpretation to such a vocal genre helps Amber shape the perception of her as masculine. At the very least, it fosters the illusion that she might be gender-fluid and/or queer.

The stanzas that Amber raps, and the lyrics of f(x) songs in general, appear at first to fit the recurrent tropes of girl groups, such as puppy love and carefree partying. In fact, though, they leave “spaces of indeterminacy that allow a queer reading of the [...] group’s material”, and therefore can be seen to contrast the norms of K-pop, which routinely reinforces the dichotomization of male and female (Epstein and Turnbull 329). In many songs, but unlike many other girl group hits, Amber does not refer directly to an ‘oppa’ (that is an older boy)—examples would include the song *Danger (Pinocchio)*, which in its indeterminacy could be addressed at both or either a boy or a girl, and the hit *Nu Abo*. In the latter, f(x) directly sing to an ‘eonni’ (that is an older girl), encouraging queer readings of the lyrics.

It is principally Amber's sexual and gender identity, not that of the other group members, which is made ambiguous through vocal style, music, video depictions and in performances. This is deliberate, hence, when on 24 November 2015 Amber and Luna sang a cover of a love song by the 1980s heart-throb Kim Min Woo as a duet, they did so as if they were a heterosexual couple: Amber dressed in a suit, as more masculine, and Luna wore a short black dress and heels.⁸ Another example is the *Shake That Brass* video, and particularly the last scene, where Amber puts her arm around Taeyeon's shoulders, transmitting the image of a boyfriend and girlfriend (Figure 5). The dichotomization of male/female is at play here, just as it is in most K-pop songs and videos, but in this particular example there is a girl representing the male counterpart. There is, though, still much ambiguity, since at the same time Amber is often featured in love song duets with male singers such as Henry's 1-4-3 (*I Love You*) and with Eric Nam in *I Just Wanna*. Nam, in the latter song, addresses Amber as "baby girl" and she responds, calling him "baby boy", echoing a common trope in pop music around the world.



Fig. 5: Amber and Taeyeon. Screenshots from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ENFEi55G34> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYGeG11hlc>



Fig. 6: Caption from the Video of *Beautiful*. Screenshot from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cgCGgq4OCjga>

As is clear, Amber’s persona is built around ambiguity and originality, being different and not fitting in, but only to a degree that can be tolerated within a largely conservative music scene—and, as we will discuss below, tolerance is expanded because of difference: in this regard, the fact that Amber is known to be foreign and not of Korean heritage marks this. On the first track of her debut album, both the track and the album called *Beautiful*, Amber sings at the end in English: “I’m happy to be myself”. As she does so, a caption fades in on the video, reading “You are beautiful no matter how different you are” (Figure 6) In *Borders*, a song in English for which she contributed to the composition and writing of lyrics that was released in March 2016, she offers the following: “Mom said I’d be crossing borders / Never be afraid when you’re cornered”. She encourages her listeners to follow her example, not to fear to be different or to fight for their own way. Through her lyrics, her tomboyish image is linked explicitly to being authentic and to not being afraid of being who she is, despite not fitting in within the standard ways. There is a sense in which she is not alone in this, since the Mando-pop singer Sandee Chan, as described by Fran Martin, in many ways parallels Amber. With both Sandee and Amber, fans are encouraged to identify themselves with the singers’ image of “freethinking independence” (Martin 272), an image generated by the publicly-revealed and profiled singers’ lives, statements, as well as by their song lyrics. These, Martin tells us, based on a survey conducted in 2001, generate “a quite different feel than [those of] a mainstream [...] woman” (272). Our view is that an added element

is needed to break through the standardization of K-Pop, and for this message to be communicated successfully, and with Amber it is her originality that facilitates it. But, as she incites people to be different, she does so through mainstream pop, and the result is anything but different.

ATTITUDE, GENDER REPRESENTATION AND RECEPTION

In her television appearances, Amber is often seen hanging out with boys, playing sports with them, joking and fooling around.⁹ While representations of girls and women in K-Pop have shifted from the girl-next-door of Lee Sun Hee in the late 1980s through “cutesy” (*aegyo*) at the turn of the millennium with, say, FinK.L, and beyond sexy with, say, G.Na (Gina Jane Choi) to sexualized with Gain (Song Ga-in) from the group Brown Eyed Girls, Amber offers nothing that is girly and cute. She sits, fitting the stereotypical image of a tomboy as easy-going and laid back, with her legs spread asunder, assumes manly poses when standing, and in interview does not refrain from speaking her mind. Her Instagram feeds do not offer a collection of cute or even sexy selfies, but rather present an assortment of funny pictures, mostly taken with friends, along with playful videos; this, equally, is the content that predominates on her co-hosted *What the Pineapple* channel.

The image of her as a tomboy, at times engaging in childish behavior, seems to be accepted by the Korean public, and appears to be regarded as unthreatening, something allowable among adolescents as a “temporary phenomenon that does not continue into adult womanhood” (Lucetta 105). Amber is allowed to behave as she wants, so long as—from the public perspective—she will grow at some point into a more overtly feminine woman. She has encouraged this belief in a heterosexual future by declaring that at one time she had a crush on a boy,¹⁰ but for the moment, although she is often seen in the company of boys, no one finds in her behavior towards them anything that can be considered flirtatious. If any other female idol attempted to put on her shoes, we might envisage that their attempt to act like Amber would likely cause a stir, leading to gossip circulating as people speculate whether she is romantically involved with one boy or another boy. Yet, this does not occur with Amber; she is perceived by the public to be unthreatening, as the kind of girl that heterosexual men would be unlikely to be attracted to. This has been picked up by promoters, and it is interesting to note that in the video for the song *Chocolate Love*, an advertisement for Samsung, her f(x) fellow members Victoria, Krystal, Luna and Sulli dance slinkily in sexy leather clothing as if to pleasure the male gaze, but Amber is left out; she cannot be molded in a sexualized way, and it is as if she could not arouse sexual interest from a heterosexual audience.

Rumors circulate that she might be dating girls. In one interview on the Seoul-based Arirang channel she addressed the issue, remarking, “When I am with guys, nothing is like ‘I am dating Aaron or Daniel.’ It’s like ‘I am dating Krystal or Mina.’ It is just so funny but...really cute. I don’t like it because it puts my friends in a very awkward situation. But I like it, because people say I look like a boyfriend, that I can take care of people, and that is actually very nice to hear It is awkward but nice”. The ambiguity remains. She does not say she disapproves of the rumors because she is straight, but rather she fosters the idea that she might be queer, although she never says it explicitly. She neither confirms nor denies rumors, but neither does she stigmatize same-sex relationships. As a commentator on the Internet noted,¹¹ within the K-pop scene, such a perspective is revolutionary. However, if we delve more deeply, S.M. Entertainment trade on Amber’s ambiguous sexual and gender identity, and this means she is not free to identify herself either as straight or gay. If she was to be marketed as straight, it would destroy her image as an exception, an original and distinct person, but if she was to be revealed as lesbian or bisexual her image would be threatened, since Korea is a society where homosexual relationships continue to be largely stigmatized. The truth, then, is that she does not have the freedom to declare how she identifies herself, and as she finds ways to get her message about identity and sexuality across she does so within the constraints imposed on her by the music industry. The result, to use Fran Martin’s words, is that Amber has “a paradoxical audibility in reticence” (275).

Despite this, and despite the ambiguity—perhaps even thanks to it—she is able to retain her image as authentic; her personality is perceived as being easy-going and nice. She is not condemned for her androgynous looks but, rather, it is her image that has enabled her to secure fame and popularity among a fan base that mixes across genders and sexualities. One possible reason is because she is allowed to act as she does because she is a foreigner, born in Los Angeles to mixed parents. If we take this view, then we need to argue that the bottom line is that as a foreigner she is perceived as exotic, that she does not represent Koreans, and that she cannot therefore provide a model for Korean behavior. But, for this to be so, we need to recognize that pop idols have been sourced from North America and from East and Southeast Asia for the last two decades; such a perspective, then, can underestimate the inclusion of foreignness within the globalizing socio-cultural environment of modern-day Seoul. What appears to be happening in Korea is that idol group members of foreign heritage are being expected to conform to dual standards. Moral integrity is expected, together with a nationalist inflection in which they must show loyalty to their adopted country and its people, but this couples to an awareness that the Western world to which Korea now relates and towards which it projects its popular culture production is less socially conservative than the Korean peninsula. The latter allows a latitude in behavior, in costume and in identity that is not permissible in home-grown idols, and this affords privilege to both foreign

heritage idols and the entertainment companies that contract them. Further, the former tends to be the focus of scandals.¹² Consider, for instance, how 2pm's Jay Park was forced out of the group by Korean netizens when misjudged comments he had posted some years before on MySpace became public, or how the married Turkish-heritage actor and member of the talk show *Non-Summit* Enes Kaya's was hounded after his online posts in which he flirted with other women and boasts of infidelity were revealed. Much the same applies to Korean-heritage idols brought up abroad, as the Epik High Korean-Canadian rapper Tablo (Lee Seon-woong or Daniel Armand Lee) discovered when netizens questioned his Stanford University academic record, and as Yoo Seung Joon (Steve Yoo) infamously discovered when he was revealed as a military draft dodger.

CONCLUSION

There are a number of layers to Amber's liminality. If we consider all the cards that are in play, Amber looks at first glance to defy the conventions of femininity in popular music, much as has been highlighted by Arlene Stein (19) and by Stella Bruzzi with reference to American artists of the 1980s and later such as k.d. lang. She looks entirely East Asian, and this familiarity within the South Asian context allows her to harness the metrosexuality of male androgyny. She doesn't openly reveal her sexuality, and is thus able to avoid some of the pitfalls and scandals that other idols with non-Korean heritage or non-Korean upbringings have struggled with. However, it remains uncertain that she embodies a wind of change for the standard K-pop portrayals of femininity, womanliness, and sexuality, and in so doing that she offers a new portrayal of the "masculine woman" (as Lucetta would give it).

It must not be forgotten that Amber belongs to the mainstream, in an industry fueled by capitalism, where any supposedly new type or breed of pop woman can only emerge if the industry is convinced that they can be marketed. Why does S.M. Entertainment allow her to wear clothing identified as that of boys and men? To what extent are her choices, in clothing as in music, her own? Within Korea as elsewhere, pop idols are the products of entertainment companies (Aoyagi), trained and polished during a lengthy, controlled apprenticeship. They represent a considerable investment for their company, and it is, therefore, highly doubtful that she has a free choice in how she behaves. If so, then her style is ultimately a marketing gimmick, even if an ingenious one,¹⁵ thought through and crafted in order to make her and her fellow band members stand out in a world full of similar idol groups. Yet, her appearances on mainstream media allow her to get something of a new message across, and to an extent to make it her own as she shows how

her model of womanliness can be acceptable, so long as she resists proposing it explicitly as her own orientation. The question, then, is whether resistance is actually possible in the culture industry. The old mantras of the Frankfurt school, as delineated by Adorno and Horkheimer, would say that it is not; they would affirm that “anyone who resists can survive only by being incorporated. Once registered as diverging from the culture industry, they belong to it” (104). To return to our starting point, Stuart Hall would, on the other hand, believe in the possibility to propose new models for popular culture, for it is not simply and only the forms which are superimposed, but the ground on which the transformations are worked (cited in Storey). And, in the case of Amber, it certainly appears as though, whether because of her having Taiwanese-American heritage and so creating an image that would not be tolerated in idols born and bred within the borders of South Korea or not, she represents a new model for K-Pop.

Notes

1. http://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/k-town/6479984/amber-beautiful-solo-debut-world-heatseekers-album?utm_source=twitter. NB: unless otherwise indicated, all URLs last accessed on 30 March 2017.
2. <http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCD-aVzvsQsFizfMSuUSN9cA/about>.
3. For example, in addition to internet sources cited directly in this article, <http://fictionistasinceicouldread.blogspot.co.uk/2012/01/cause-i-have-lot-to-say-about-amber-liu.html>, <http://www.kpopstarz.com/articles/49113/20131114/f-x-amber-krystal-sulli-luna-victoria-henry.htm>, <http://www.dramafever.com/news/fx-ambers-top-16-fiercely-androgynous-looks-will-make-you-scream-girl-power/>, <http://thelearnedfangirl.com/2013/08/electric-shock-amber-from-fx/>, <http://www.laweekly.com/music/amber-liu-an-androgynous-k-pop-star-4137160>, <http://sorathothamax.wordpress.com/2014/04/25/can-fx-amber-sing/>, <http://posturemag.com/online/2014/10/16/is-kpop-as-queer-as-it-appears-to-be-androgynous-fashion-fan-service-and-boy-love-in-korean-pop-culture/>, <http://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/k-town/6479984/amber-beautiful-solo-debut-world-heatseekers-album?>, <http://www.dazeddigital.com/music/article/23695/1/amber-liu-fx-marks-the-spot>, <http://www.mochimag.com/article/fx-amber-liu-speaks-out-on-her-fashion-sense-and-solo-ventures>.
4. <http://youtu.be/XAqDy-BHAQE>. A second video relating to the same issue is at <http://youtu.be/ZH-slOdx3-A>.
5. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdC5XO6F7ww> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01aE2qBIDFA>.
6. <http://youtube.be/bUy3OKri-pl>.
7. <http://www.soompi.com/2015/01/25/amber-fails-physical-test-for-real-men-due-to-her-oversized-tattoo/>.
8. <http://youtu.be/1ENFEi55G34>.
9. An example is online at <http://youtu.be/gY8FS7Cfr8o>.
10. <http://youtu.be/HlxslXNCaCE>.
11. Reported at <http://beyondhallyu.com/k-pop/ambers-reaction-rumours-dating-girls-refreshing/>.
12. An interesting discussion of this, including the comment “he/she must have saved a country”, is at <http://www.allkpop.com/forum/threads/an-asian-idol-dating-a-western-mainstream-star.1979/>.

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