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Book Review:

De Seúl al cielo and Luces en el cielo

De Seúl al cielo, by Silvia Aliaga and Tatiana Marco, Nocturna Ediciones, 2018, 605 pages, 978-84-16858-77-4, \$25.40.

Luces en el cielo, by Silvia Aliaga and Tatiana Marco, Nocturna Ediciones, 2019, 332 pages, 978-84-17834-19-7, \$18.00.

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In the last three years, the available literature on K-Pop in Spain has increased considerably. At around the same time as the publication of Fernando San Basilio's *Crónicas de la era K-Pop* (2015), the first three biographies devoted to a K-pop band have been released, specifically, *BTS: Iconos del K-Pop* (2018), *EXO: K-Pop Superstars* (2019), and *Blackpink* (2020). All of them have been written by Adrian Besley, who had published these volumes in English in London before they were translated into Spanish.

The two translated works described here constitute the joint work of two young female authors from Zaragoza, habitual consumers of K-Pop since 2009, and are part of what is known as Young Adult literature. They are the first Spanish novels set in the world of K-Pop, and the common places of this genre appear throughout the fictional story. With this approach, the young female readers i.e., the niche to which they are destined, in their vast majority fans of the genre, identify themselves within this context and build the imaginary, i.e., the places in South Korea known through K-Pop songs, K-Drama and K-Movies, by means of the “real” places and “fictional” events.

In *De Seúl al cielo*, the story is developed through R*E*X, a Boyband of great success in East and Southeast Asia, who had debuted seven years before, having completed their training with the company WIMTS. The band consists of four artists: Jay, Hyunsoo, Alex, and Young. Through the activities of the band, a narrative is drawn with parallel stories in which four more characters participate: Paula, a Spanish dancer who travels to Seoul with the aim of meeting Jay, Cris, an English girl who lives in Seoul who soon becomes friends with Paula, Minwoo, a young owner of a trendy café in the Yeouido district, and Dani, another Spaniard who after meeting Cris in England during his student period, moves with her to Seoul and ends up working at Minwoo's café.

Luces en el cielo is the prequel to *De Seúl al cielo*, and takes place seven years earlier, during the summer before R*E*X's debut. In this case, there are three areas where the narrative develops: Seoul, Jeju Island, and several cities in Europe. Jaehwa (Jay), born and raised in Jeju, spends the summer on the island with his friend Hyunsoo, who he is a trainee with at WIMTS. At WIMTS, they interact with two former classmates of his Yuna and Siwon. Alex travels through several places in Europe where he meets Andrew, another young Englishman with whom he ends up having a romantic relationship. The novel concludes with the end of summer holidays and the return of the R*E*X artists back to Seoul for their debut.

Both books are indisputably aimed at a young and undoubtedly female audience, the profile of the genre's target audience. The fact that there are common places, such as the most emblematic areas of Seoul related to K-Pop, Jeju Island, its production, training system, agencies, debut, fandom, K-beauty, K-food, coffee shops, fashion, etc., and even sentimental relationships, both heterosexual and homosexual, points to a very specific audience, and allows the reader to use their imagination to recreate the universe of K-Pop. Both books include illustrations by Inma Moya as well as QR codes that allow readers to access the story's soundtrack, which consists of Spotify links to pieces by BTS, EXO, Gfriend, TEN, Wonder Girls, BLACKPINK, Girls Generation, Twice, Super Junior, SHINee, Red Velvet, Seventeen, MONSTA X, Mamamoo, and NCT: a very varied selection of the best known groups that reflects the authors' predilections.

Undoubtedly, this work should be taken into account when considering what it means to be a pioneer in the genre of the novel set in the K-Pop universe in Spain. It will apparently have continuity with a third volume in the future.

Xosé Crisanto Gándara Eiroa has Ph.D. in Philology and Music by the Universidade da Coruña, Spain and is Main Professor of History of Music at the Conservatorio Superior de Música da Coruña. His research interests cover Organology, History of the Double Bass in Spain, Musical Theaters on the Iberian Peninsula in the Eighteenth Century, and the reception of Popular Music. He currently researches music on the Korean Peninsula.