

PURPLE OCEAN

Music.

It is not subject to any rules and is open to any kind of interpretation. It is not about right or wrong, but about finding yourself in the music and being able to convey your own thoughts, feelings and fears to the outside world through it. The music is like a mirror that you look into to find your own reflection. Not everyone has been blessed with a talent for using words. This is exactly why the music is so important, because the lyrics express what a lot of people try to put into words, but which is doomed to fail from the start.

However, individual musical tastes have always divided opinions in society. An element that should actually connect people now ensures that you no longer dare to pronounce aloud, to be a fan of a certain music genre.

Exactly four years ago, I became painfully aware of this phenomenon when I started becoming part of the K-Pop community.

In my eyes there is no musical genre that is hated as much as Korean pop music and for me, a fan who is so passionate about Korean culture and music as if it were my own, makes my heart bleed. Korean music is filled with prejudices against the singers as well as the fans. Every day I have to listen to the same racist and hurtful comments. Over and over again. Sentences like: "Oh, they all look the same anyway", "Are you listening to that Ching Chang Chong music again?" Or "The men put on make-up and put on women's clothes, sure they are not girls? They are all gay anyway, "I get thrown at my head far too often. We fans are labeled every day as screaming 12 year old girls who are crazy, almost obsessive about their favorite idols.

It is often the case that K-pop music saved the lives of fans. Many fans report that they were severely depressed before their K-Pop phase and that they could no longer see the meaning of their lives. They did not think it necessary to continue fighting for something that was not worthwhile. But K-Pop has given them a purpose in life again. They found solace in the lines that were sung for them.

Therefore it is only understandable that fans react very sensitively to racist comments that are directed against the idols and do everything necessary to defend them.

Regarding the prejudice "you do not understand what they are saying anyway" I can only say that there are many ways to understand what is sung about in the songs. The fans even learn the Korean language or print out the lyrics in English. Music is not about language, it is not about understanding every single word. It is about feeling it and realizing what it makes you feel.

K-pop has the power to bring people together. If you are at a BTS concert, you are standing in a crowd with a wide variety of ethical backgrounds, age groups and skin colors. Everyone speaks a different language, but when the idols' music starts playing, all fans only know one language. They sing along with every song by heart and it does not matter which country you come from. K-Pop is a huge family and if you are in the middle of this concert with all these people and their purple light sticks, you feel as if you are standing in the middle of a purple ocean. Even the idols see us as part of their family and accept each of their fans for who they are. Kim Namjoon, a member of the band BTS, once said: "Tell me your story. I want to hear your voice, and I want to hear your conviction. No matter who you are, where you are from, your skin color, gender identity: speak yourself. Find your name, find your voice by speaking yourself. "

I am often asked why I am so fascinated by a country and a culture that has nothing to do with my own.

Why I am fascinated by a language that I don't speak myself and by a genre of music that I do not know what the songs are about.

Why I am fascinated by men who put on make-up, dance and wear feminine clothes as if it were the most normal thing in the world.

My answer to that: I am a K-pop fan.
Becoming a fan does not just mean that you enjoy listening to one song or two. No, it is so much more than that.

You support your favorite groups and idols.
You become a binge watcher of BL series and K-dramas.
You become a lover of Asian cuisine.
You become a fan of every single Asian culture.
And most importantly, you stand up against racism against Asians.

It is not just the screeching of 12 year old girls or the morbid obsession.
For many fans it means family.
A place you can always come back to.