



# K-FUSION

by Carrington Langston

## How the Fusion of K-Pop and African-American Popular Music Influenced the Generation



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### Abstract/Background

Many genres of Western pop music have some beginnings in African American culture, specifically genres such as rap and R&B. K-pop (Korean popular music) is the second most popular genre of music in South Korea. Although both genres have been around for a while, K-pop wasn't heavily known to the US until 2013 with the debut of Koren boy group BTS. Since then, the rise of K-pop has grown substantially in the US over the next 10 years – for both citizens and music artists.

### Research Findings

Although this is a fusion that has yielded positive results for both Western audiences and South Korean audiences, the media tends to spotlight the negatives that have come from this collaboration. Social media has made trends such as Asain Baiting mainstream, but what's not as well known, for example, is how much African-American music artists have been a source of inspiration for many K-pop idols or how South Korean idols have to come to support African- American movements

### Positive Influences



Michael Jackson has been a huge influence and source of inspiration for many k-pop idols in terms of singing and dancing



“When Michael Jackson was alive, he emphasized social issues or peace a lot. I want to continue what he did.”  
Kim Hong Joong of ATEEZ, “BLACK OR WHITE”

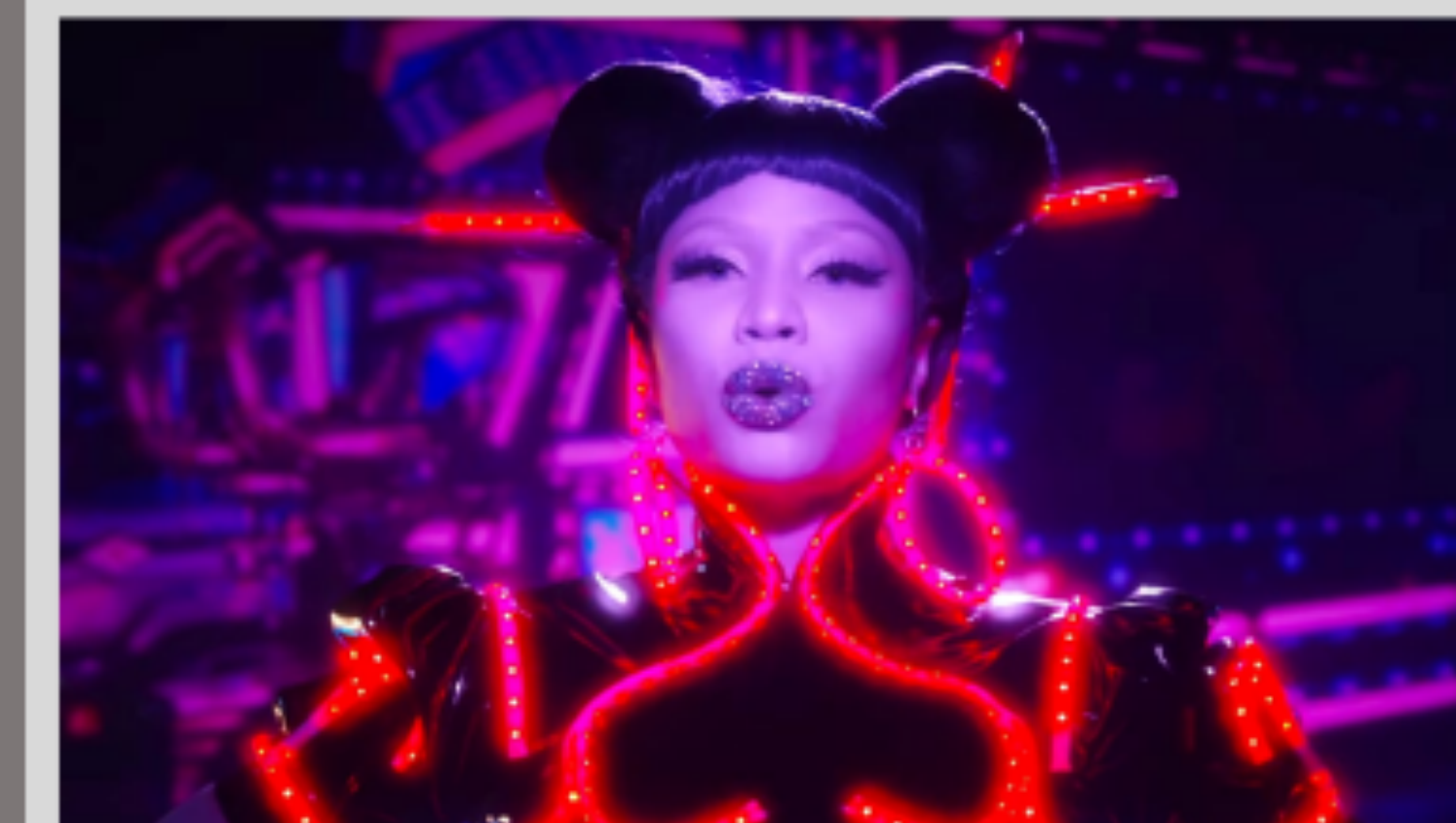
**"A SONG LIKE MICHEAL JACKSON['S] 'BILLIE JEAN', IT'S LIKE THE WORLD'S BIGGEST, MOST UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE."  
PSY, THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER, 2012**

The influence of hip-hop and R&B has also led a few K-pop idols and companies — such as BigHit Entertainment (home of BTS) — to support other African-American movements, such as Black Lives Matter



Many k-pop groups have also started using Afrobeats and/or moves with inspiration from African culture, such as “Smart” by LE SSERAFIM (pictured) and “Tinnitus (Wanna be a rock)” by TOMORROW X TOGETHER

### Negative Influences



Nicki Minaj stirred up controversy of Hong Kong Asain baiting in 2018 with her song “Chun Li”

**"Asain baiting" (when a non-Asian person attempts to appear East Asain through makeup, dress, and mannerisms) has been a subject of controversy across popular media for years for not only South Korean culture, but many Asain cultures as well**

**"I WENT AND COPPED THE CHOPSTICKS PUT IT IN MY BUN JUST TO POP SH\*T"  
NICKI MINAJ, "CHUN LI"**

K-pop idols sporting traditionally African-American hairstyles has been a trend for the past few years

"Limitless", released in 2017 depicts NCT 127 member, Dong Si Cheng (stage name: WinWin), in a traditionally African-American hairstyle

