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What Was "Pop" in Korean Pop Before the K-pop 1964–1987?

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Abstract

Before K-pop emerged as a global phenomenon, the term pop in South Korea is often assumed to have referred mainly to Anglo-American music. Yet between the mid-1960s and mid-1980s, pop (*p'ap*) and pops (*p'aps*) were also widely used for domestically produced music. This study examines how pop was defined and debated in a rapidly developing South Korea by analyzing media discourse and musical practices of the time. Two case studies anchor the discussion: Jo Dong-jin (Cho Tong-jin) and Lee Sooman (Yi Su-man), both linked to the influential Orient label. Cho later founded Hana Music and Yi founded SM Entertainment. Despite their contrasting aesthetics and strategies, both companies shared common roots until the early 1990s, when globalization and digitalization reshaped the industry. Today they seem worlds apart, yet enduring personal and professional ties reveal subtle but lasting imprints on K-pop's texts, discourses, and practices.

Keywords: pop (*p'ap*), South Korea, Korean pop, K-pop, Orient, Hana Music, SM Entertainment

A useful starting point for this essay is *Rolling Stone's* 2023 list "The 100 Greatest Songs in the History of Korean Pop Music."[1] The list is undeniably shaped by the tastes of international critics, enthusiasts, and fans, some of whom lack a deep understanding of the complex history of Korean popular music. Heavily skewed toward international K-pop hits, it includes only 19 songs from before the 1990s. As a result, it falls short of meeting the expectations of popular music critics and scholars in Korea.[2] However, critique is not the primary focus of this essay. To me, the list indexes how the complex history of Korean popular music is perceived by "foreigners."

Before further exploring this issue, let us turn to two '90s songs featured in the *Rolling Stone* list. The second-ranked song is "Candy [캔디]" from the debut album of H.O.T., a five-member boy band widely regarded as the first K-pop idol group. Released in 1996, "Candy" marks a pivotal moment in K-pop history, with H.O.T. carefully produced by Lee Soo-man (Yi Su-man, b. 1952), the head of SM Entertainment. The company became renowned for its pioneering "in-house system," which mass-produced single-gender idol groups—both boy bands and girl groups—a model that continues to dominate K-pop group formats.

In contrast, "When My Loneliness Calls to You [나의 외로움이 널 부를 때]" by diva Jang Pil-soon (Chang P'il-sun, b. 1963), is ranked no. 50 on the list. The song was produced by the now-defunct Hana Music, led by the late Jo Dong-jin (Cho Tong-jin, 1947–2017) and his brother Jo Dong-ik (Cho Tong-ik, b. 1961). The brothers gained widespread recognition for their poetic songwriting and artistic integrity, with Jo Dong-jin frequently likened to figures like Leonard Cohen and Yves Duteil. Hana Music was not primarily a profit-driven entity, but rather a collective of musicians committed to the singer-songwriter tradition.

Examining the release year of these two songs reveals two key points. First, the use of "pop" to describe Korean music in the 1990s is entirely justified, as the era's style and sound went beyond the commercial conventions typically associated with mainstream music prior to this period. Korean popular music in this period fused a variety of genres, creating a more nuanced and dynamic sound. This

shift toward greater musical sophistication led artists and producers to incorporate intricate arrangements and innovative production, aligning with the elevated aesthetic standards of international pop during the same period.

Second, Korean pop in the 1990s was, perhaps unexpectedly to non-Korean K-pop fans, diverse enough to allow independent or underground artists to achieve significant commercial success, enabling them to focus solely on music creation—an influence that ultimately garnered recognition from international critics. This is evidenced by the inclusion of four independent artists among the 21 tracks from the 1990s in the *Rolling Stone* list. In contrast, no post-2000 independent music appears on the list, marking a clear shift away from this trend.

Together, these points help explain why Hana Music and SM Entertainment were seen as polar opposites in the late 1990s Korean music landscape. SM Entertainment symbolized commercialism, entertainment, and mainstream, while Hana Music represented authenticity, artistry, and the underground. Although this contrast may seem overly simplistic from a contemporary perspective, it dominated critical and fan discourse at the time, when serious discussions of popular music were emerging.

The lengthy explanation in the past three paragraphs leads to the enigma below. Lee Soo-man was a multifaceted singer who dabbled in a wide range of genres, including folk, rock, ballads, and even electronic music between 1972 and 1989, with a brief hiatus in the early 1980s. One particularly complex moment in his trajectory is his recording of "The Song I Sing Again [다시 부르는 노래]," released in 1976. The song was written by none other than Jo Dong-jin, who would record his own version in 1979. Although the song did not achieve significant chart success, it remains beloved by Jo's loyal fans, who are drawn to his poetic lyrics and deeply moving voice.

Simply put, Jo and Lee shared the same roots in their twenties. Despite differences in many aspects, SM and Hana shared common ground in terms of musical sophistication, particularly through their in-house production. The intertwined stories of Lee and Jo would

likely surprise many younger Koreans who did not experience the 1970s as pop fans. Thus, a rich and complex narrative of Korean popular music must be constructed for the period preceding the rise of K-pop. A crucial element of this narrative lies in the emergence of the term "pop" during a time of complex encounters, intersections, entanglements between these two figures and others.

This essay focuses on the period from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s, shedding light on the cultural and musical landscape of these two decades. For reference, I have written about the period following this era elsewhere.[3] Before delving into the period, however, it is essential to first investigate the immediately preceding years

Pop as Foreign Music vs *Kayo* as Domestic Song: Before 1964

It is fortunate that the *Rolling Stone* list categorizes the music as "Korean pop" rather than "K-pop," as many scholars and critics fail to distinguish between K-pop, Korean pop, and Korean popular music. In some cases, K-pop is often used uncritically as a shorthand for Korean popular music, yet this simplification overlooks the complexities of its histories, which involves both continuities and discontinuities.[4] My interpretation is that K-pop refers to a specific genre or style, while Korean pop encompasses a broader, more generic category, equating it with Korean popular music as a whole.[5]

An essential question still looms: what is pop, and when did it emerge in Korea as a genre and a term? The *Rolling Stone* list traces Korean pop to 1926, while noting that "the birth of 'modern K-pop' or 'K-pop proper' is dated to the early 1990s."[6] However, my research indicates that the term "pop" as an endonym for a specific type of Korean popular music first appeared in the late 1960s at the latest, whereas the term "K-pop" emerged as an exonym no earlier than the mid-1990s. It would be more appropriate to render the former as *p'ap*, following the McCune-Reischauer romanization of the Korean script [팝], which itself is a transliteration of the English word pop. As the term specifically refers to pop music produced in South Korea,

it would be more appropriate to call it R.O.K. pop,[7] following the naming conventions of U.S. pop or U.K. pop. Furthermore, in this paper, it does not encompass the period before 1945, when Korea was colonized but unified, nor the period after the twenty-first century, when cultures from divided South Korea became integrated into the global digital economy with the hyphenated "K-."[8]

Thus, my concept of pop in this essay is inclusive of K-pop but narrower than the definition of Korean pop in *Rolling Stone*. It refers only to post-1960s Korean popular music, excluding other areas that became highly localized and had longer histories. I am not inquiring into the "K" in K-pop,[9] but rather the "pop" in Korean pop. In most studies on K-pop, the pop has been left unquestioned, simply taken for granted rather than critically interrogated. For that reason, I examine the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s because this era was marked by authoritarian rule and significant political and cultural changes. Pop was one of the symbols of these changes.

For clarity, I must introduce two key terms. The first is *kayo*, a Sino-Korean word encompassing domestic or national popular song. It literally denotes "songs and ballads (歌謠)," a word whose origin is traced to ancient Chinese texts.[10] However, modern Koreans have interpreted it as encompassing all kinds of songs enjoyed by common people, ultimately becoming shorthand for *taejung kayo*, which can be translated literally as "mass song" or more liberally as "popular song." In any case, *kayo* was seldom applied to popular songs produced elsewhere, particularly outside East Asia.[11]

Until the early 1960s, popular music from the U.S. was referred to as "jazz (*chaejŭ*)." The influences of the ongoing presence of U.S. military forces—the Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA)—cannot be overlooked. The camp shows organized by EUSA provided opportunities for Korean musicians to entertain U.S. servicemen. American Forces Network Korea (AFKN) radio and pirate records also served as important channels for disseminating U.S. popular music. Korean performers on these stages were colloquially known as jazz singers (*chaejŭ singgŏ*), often singing in English even for Korean audiences, and they participated in the "touring varieties"[12] circuit across the Asia-

Pacific region.

However, the dominant genre of *kayo* until the 1960s was not jazz-tinged but "japan-tinged (*waesaek*)." This genre came to be known as trot (*t'ŭrot'ŭ*) or *ppongtchack* (hereafter shortened as "*ppong*") around the mid-1960s. While the etymology of the former traces back to foxtrot and the latter is an onomatopoeia reflecting its duple meter, both terms denote an old-fashioned 32-bar form lacking a proper chorus. Built on a pentatonic, predominantly minor scale, trot or *ppong* bears similarities to Japanese *enka*, which has roots in the period before 1945. Trot and *ppong* were and still are largely interchangeable terms, while the latter often carries derogatory connotations in official discourse. Trot/*ppong* dominated the *kayo* scene, particularly in the record industry and private radio stations, which was perceived as earthy, conservative, and rural.

As a pop historian, I have wondered why non-trot popular genres influenced by rhythms like waltz, swing, blues, mambo, hillbilly, and twist in the mid-1950s and the early 1960s did not acquire a specific name. Son Sŏk-u, for instance, pioneered modern songwriting in his popular compositions, marked by catchy sections structure around AABA song form. For example, "The Boy in the Yellow Shirt [노란 샤쓰의 사나이]," sung by Han Myŏng-suk and ranked no. 90 in the *Rolling Stone* list, clearly employs the idiom of the country and western genre. But he struggled to define his style, using the generic name "popular song (*p'op'yullŏ song*)."[13] The singers who started their careers as "jazz singers" recording songs penned by Son and others were not bothered much by the term *kayo*, despite their "Americanized," mostly crooning vocal styles. They were welcomed as wholesome and bright by a few critics and intellectuals but their record sales remained modest. More generic *kayo* prevailed despite its criticism as lowbrow and decadent by the educated class.

When, then, did the term "pop" appear in discourse? The terms "pops" and "pop tunes" were introduced in a 1963 newspaper article, used as an abbreviation of "popular song, popular tune, and popular music."[14] However, I argue that "pop" signifies more than just an abbreviation of "popular," and that *taejung kayo* and/or *kayo* do

not map exactly onto "popular song" or "pop song,"[15] in the same way that *chanson*, *canzone*, and *enka* do not require translation. My point is that the phonetic difference between pop and *kayo* carries great significance. Pop was perceived as bright, joyous, happy, and optimistic, while *kayo* connoted darkness, sadness, unhappiness, and pessimism. What matters is not whether these perceptions are correct but whether they resonated with audiences. In short, pop was defined not only by musical idioms but also by sonic qualities.

The term pop carries an additional layer of cultural significance within the Korean context. In 1960s Korea, pop music was often seen as a genre that appealed to the middlebrow tastes of educated, middle-class youth. These fans typically had at least a basic understanding of English or the ability to read Roman characters. Pop music was enthusiastically embraced by urban youth, often without critical engagement. Despite not fully understanding the lyrics, they could still sing along phonetically. In contrast, *kayo* catered to the tastes of a wider audience, often perceived as more accessible or lowbrow.

During this period, pop and Korea seemed to exist in a state of alienation from one another. In the *Rolling Stone* list, there are two songs released in 1964. One is "Charlie Brown" (a cover of The Coasters' song) by the Kim Sisters,[16] and the other is "Camellia Girl [동백아가씨]" by Lee Mi-ja (Yi Mi-ja).[17] These two songs embody the aforementioned dichotomy and its associated connotations: pop vs *kayo*, English vs Korean, Made in U.S.A. vs Made in R.O.K., cover vs original, bright and happy vs dark and unhappy, etc. Even now, Koreans would be reluctant to categorize the latter as pop in any sense, as it epitomizes the trot/*ppong* genre.

Rock and Folk as *P'ap or Pops Koreana* 1964–75

The dichotomy between *kayo* and pop persisted in the mainstream media, yet an undercurrent began to link "pop" with "Korean." In 1964, the groups Add4 and Key Boys, influenced by the Ventures, the Beatles, and the Beach Boys, made their recording debuts. These groups and their contemporaries gained recognition within a niche

audience by covering Western bands, except for Add4, which also performed original songs. While some of their vocalists pursued solo careers, these groups largely succeeded within the domain of *kayo*—a genre of songs composed by established songwriters and performed with orchestral arrangements.

By 1968, a significant transformation had occurred in both the discourse and musical style of popular music. The short-lived publication *Pops Koreana*, launched in July 1968, marked a shift from *kayo* to the more internationally recognized term "pop." Critic Sŏ Pyŏng-hu, the magazine's editor-in-chief, played a pivotal role in shaping this evolving discourse. He was a key supporter of Shin

Figure 1.

Posters of package shows, arranged from left to right, including "Crazy Time of Jazz [째스의 크레지 타임]," Dong-A Daily Newspaper [동아일보], Jan. 12, 1960, "Vocal Group Competition [보컬그룹 경연 대회]," Chosun Daily Newspaper [조선일보], Jun. 6, 1966, and '72 "Summer Pops Fair [썸머 팝스 페어]," Chosun Daily Newspaper [조선일보], Jul. 13, 1972. The terms jazz (tchaesŭ) and rock'n'roll (rok aen rol) appear on the left, vocal group (pok'ŏl kŭrup)—including Add4 and Key Boys—in the middle, and pops (p'apsŭ), rock (rokk'ŭ), and folk (p'okk'ŭ) on the right, respectively.

Joong-hyun (Sin Chung-hyŏn, b. 1938), the guitarist, bandleader, and songwriter of Add4 and subsequent groups. Shin was central to this shift, with his production of The Pearl Sisters' debut album in 1968 and his work with Kim Choo-ja (Kim Ch'u-ja) in 1969 significantly influencing Korea's pop explosion.[18] While much of this narrative has been explored elsewhere,[19] I will focus on one key aspect: the genre question.

Shin's music from the late 1960s and early 1970s blends soul and psychedelic influences, drawing from both the Motown Sound and the San Francisco Sound. While it was often, albeit uncritically, labeled as "soul & psychedelic," I contend that this seemingly incoherent term ironically highlights the uniqueness of his style, which is more accurately described as eclectic pop than purist rock. Further evidence lies in the fact that, despite his innovative and unconventional instrumental arrangements, the basic song structures he crafted rarely strayed far from commercially viable formats.

Shin led his own group while mentoring soul singers and other vocal groups, successfully transforming them into stars. Over time, a loose distinction emerged between soul and psychedelic: "soul singers," both male and female, often conformed to *kayo* conventions after achieving commercial success, while "psychedelic groups" were primarily known as live acts. Following a period of moral panic over television appearances in 1969 and 1970—fueled by hippie-style long hair and exuberant performances—the designation gradually shifted to "rock group" or, more colloquially, "group sound." Notably, the term "rock band" was rarely used until the mid-1980s. For this reason, I adhere to "rock group" in this essay.

The final point about Shin concerns the record business. His group's records, along with those of his protégés, were produced until 1973 by Pak Sŏng-bae of King Production, who allowed Shin considerable creative autonomy. However, the label often did not appear on the record sleeves. Due to strict regulations, King could not officially register as a "record company" because it lacked its own studio and manufacturing facilities. Instead, it functioned as a "production company," meaning it did not have an official label.

This arrangement, known as the "label-renting production system," involved renting recording studios and outsourcing the manufacturing of records. While this may seem complex, it highlights a crucial point: in Korea, pop music was often produced by smaller scale producers whose names did not appear on the covers.

In October 1975, however, a full-fledged concert by Shin's group Yŏpchŏndŭl (Coins) was publicized as a "pop concert" in a daily newspaper,[20] not "rock concert." This event followed the national success of the song "The Beauty [미인]," which would later be hailed as the nation's rock classic. The song's rhythm is notably cheerful, and its hook is too vibrant to be considered authentically "rock" by international standards of rock criticism in the 1970s. However, this was not a contradiction in Korea, where rock was never truly a separate genre. Instead, rock was an integral part of what defined the Korean pop sound. Both the song and the album which it titles are still widely regarded as genuinely creative and original, hailed as a classic by listeners in Korea and abroad.[21]

It should be noted that folk (*p'ok'ŭ*) does not refer to traditional Korean songs (*minyo*) but aligns more closely with international pop genres. In 1973, Lee Jang-hee (Yi Chang-hŭi; b. 1947) created a real sensation, demonstrating that another shift was possible—this time from acoustic folk to electric rock. His third album (1973), particularly the song "It's You [그건 너]," achieved both commercial success and critical acclaim through its blending of acoustic and electric sounds, and, most of all, its catchy and strong hooks. Although Korean folk song is often examined within the context of youth culture during the Cold War, the most pivotal figures in terms of broader appeal and market impact are Lee Jang-hee and his musical colleagues.[22] Much like Shin Joong-hyun, though a generation younger, Lee adopted an eclectic songwriting style that spanned folk, country, calypso, soul etc. While his music was marketed under "folk," this categorization was not the one Lee necessarily embraced.[23] When listening to the recorded sound on the record, the distance between Shin and Lee is not that significant. The reason the former was categorized as rock, while the latter was classified as folk, lies more in cultural distinctions than in

musical differences.

Lee Jang-hee's records were produced by the legendary Orient Production, where he also wrote numerous songs for other singers. Jo Dong-jin played a similar role as a songwriter, recording only one track featuring his own voice during his time at Orient. Starting as a guitarist in a rock band, he also served as a session musician. Though less commercially successful than Lee at that time, Jo was respected by his peers, including Lee Soo-man, who recorded "The Song I Sing Again." Jo also wrote several soul- and blues-influenced songs for other singers, though they remain relatively obscure.

This highlights the eclectic nature of Korean folk, much like Korean rock, making the concept of genre purity more theoretical than practical. The blending of diverse domestic and international influences, alongside the association of international musical styles with national languages, led to the blurring of genre boundaries, demonstrating the fluidity of the musical landscape at the time. This is why I argue that pop is the most relevant term, as it reflects the selective and vernacular appropriation of international genres.[24] Another key point is that Orient Production was a pioneer of in-house production, overseeing its own recording studio, production team, and most importantly, its house band, Tongbang ŭi Pit (The Lamp of the East). The band incorporated effects like fuzz and wah-wah on electric guitars, as well as new instruments like the electric piano and Moog synthesizer. They also employed innovative techniques such as multi-track recording with extensive overdubbing. The contributions of producer Na Hyŏn-ku, guitarist Kang Kŭn-sik, and keyboardist Yi Ho-jun were instrumental behind the scenes and are crucial for understanding the history of pop music beyond celebrity narratives.

Two significant issues arise when examining Orient's recordings. First, the folk genre, which was perceived as authentic by young audiences, was heavily edited and produced. Yet it didn't initially convey a sense of artificiality, a realization that came later when the same house band recorded for various other artists. Second, Orient's recordings may not have reached the level of sophistication seen in more developed countries in the mid-1970s, as the recording

equipment was often assembled from refurbished parts and second-hand gear. This raises questions about the role of vernacular technology in developing countries. A related question is why no recorded work from Orient was included in the *Rolling Stone* list.[25] There are likely multiple factors at play, which merit further exploration. One possible explanation is that innovations emerging from the periphery had already become conventions in the center; their music, to international ears, may have been unremarkable.

An important point about genre classification is that, although folk singers and rock groups shared similar recorded sounds after 1973, their performance styles differed significantly. Rock groups and soul singers performed regularly at commercial live venues throughout the year, even after achieving fame. In contrast, folk singers made sporadic appearances on television and radio and occasionally held concerts. Many of them transitioned into roles as personality DJs or show hosts. This environment set an early example of star-making in the idol industry, though it cannot be claimed that this was a conscious strategy. Nevertheless, some singers at Orient effectively filled the roles of teen idols. Instrumentalists, on the other hand, often focused on commercials or film soundtracks rather than live performances. Thus, the distinction between folk and rock was more cultural than purely musical, shaped by performance context, media representation, and audience expectations rather than solely by sound or style.

Ultimately, "pop" functioned as an umbrella term encompassing various genres, including folk and rock, within the vernacular categorizations of *k'yeyŏl* ("line") or *k'yetong* ("lineage"). In contrast, trot/*ppong* formed a distinct line and was never considered "pop" in any sense. I interpret these terms as vernacular names for different "scenes."[26] By 1971, a clear division emerged between these musical lines, as folk singers and rock groups began to dominate live venues and released records that gained significant radio airplay. Major pop festivals also began that year, and by 1973, pop records reportedly outsold trot/*ppong* records. By 1974–75, pop music had expanded beyond young, urban audiences, firmly establishing itself as a mainstream genre.

However, this growing popularity was abruptly halted by the sudden decline of pop in December 1975 in the wake of the so-called "marijuana shock," during which many pop musicians, including Shin Joong-hyun and Lee Jang-hee, were arrested for marijuana use, damaging their careers. Over fifty celebrities disappeared from the public eye overnight and were unable to resume their careers for four years. This event led to strengthened pre-censorship on records, which lasted for over twenty years.

Lee Soo-man emerged as one of the rising stars or idols in the later part of this era. His songs, such as "Tide [파도]" and "Happiness [행복]," became popular hits in 1976–77, although it is estimated that these tracks were recorded at Orient Studio prior to that year. At the close of 1976, Lee was awarded the Best Male Vocal award at the *Pops Grand Prix*, organized by the music magazine *Monthly Pop Song* [월간 팝송], as well as the Best New Male Vocal award at the *Big 10 Singers Kayo Festival* [10대 가수 가요제]. However, the former award ceased to exist after that year, while the latter endured for many years thereafter. This raises an important question: What factors contributed to the decline of pop and the persistence of *kayo*?

Kayo as Mainstream, Pop as Underground, 1976–1987

After the late 1970s, the term pop gradually faded from mainstream discourse in reference to Korean music, largely due to mass media's reluctance—especially among television stations—to use the term for domestic popular music. Instead, popular music was subsumed under the label *kayo* once again. This shift is evident in the titles of various annual *kayoje* (song festivals), which were hosted and broadcast live by television stations from 1977 onward. By the 1980s, programs like KBS's *Kayo Top 10* [가요 톱텐] (1981–1997)[27] and *Kayo Mudae* [가요무대] (1985–present) broadcasted on a weekly basis. "Pop" again became exclusively associated with foreign music, as in the period before the mid-1960s.

The power of highly centralized media should not be overstated. It is essential to consider the complex negotiations between broadcast

media, the recording industry, production companies, and the live music business, even within the context of the seemingly omnipotent media control exerted by the dictatorial state.[28] Thus, I will present a tale of Korean pop between 1976 and 1985 by patching together narratives from five songs featured on the *Rolling Stone* list: "No Already [아니 벌써]" by Sanullim, "It's Been a Long Time [한동안 뜸했었지]" by Sarang kwa P'yŏnghwa (Love and Peace), "Short Hair [단발머리]" by Cho Yong-pil, "Round Round [빙글빙글]" by Na Mi, and "That's My World [그것만이 내 세상]" by Tŭlgukhwa (Wild Chrysanthemum). While these narratives will be rearranged for the sake of flow, they collectively reflect the diverse and interconnected landscape of Korean music during this era.[29]

One of the most popular hits of 1976 was Cho Yong-pil's "Come Back to Pusan Port [돌아와요 부산항에]," which blended trot and rock in a fusion called rock-*ppong* in local jargon. His early career in rock groups and the release of this song through King Record are well documented, along with his mentions of "musical exchanges with Lee Jang-hee"[30] in the 1970s, reflecting the era's interconnected music scene. After legal issues related to marijuana in 1977, Cho returned in 1980, blending genres and forming Widaehan T'ansaeng (Great Birth), where Yi Ho-jun from Tongbang ŭi Pit played a key role, especially on "Short Hair." Furthermore, some of his later works represent genuine rock efforts, challenging Keith Howard's one-sided view of Cho as merely a "1980s ballad singer" and "teenybop idol."[31]

In 1977, the rock trio Sanullim, formed by three brothers, made a breakthrough that would leave a lasting impact on the trajectory of Korean rock. They juxtaposed catchy melodies and a wholesome image with their primitive, raw, and amateurish rock sound, capturing the complexities of the late 1970s amid heavy censorship. Frontman Kim Chang-wan (Kim Ch'ang-wan), though not directly connected to Shin Joong-hyun or earlier rock groups, is regarded as Shin's successor. A pivotal figure in the recording industry, Kim played a crucial role at Taesŏng Ŭmban (Daesung Record), where he released eleven albums with Sanullim, composed songs, and produced records for other artists, cementing his influence on Korean rock and pop.[32]

By contrast, Sarang kwa P'yŏnghwa, which emerged in 1978, displayed a different approach. Lee Jang-hee composed and produced their records, though he deliberately avoided credit due to the political censorship of the time. The group combined Lee's melodies with funk and disco rhythms to create a unique and influential style. Notable members like guitarist Ch'oe Yi-chŏl and keyboardist Kim Myŏng-kon helped shape the group's sound. One of Kim Myŏng-kon's early works, "Round and Round" by Na Mi, became a pioneering experiment in synth pop and dance music, recorded with just a single synthesizer. Afterwards, Kim Myŏng-kon, alongside Yi Ho-jun, became a prominent and sought-after studio musician, contributing to numerous dance pop and pop ballads.

These four songs illustrate how members of the 1970s pop scene became dedicated professionals who helped reshape mainstream popular music in the 1980s. Though still classified as *kayo*, they stood out from generic trends—likely a key reason *Rolling Stone* recognizes them as Korean "pop." Motti Regev might conceptualize this as a case of "pop-rockization."[33] However, using local terminology, it could be better described as the "pop-ization" of *kayo*. I avoid the term "pop-rock" because, until the mid-1980s Korea, rock was simply a part of pop, and rockism had yet to emerge as a solid ideology.[34]

Tŭlgukhwa, however, stood apart from the rest due to their uncompromising and non-conformist attitude. Two vocalists, Chŏn In-kwŏn and Ch'oe Sŏng-wŏn, had roots in the 1970s folk scene, the latter once being a session player in Orient studio. Both had already made their debuts in 1979 and 1980 respectively. But the group spent considerable time before releasing a regular album without help from media exposure. Their self-titled debut album has been regarded as one of the greatest albums in Korean popular music history, often ranking at the top of polls. A recent review by *Paste* even listed the album among the "The 300 Greatest Albums of All Time,"[35] describing it as "a perfect amalgam of the chart-topping arena music of its era and the jaw-dropping hooks of modern K-pop." As mentioned, Tŭlgukhwa's music retained a pop sensibility, much like the previously discussed songs, although some were rooted in the musical

idioms of "arena music" or classic rock.

Tŭlgukhwa and its contemporaries were called "underground music." Marginalized by television, these artists expressed themselves through live performances in smaller venues, emphasizing intimate, personal, and communal musical communication. Their approach reflected a DIY ethos, even though the term had yet to be coined or introduced in Korea. By 1987, it was clear that underground music was no longer limited to a few creative artists but had evolved into a collective movement.

It is noteworthy that this "underground" was still referred to as pop before 1985. Setting aside sporadic mentions in newspapers and media, I will focus on two key cases: the first is a 1981 article from a music magazine that discussed pop in Korea,[36] and the second is the Yongpyŏng Pops Festival, held from 1982 to 1984. The former features

Figure 2.
Monthly Pop [월간 팝송] (Jun. 1981). Jo Dong-jin and Lee Jung-sun is at the right and the left in the picture (left). Mudang plays at Yongpyŏng Pops Festival in 1984 (right). "P'ap" on the left and "Pops" on the right are clearly visible.

two prominent singer-songwriters: Jo Dong-jin, introduced in the opening, and Lee Jung-sun (Yi Chŏng-sŏn), who will be discussed later. The latter festival was organized by Yun Hyŏng-ju, another singer-songwriter from Orient production in the 1970s who later became a businessman. In hindsight, both cases illustrate the rise of underground music, exemplified by the participation of Tŭlgukhwa as well as hard rock band Mudang in the 1984 edition. I would term this phenomenon "underground pop," an intentional oxymoron that captures the paradoxical musical landscape of Korea, shaped by stringent media control.

Jo Dong-jin, often referred to as the "Godfather of the underground," was a central figure in the movement. His songs "A Happy Person [행복한 사람]" and "Between the Tree Leaves [나뭇잎 사이로]" became near-hits in 1979 and 1980, appearing on his first and second albums, respectively. Though he released albums only every four to five years—his third in 1985 and his fourth in 1990—his influence on the underground music scene was profound. Each album resonated deeply with musicians seeking sincerity and independence from mainstream commercial pressures. Jo's minimalist yet impactful production style, combined with his philosophical approach to lyrics and music, played a crucial role in shaping Korea's underground music movement.

In contrast, Lee Jung-sun (Yi Chŏng-sŏn) was more prolific, releasing seven solo albums between 1974 and 1985. As a singer-songwriter, virtuoso guitarist, and session arranger, his influence endures through his disciples, who continue to shape the Korean music scene today. In 1986, Lee formed Sinchon Blues with Ŏm In-ho, a collective that nurtured blues musicians and played a pivotal role in establishing the blues genre in Korea. His contributions left a lasting legacy, inspiring future generations to carve their own creative paths.

In terms of record production and distribution, Dong-A Enterprise (Tonga Kihoek), led by Kim Yŏng, had emerged as a key player. Transitioning from an unsuccessful songwriter to a successful record retailer, Kim provided artists with greater autonomy, allowing musicians like Jo Dong-jin, Tŭlgukhwa, and later Lee Jung-sun

to release records that defied mainstream expectations. Similarly, Chang Ko-ung also played a role in expanding and strengthening the underground scene through Namu Enterprise (Namu Kihoek), which evolved into Sinchon Music in the 1990s. Notably, both Dong-A and Sinchon were production companies rather than established record labels.[37]

Two songs released in 1987, included in the *Rolling Stone* list, reflect these changes. Lee Moon-se (Yi Mun-se) cannot be classified as underground, but his record was heavily supported by the musicians mentioned before. Songwriter Yi Yŏng-hun was closely associated with Sinchon Blues, while arranger Kim Myŏng-kon was a former member of Sarang kwa Pyŏnghwa. In contrast, Yoo Jae-ha (Yu Chae-ha), who self-produced a one-man album, was undeniably influenced by the underground scene. By this time, underground music had evolved from a marginalized cultural expression into a refined artistic form, selling as many records as mainstream singers who relied on TV exposure. This transformation coincided with the country's democratic transition after years of struggle, though few at the time directly connected the two shifts.

The boundaries between pop and *kayo* became increasingly blurred, and what was once underground began redefining the mainstream. These shifts reflected broader cultural and political changes in Korea. While mass media continued using the term *kayo* for several years, it was not long before new, competing terms emerged to replace this rigid and overly generic label. Regardless of subsequent contested evaluations, post-democratization Korea soon entered an era shaped by globalization and digitalization under the conditions of the post-Cold War—forces that intertwined to shape "modern K-pop" previously mentioned.

In other words, the word pop lost the distinctiveness it once held. As a result, it is fitting to refer to the mainstream of Korean popular music, or the newer genres of *kayo* that emerged since the late 1980s, simply as "Korean pop." To non-Koreans, this marked the beginning of a new chapter in which less esoteric and obscure terminology is applied to define pop at the periphery. The illusion surrounding pop

gradually faded as well. Once almost subcultural or countercultural, whether in a negative or positive light, pop became embedded into everyday life with the rise of modern music industry.

Outro: Between Happiness and Popssimism

Following his study in the United States, Lee Soo-man released albums in 1986 and 1987, both influenced by the burgeoning underground scene. His 1987 album, produced by Chang Ko-ung, featured compositions by Hong Chong-hwa, a musician affiliated with underground bands such as We and Sinchon Blues. Of particular significance is Lee's 1989 album, *New Age 2*, the first to bear SM's logo, marking it as the company's inaugural commercial product. While the album did not significantly impact Lee's career as a pop singer, its title track, "The Scent of Roses Blows in the Wind [장미꽃 향기는 바람에 날리고]," written by Hong, was later covered by Red Velvet in 2016, establishing a direct link to its 1980s origins.

In 1990, SM Entertainment debuted Hyun Jin-young (Hyŏn Chin-yŏng) with *New Dance*, making him the first SM artist aside from Lee himself. His second album, *New Dance 2* (1992), featured the dance track "You in a Blurry Memory [흐린 기억 속의 그대]," ranked 46th in *Rolling Stone*'s list, also composed by Hong. This album fueled competition with Seo Taiji and Boys, drawing significant public attention. However, Hyun's career was soon derailed by drug-related scandals, cutting short his influence despite his pioneering role in shaping SM's artist development strategy.

Even in 1992, earlier musical influences persisted in defining dance music. Hyun's album included covers of songs by Shin Joong-hyun and Lee Jang-hee, demonstrating how 1970s pop remained embedded in the evolving "new dance" genre.[38] Additionally, several songwriters and arrangers from the emerging collective Hana Music contributed to its production. Notably, two singer-songwriters who debuted under SM in 1990 later migrated to Hana Music, recognizing Lee Soo-man's increasing focus on dance music over other genres. Thus, SM's early catalog was more diverse than the idol-centered image it later became known for.

Hana Music, meanwhile, emerged as a key hub for underground music, particularly after Dong-A Kihoek expanded beyond the underground scene. Recruiting young artists through a music competition honoring the late Yu Chae-ha, it became a sanctuary for bohemian artists and musicians. While embracing digital recording and electronic music, it notably avoided dance music. Despite producing critically acclaimed yet commercially challenging works, it struggled with financial instability, partly due to its more free-spirited approach. Among its notable alumni, Yu Hŭi-yŏl became a highly respected artist, songwriter, and producer, as well as a prominent media figure, wielding domestic influence comparable to leading K-pop moguls, though this happened only after he left Hana Music. Bang Si-hyuk (Pang Si-hyŏk), later the producer of BTS, participated in the 1994 competition and won the bronze prize with his sentimental ballad, representing another enigmatic episode in Hana Music's history.

This period illustrates the coexistence of two contrasting models in the Korean music industry: Lee Soo-man's structured, business-driven approach and Jo Dong-jin's artist-centered, creativity-driven philosophy. Neither model fully defined the industry in the early 1990s, but by the mid-1990s, clearer distinctions in music production, artist management, and business strategies had emerged. This divergence led to a lasting bifurcation that continues to shape K-pop and the broader music landscape, making a return to earlier integrated models increasingly difficult.

The last notable cases of smaller productions challenging major record companies by combining artistic creativity with hands-on management were King and Orient in the 1960s–70s and Dong-A and Namu/Sinchon in the 1980s–90s. Nostalgia for these eras persists among those who lost out in the industry's consolidation, as the realities of a highly competitive market left little room for such models to endure. More recently, it has been documented that some artists from indie music have contributed as lyricists and composers to the works of K-pop groups such as BTS and NewJeans. Despite the persistence of tight creative control, these developments indicate that

the K-pop industry has been undergoing structural changes since the late 2010s. However, a comprehensive discussion of this change lies beyond the scope of this essay.

At their peak, both SM Entertainment and Hana Music were headquartered in Gangnam. Today, SM operates in Sŏngsu, one of Seoul's most gentrified districts, while the remnants of Hana Music have relocated to Jeju, Korea's southernmost island. Though both remain engaged in pop music production, their creative philosophies have diverged significantly. Intriguingly, the latter's music often conveys a more introspective, artistic, and optimistic sensibility in its own way, whereas some of SM's K-pop—despite its global success and polished aesthetic—has increasingly reflected the intense pressures of the industry. I am tempted to call this psyche "popssimism"—if such a term is permissible. The suicides of Jonghyun (SHINee, 2017) and Sulli (f(x), 2019) are illustrative of the profound psychological strains associated with navigating the industry.

Lee Soo-man was also compelled to step away from SM Entertainment in 2022. He then referenced his self-penned hit "Happiness" in 1977, suggesting a nostalgic longing for his Orient days—an era when pop music symbolized happiness. Global younger K-pop fans would likely recognize a different song titled "Happiness [행복]," released by a girl group Red Velvet in 2014. Local older K-pop fans, however, would construct a genealogy that includes yet another "Happiness [행복]" released by the boyband H.O.T. in 1997. As a seasoned pop fan, however, I am reminded of "The Song I Sing Again," whose third verse reads "Do not sing the last song / The last moment is the beginning again." I take this to reflect what Lee had in mind. He was pursuing happiness at the very moment when everyone thought he was singing the last song. Or perhaps the meaning of happiness itself had radically changed over the past half-century.

Let me conclude with a remark in the style of a pop critic. As I completed the first draft of this manuscript, Jin of BTS released his first solo EP after military service, titled in English—*Happy*. One track, "Heart on the Window," featuring Wendy of Red Velvet, unfolds with

a relatively linear progression more reminiscent of twentieth-century Korean pop than today's "complex, modular"[39] K-pop. The contrast shows that older forms and sensibilities remain active, cutting across the narratives and practices of modular transformation or innovation. Even if the past is a foreign country, as some have said, it is less a destination of nostalgia than a reminder that multiple temporalities intersect the present. Times may change, yet the pursuit of happiness persists. That's pop, alive with both optimism and melancholy. Pop belongs to no fixed culture or moment; it is always in motion, constantly reinventing itself.

Acknowledgements

This essay follows the McCune-Reischauer system of Korean Romanization, which has become the official standard in the academic field of international Korean studies, to which I adhere. All personal names mentioned in this chapter are presented in the East Asian order (family name followed by given name), in accordance with standard English academic and journalistic conventions. However, when individuals or corporations have adopted alternative names by which they are widely recognized, I respect these names, providing the McCune-Reischauer version in parentheses. For example, Jo Dong-jin (Cho Tong-jin). I also use a hyphen between two given names to avoid potential confusion. The names of authors of publications in English are exceptions and are presented in the English order.

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Notes

[1] "The 100 Greatest Songs in the History of Korean Pop Music: BTS, Blackpink, NewJeans, and many more," *Rolling Stone*, July 20, 2023.

[2] For a territorial critique of the *Rolling Stone* list, "The Irresponsibility of Rolling Stone's 'The 100 Greatest Songs in the History of Korean Pop Music'," *Zenerate*, August 12, 2023, accessed July 1, 2025, https://realzenerate.com/opinion-rskoreanpop100-en/.

[3] Hyunjoon Shin, "Itaewon Class, Gangnam Style, and Yeouido Star: The Industrial Revolution of Korean Pop in the 1990s," in *The Cambridge Companion to K-Pop*, ed. Suk-young Kim (Cambridge University Press, 2023): 28–48.

[4] Below are some examples. Suk-Young Kim, *K-pop Live: Fans, Idols, and Multimedia Performance* (Stanford University Press, 2018); Hark Joon Lee and Dal Yong Jin, *K-pop Idols: Popular Culture and the Emergence of the Korean Music Industry* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2022); Young Dae Kim, "The Pursuit of Modernity: The Evolution of Korean Popular Music in the Age of Globalization," (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2022).

[5] On Spotify, K-pop and Korean pop are separated and largely mutually exclusive. The latter tends to be more conventional, appealing to local and casual fans, whereas K-pop is geared primarily toward global superfans. See Sébastien Miroudot, "What's behind the 'K'? Common audio features of Korean popular music before and after the rise of K-POP," *Popular Music* 43, no. 2 (2024): 123–44.

[6] "The 100 Greatest Songs in the History of Korean Pop Music."

[7] The Republic of Korea (ROK) is the official name of South Korea, though the common term used by Koreans is *Han'guk*. *Han'guk p'ap* is the term my colleagues and I use in the title of a four-volume work covering the periods from the 1960s to the 1990s. See *The Archaeology of Korean Pop* [한국 팝의 고고학] (Seoul: Eulyoo, 2022).

[8] I disagree with the view that equates K-pop with Korean popular music. For instance, Kim Changnam employs K-pop as a broad label encompassing the entire history of Korean popular music from the 1920s to the 2010s in *K-pop: Roots and Blossoming of Korean Popular Music* (Seoul: Hollym Intl, 2012). This perspective contrasts with another approach that overlooks the historical trajectories of Korean popular music. For example, Crystal S. Anderson situates K-pop within a transnational framework, describing it as "a branch of a global R&B tradition" in *Soul in Seoul: African American Popular Music and K-pop* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2020), 145, 156.

[9] This question was raised by John Lie, who argues that "there isn't very much 'Korean' in K-pop" and that "the K in K-pop is merely a brand." John Lie, "What Is the K in K-pop? South Korean Popular Music, the Culture Industry, and National Identity," *Korea Observer* 43, no.3 (2012): 361. However, I wonder who applies the notion of "the national" (the "Korean") to pop culture in such an essentialist

manner. Additionally, I cannot help but point out the numerous factual errors in his monograph *K-Pop: Popular Music, Cultural Amnesia, and Economic Innovation in South Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016). About the detail, see the review by Keewoong Lee, "K-Pop: The Soundtrack of Korea's Globalization," *Journal of Contemporary Korean Studies* 3, no.1–2 (2016): 321–35.

[10] Despite sharing the same Chinese characters for a long time, there are significant variations between the terms for "popular/pop song" in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, particularly from the period after 1945. In Chinese, it is *liuxinggequ* (流行歌曲), in Japanese *kayōkyoku* (歌謠曲), and in Korean *taejung kayo* (大衆歌謠). Although these can be literally translated as "fashionable song and tune," "song, ballad, and tune," and "mass song and ballad," respectively, their connotations extend far beyond mere literal translations.

[11] The dominant term shifted over time, from yuhaengga (流行歌) in the 1920–1930s to kayogok (歌謠曲) in the 1940–50s, and to taejung kayo (大衆歌謠) since the 1960s. For an exploration of the politico-cultural implications of these terminological changes, see Hyunjoon Shin and Junhue Lee, "An Anatomy of Song (歌), Ballad (謠) and Tune (曲) 3: The Fall of 'Fashionable Songs' and the Rise of 'Popular Song' in South Korea 1945–1960 [가(歌)·요(謠)·곡(曲)의 해부학 3—'조선 유행가'의 점멸과 '한국 대중가요'의 발생 1945–60]," *Music and Reality* [음악과 현실] 68 (2024): 78–117.

[12] Jonathan Bollen, *Touring Variety in the Asia Pacific Region, 1946–1975* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

[13] *Dong-A Daily Newspaper* [동아일보], August 27, 1962.

[14] *Kyunghyang Daily Newspaper* [경향신문], December 13, 1963.

[15] Ethan Waddell, "Listening to South Korean Fiction through Popular Songs, 1950s–1970s" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2024). Also see Ethan Waddell, "Psychedelic Codes and Close Listening to South Korean Fiction, 1971–1989," *Positions: Asia Critique* 33, no. 1 (2025): 109–34.

[16] For a study on the Kim Sisters' musical migration to the United States, see Benjamin M. Han, "Transpacific Talent: The Kim Sisters in Cold War America," *Pacific Historical Review* 87, no. 3 (2018): 473–98.

[17] Patti Kim, whose song from 1972 is ranked 28th on the Rolling Stone list, occupies the middle ground between the Kim Sisters' pop and Lee Mi-ja's *kayo*. A prototype of the "jazz singer" in the late 1950s and early 1960s, she pursued the American dream—reflected in her stage name—by performing in Las Vegas.

[18] "A Cup of Coffee [커피 한 잔]" (1968) by the Pearl Sisters and "It Is a Lie [거짓말이야]" (1971) by Kim Choo-ja are ranked at no. 56 and no. 37, respectively, in the *Rolling Stone* list. The former features a soul rhythm with a slow tempo, while the latter is driven by a go-go rhythm with a fast tempo.

[19] Pil Ho Kim and Hyunjoon Shin, "The Birth of 'Rok': Cultural Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Glocalization of Rock Music in South Korea, 1964–

1975," *Positions: Asia Critique* 18, no. 1 (2010): 199–230.

[20] *Daily Sports* [데일리스포츠], October 19, 1975.

[21] This album was ranked 281st in a 2024 "Greatest of All Time (GOAT)" poll. "The 300 Greatest Albums of All Time," *Paste*, June 3, 2024, accessed July 1, 2025, https://www.pastemagazine.com/music/greatest-albums/the-300-greatest-albums-of-all-time-2.

[22] Hyunjoon Shin, "Searching for Youth, the People (Minjung), and 'Another' West While Living through Anti-Communist Cold War Politics: South Korean 'Folk Song' in the 1970s," in *Sound Alignments: Popular Music in Asia's Cold Wars*, eds. Michael K. Bourdaghs, Paola Iovene, and Kaley Mason (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021), 131–52.

[23] This point was confirmed through lengthy interviews with Lee Jang-hee on October 6 and 14, 2004. He said that his genre was pop rather than folk.

[24] Put precisely, *p'ap* in Korean does not necessarily signify the same thing as "pop" in English. The same applies to *p'ok'ŭ* and *rok'ŭ* as subgenres of *p'ap* or *p'apsŭ*.

[25] During my fieldwork, it was discovered that "Now" by Kim Jung-mi (Kim Chŏng-mi) was, at least partly, recorded in Orient studio during the short period of collaboration between Pak (King) and Na (Orient). But the band who played was not Tongbang ui Bit but Shin Joong-hyun and the Men. The album is mischaracterized as a "folk masterpiece" in the Rolling Stone list where its opening track "Sunbeam [해님]" is featured at no. 30. It is sufficient to say Shin absorbed elements of folk.

[26] A June 12, 1971 article in *Kyunghyang Daily Newspaper* [경향신문] described three lines: *ppongtchack* (trot), folk song, and group sound (rock). The latter two are often undifferentiated and grouped together under the label "pop line."

[27] In contrast to Eric Weisbard's association of Top 40 with democracy in the U.S., the Top 10 in twentieth-century South Korea was never democratic. The chart was not based on record sales or radio airplay but rather on fan voting and committee recommendations, with the latter holding the lion's share of influence. As a result, "rival mainstreams" rarely functioned effectively. The "democratization" of pop charts was realized only after digital platforms became institutionalized. Eric Weisbard, *Top 40 Democracy: The Rival Mainstreams of American Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

[28] Keith Howard, "Exploding Ballads: The Transformation of Korean Pop Music," in *Global Goes Local: Popular Culture in Asia*, eds. Timothy J. Craig and Richard King (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), 80–95. Howard argues that the "star system" was "promoted and marketed by television stations of the era," (80). However, this deterministic perspective is particularly problematic.

[29] For reference, the release years and corresponding rankings in the list are as follows: 1977, No. 42; 1978, No. 69; 1980, No. 5; 1984, No. 43; and 1985, No. 47.

[30] An excerpt from Cho's memoirs, serialized in a daily newspaper in 1988, is

archived, although the original source remains unidentified, https://choyongpil.co.kr/board/93011, accessed July 1, 2025.

[31] Howard, 83.

[32] Kim Ch'ang-wan and Lee Soo-man, both alumni of the same college, were indirectly associated with the campus rock group Sand Pebbles, which won the Grand Prix at the inaugural MBC Campus Song Festival. Lee served as the moderator of the festival, and the song "How Should I Do? [나 어떡해?]," written by Kim Ch'ang-hun, the bass player of Sanullim and former member of Sand Pebbles, became a defining piece of the campus rock genre, setting the style for future campus rock groups (a.k.a. campus group sound).

[33] Motti Regev, "The 'Pop-Rockization' of Popular Music," in *Popular Music Studies*, eds. David Hesmondhalgh and Keith Negus (London: Arnold, 2002), 251–64.

[34] In that sense, I agree with Keith Negus, who argued that "for many people, important years during the 'rock era' were filled with the sounds of reggae, folk, jazz, country, salsa, blues, funk, soul, disco, enka, and film soundtracks." Keith Negus, *Popular Music in Theory: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity, 1996), 163.

[35] Unfortunately, the review is incorrect regarding who play which instruments. "The 300 Greatest Albums of All Time," *Paste*, June 3, 2024.

[36] "Us Who Carry Pop Korea [한국 팝을 짊어진 우리]," *Monthly Pop Song* [월간 팝송], June 1981, 71–78.

[37] Dong-A and Namu "rented" the labels of Seorabeol (Sŏraböl) and Asia (Asea) respectively.

[38] It is less known that Lee Jang-hee and Shin Joong-hyun wrote songs for dance diva Kim Wan-sŏn in 1988 and 1989, respectively. Yi Ho-jun also shifted his style, writing and producing dance music for diva Na Mi in 1990. This suggests that the birth of modern K-pop cannot be explained solely through the discourse of discontinuities or breaks with the past.

[39] Jung-Min Mina Lee, "Finding the K in K-Pop Musically: A Stylistic History," in *The Cambridge Companion to K-Pop*, ed. Suk-Young Kim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 57. K-pop as "modular pop" will be the focus of my collaborative research with Keith Negus, examined through the perspective of Eurasian entanglements. Regarding this idea, see Keith Negus and Hyunjoon Shin, "Eurasian Entanglements: Notes towards a Planetary Perspective of Popular Music Histories," *Popular Music* 40, no. 1 (2021): 158–64.

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