Writing Assignment 2 (Annotated Bibliography) - Jonathan Wang

Jin, Dal Yong and Hark Joon Lee. 2019. ”Preface,” “Emergence of K-pop as Transnational Popular Culture,” and “K-Pop in the Twenty-First Century.” In *K-Pop Idols*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

The book focuses on the industrial perspectives of K-pop, combined with theory and musical aesthetics to provide a better insights into the K-pop phenomenon and how its increasingly popularity made it a unique local culture in the global markets since 2010s. Throughout the book, it uses the example of Nine Muses to shed light on the training process as well as the systematic star system from entertainment houses to convert them into global celebrities (Jin and Lee 2019, 3-5). It later went on to discuss the pros and cons of this system, as idols are often treated as cultural commodities and lack of authenticity due to the selective star system. In addition, one of the main reasons Korean pop culture can gain global popularity is transcultural hybridity, and some view it as a combination of Korean and Western popular culture (Jin and Lee 2019, 6).

In the paragraph “K-Pop in the Twenty-First Century,” it discusses the emergence of K-pop industry and the role of entertainment houses during the process. Psy’s Gangnam Style that debuted in 2012 can be marked as the turning point of K-pop industry, as it starts a trend that emphasis on dance and visual effects, which is completely different from previous pop music (Jin and Lee 2019, 18). This also led to entertainment houses strategizing its recruiting and training process to better target consumer in the global market, and fundamentally developed their globalization strategies. The author goes on to state the importance of social media and how it pushes K-pop into the global markets.

Kim, Gooyong. 2019. “Introduction.” In *From Factory Girls to K-Pop Idol Girls*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

The book examines how cultural manifestation of political-economic and sociocultural transformations contribute to the recent success of K-pop, and the role female idols have in this constant changing contemporary gender relations (Kim 2019, 15). It discusses the para-social side of K-pop and how the sexualized bodies presented could affect the traditional gender script in Korea's neoliberal transformations. The first volume of the book concludes that the consumer is the main driven force of K-pop’s global popularity (Kim 2019, 17-18).

Starting from chapter 2, the author explains how effective K-pop industry is as a tool for the national’s economic and political modernization, followed by a critical analysis of the relationship between state developmentalism along with other cultural traditions in the neoliberal K-pop industry, a point of view that recent scholars rarely focus on (Kim 2019, 24). The book also investigates cultural hegemony and the complex politico-economic nature of K-pop and concludes that K-pop should be viewed as a product of American pop and cultural surrogate of neoliberal capitalism (Kim 2019, 31-32).

Kim, Suk-Young. 2018. “Introduction.” In *K-Pop Live*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

The focus of the book is to discuss K-pop as a cultural phenomenon and the concept of “liveness”, where human subjects interact with others and nonhuman objects in the digital age (Kim 2018, 3). Carrying the banner of “Made in Korea”, K-pop start to gain popularity around millennium due to the booming online media platform and music market, and it also pave the road for the huge global success of K-pop (Kim 2018, 8). The author describes K-pop as a multimedia, multi-sensation performance and how the idea of “live” ultimately build a community around K-pop performances (Kim 2018, 5,12). In addition, it also brings out the idea that fans want to go to live concert is to watch their idols “sing, dance, and talk live”, and how this is a significant aspect of K-pop’s liveness.

Followed by this concept, the book also talks about “heung”, a word that illustrate extraordinary emotional registers related to excitement, and how the Korean government strategize around this by branding the nation to promote such lively image (Kim 2018, 19).

Oh, Youjeong. 2018. “Introduction” and “K-Star Road.” In *Pop City: Korean Popular Culture and the Selling of Place*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

The first part of the book discusses the reasons and benefits of Korean municipalities selling their place through association with K-pop following the impacts of Hallyu. It starts with the discussion of place promotion, where municipals sponsor television show and drama to bring ambiance in their physical spaces and culture to help boost the local tourism (Oh 2018, 2). Then it went on to introduce Hallyu, the grand Korean wave that struct the entire world, and how it not only able to influence commercial and economic life of Korean, but also leads to the transformation of the cities. In addition, the lack of fiscal capabilities of local government due to political decentralization also makes the local state hard to resist harnessing the popular culture - using its cultural content to sell place and gain administration performances (Oh 2018, 10).

In the paragraph “K-Star Road,” the author examines a case of place marketing using the popularity of K-pop idols. It focuses on the manual dictatorship on the development of Gangnam district to fit in a consumerist urban culture. The district’s strategy is to attract foreigner tourist through K-pop center image building and tourists’ “storytelling” to share their own experiences, which in turn help shape and introduce the place globally.