**What is K-pop?**

A lesson prepared by Prof. Maya Stiller and Amy Quirin

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**Powerpoint**: Introduction to Intertextuality through Film Posters

**Reading material:**

Oh, Youjeong. "Image Producers: The (Re)Production of K-Pop Idols," In *Pop City: Korean Popular Culture and the Selling of Place*, 105-135. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018. PLEASE READ ONLY pp. 105-130.

Saeji, CedarBough. “Thinking through intertextuality in Korean Pop Music Videos.” *Translation Review* 108, no. 1 (2020): 48-63.

**Lecture**: <https://youtu.be/h73goXNG_gc>

**Multiple choice questions (choose all that are correct):**

1. How would you define K-pop?
2. It is a music genre (CORRECT)
3. It is a method of training, producing, and performing popular music (CORRECT)
4. It is a fashion style (CORRECT)
5. It is a foreign language (WRONG)
6. What social role models are K-pop stars required to fulfill? (CORRECT)
7. Male K-pop stars must serve in the South Korean military (CORRECT)
8. K-pop stars must not lead an eccentric lifestyle (CORRECT)
9. K-pop stars must serve as cultural ambassadors of South Korea (CORRECT)
10. K-pop stars must not interact with their fans (WRONG)

**Discussion questions:**

1. What are some examples of intertextuality in K-pop music videos? Start with a “treasure hunt” of intertextuality examples in BTS’s hit “Blood Sweat and Tears.” Refer to CedarBough Saeji’s article (particularly table 4).

* Answer: In the BTS song “Blood Sweat and Tears” we can see several examples of non-Korean references, such as textual references to Hermann Hesse’s novel Demian and Friedrich Nietzsche’s Thus Spoke Zarathustra as well as visual references to European art, for example paintings by Pieter Bruegel that refer to angels, i.e., beings with wings, for example the painting Fall of the Rebel Angels. The music video also features the ancient Greek statue of the Venus de Milo and Michelangelo’s Pieta. *Pieta* is also a reference to an award-winning movie by Korean director Kim Ki-duk.

1. How are K-pop idols produced, consumed, and utilized?

Answer: Idols are produced via an “in-house system”. Entertainment companies headhunt for “visual” faces and train them for 4-5 years under strict surveillance and disciplinary control. Competition among trainees is fierce, contributing to the high standards in K-pop. YouTube is a major platform for the consumption of K-pop music videos and Twitter and Instagram are used for the interaction between K-pop bands and their fans. According to Youjeong Oh, “K-pop idols are a meta-commodity that sells/endorses secondary products, like merchandise and K-pop places.” Idols are expected to promote Korean tourism and represent Korea at diplomatic events. Nationalism also demands that they serve as spokespeople for South Korean companies.

**Final assignment:**

* What did you think K-pop was and what do you know now? Think about the following keywords: traditional culture, nationalism, intertextuality.
* Name and explain 2-3 examples of intertextuality in 2-3 K-pop videos.
* Answer in essay form and reference at least one of the two readings.

**Pedagogical Guide**

**Class 1**: Introduce students to the concept of intertextuality using the powerpoint. Begin with the pre-test and objectives, then move on to definitions of intertextuality and the practice activities.

Allow students time to look at images and discuss with one another the ways that images, color, layout, and references to past films are used to communicate genre, style, and content. You can also open up this discussion to other aspects of intertextuality in film. Placing students in discussion tables at the beginning of the class and giving time in groups to talk about each slide is one possibility for structuring this lesson.

After guiding students through the powerpoint, give them time in groups to develop their own selection of film posters for the genre of their choice. Students should have 10-15 minutes to work in groups, depending on the amount of time available in the class period. Then, groups should share their movie posters and briefly explain the intertextual elements they see.

Homework: Complete the assigned readings (2), and watch the lecture on K-pop. Prepare to discuss in the following class by taking notes on the discussion questions provided.

**Class 2**: Discuss readings/lecture. Use the discussion questions included in the powerpoint, along with specific examples from the videos and readings to help illustrate specific points.