

# Korean Wave in the British Context

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# Korean wave in Asia: early years



# Sampling: 2000–Present



The  
Economist

the guardian  
Newspaper of the year

# Early 2000s to mid-2000s

- ▶ Focus on the **economic** aspect, **regional** affair in Asia: **not immediate** nor proximate to the British audience

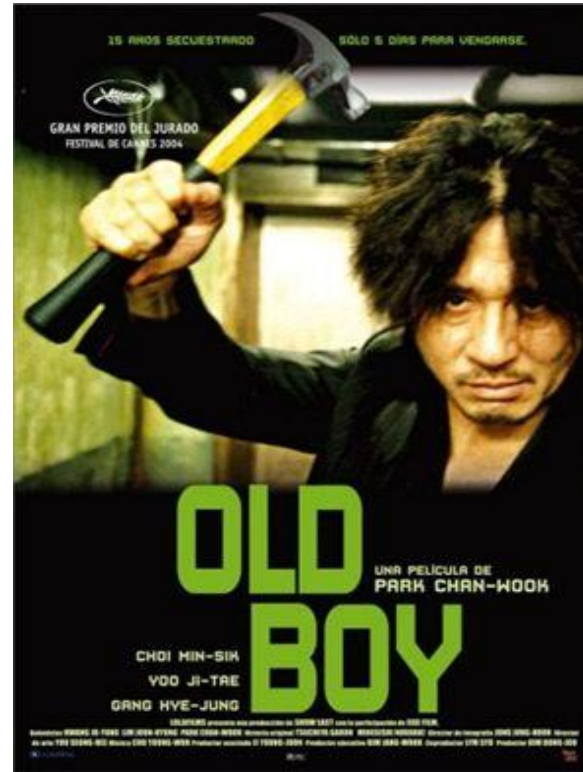
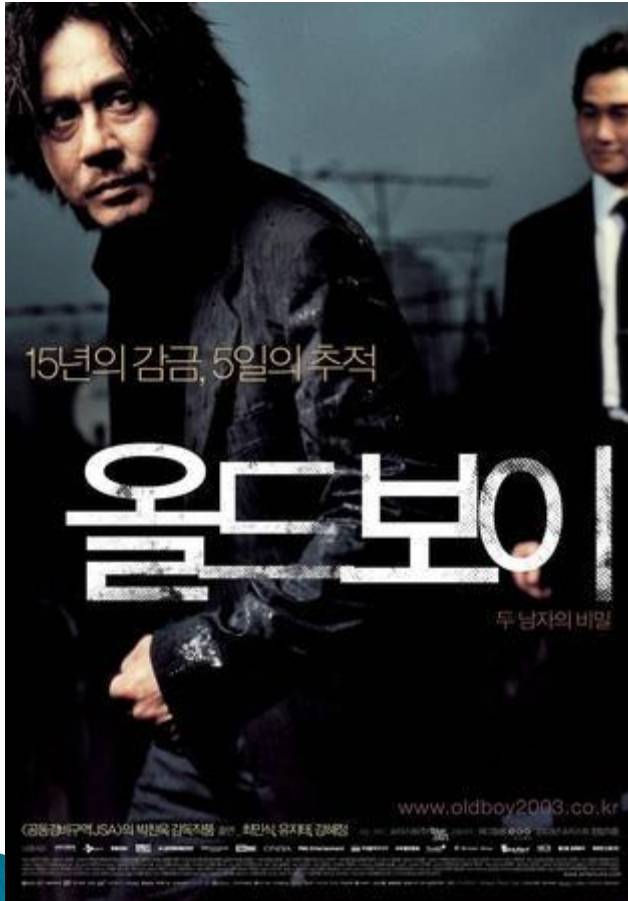
i.e. “boosting tourism revenues”

“Piracy makes harsh music for S Korea industry”

- ▶ Somewhat negative

i.e. “Struggling with their new-found place in the world”

# In the British context: early years



# London Korean Film Festival



# Emergence of K-pop

## The dark side of South Korean pop music

By Lucy Williamson  
BBC News, Seoul

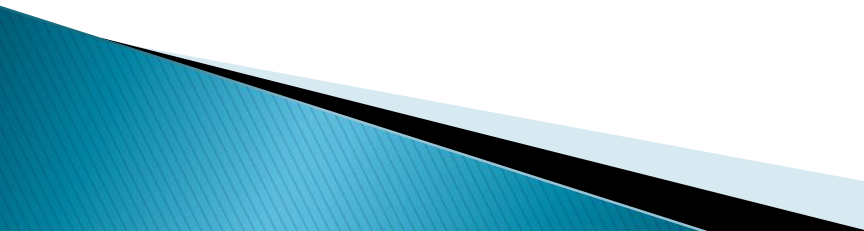


K-Pop sensations Girls' Generation on stage in Seoul

South Korea's pop industry is big business in Asia. As K-Pop sets its sights on Europe and the US, will this force a change in the way it treats its artists?



# Late 2000s to present

- ▶ More stories on a wider range of topics
  - ▶ Some explanatory, factual account while others critical
- i.e. “The only question is whether the industry ends up more famous for its music, or for its problems.”
- K-pop idols as “vigorously planned and produced product”
- 



# Some shift?

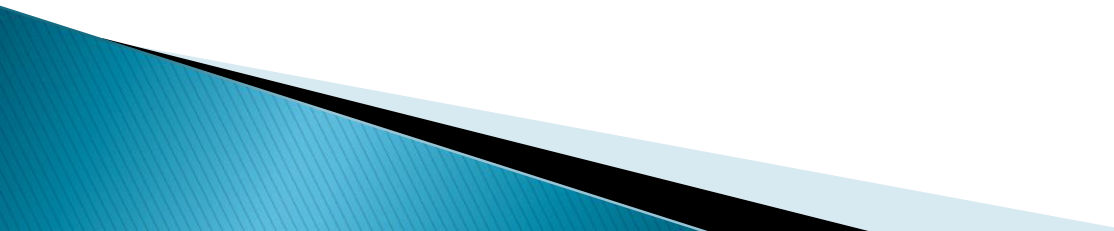
- ▶ “the major exporter of popular culture”
- ▶ “emerging in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a dynamic, global force”

“Can it make a transition from being internet-based phenomenon ... into the mainstream media?”

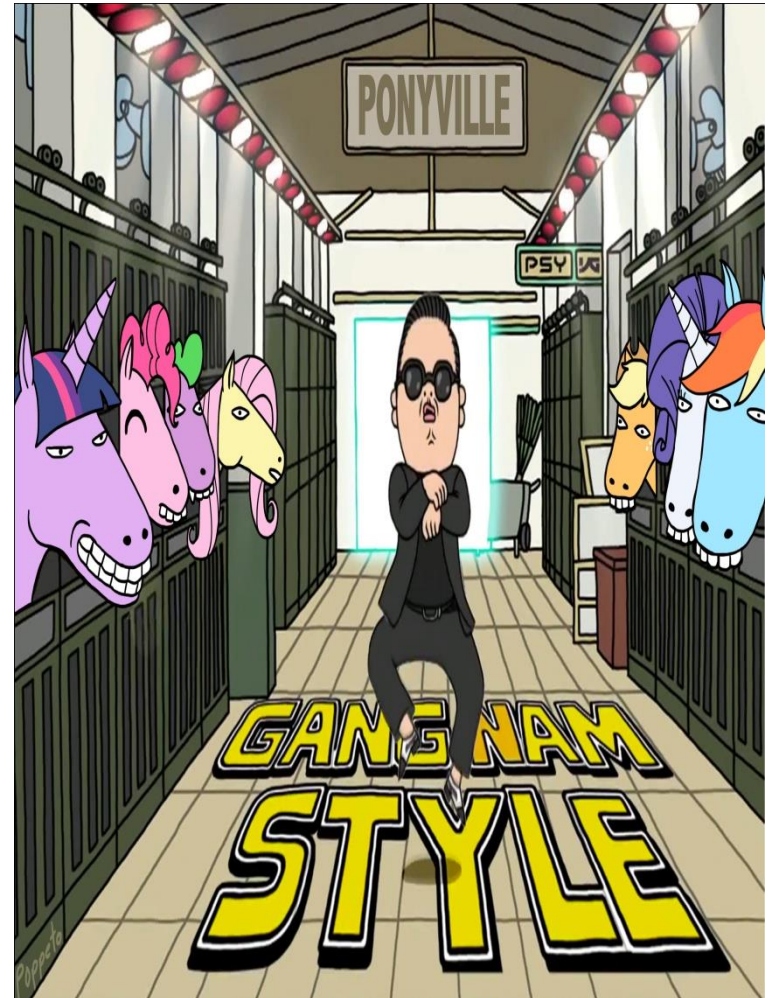
“optimistic but cautious”



# My argument

- ▶ Neither the media euphoria and overly-nationalistic tone in the Korean media nor excessively critical and cynical account of the whole phenomenon can be accurate.
  - ▶ K-pop has not 'invaded' the Britain but 'landed'.
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# Psy's Gangnam Style



News

Music Charts

Video Charts

Archive

Artists

Win



## Gangnam Style conquers the UK, officially.

He's done it! Gangnam Style fever has swept the globe this month and has now officially conquered the UK, galloping all the way to Number 1 on the Official Singles Chart.

[> More details](#)

Singles

Albums

Video

1



GANGNAM STYLE  
PSY

2



HALL OF FAME  
SCRIPT FT WILL I AM

3



I CRY  
FLO RIDA

4



WE ARE NEVER EVER  
GETTING BACK  
TOGETHER  
TAYLOR SWIFT

5



LET ME LOVE YOU  
(UNTIL YOU LEARN TO  
LOVE  
NE-YO

[> Show the top 100](#)

# Participatory culture



# S Korea's new cultural exports



# K-pop or I-pop?

- ▶ I-pop as it was promoted on the Internet, gained its momentum on the Internet, and has been, and still is being enjoyed by the international audience.
  - ▶ K-pop found a subversive way into the mainstream western music industry, media and audience.
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