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Struggles, Negotiations and Love Songs 1976 – 1992: Korean Popular Music before K-POP

In the region where ‘pop’ has been regarded as ‘Western’ or ‘Anglo-American,’ the rise of *pop* music such as *J-pop*, *K-pop* and *Mandarin pop* begs the question how the processes of “applications of the rock to ‘non-rock’ styles and genres and new entries to the canon” (Motti Regev) have also been proliferating. This paper investigates the cultural dynamics between transnational rock aesthetics and national cultural contexts, drawing on the historical experience of Korean popular music in the period running from 1976 and 1992. Not confined to the investigation of the production of the canons of local pop/rock, it will be shown that how the struggles and negotiations for cultural prestige had been waged by different collective agents through the appropriation of different styles of popular music, especially ‘love songs.’ It will also be shown that the ‘glocalization’ or indigenization of popular music is never without contradictions and contestations.