

Women fandom

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No doubt, since 2005 Korean movies have been sitting in the heart of Indonesian audiences, especially women. With the popularity of Korean TV shows and pop music that has swept across East Asia and elsewhere, including Indonesia, people started to focus on Bae Yong-joon. Housewives are crazy to watch the serial shows of his, such as "Winter Sonata" in which Bae Yong-joon is the star.

This women fandom of Korean films lingers until the present time. I was wondering what makes this mania generate a good deal of excitement for female audiences. Is it the good-looking guy that melts the heart of these women while watching, or is there any logic behind the fandom? After doing some observations and interviews with some ardent devotees to Korean movies and TV, I find that these admirers not only reflect their own life experiences on the screen, but also construct a form of escapism.

Women viewers of Korean films are currently living in a macrocosmic society in which films have become leisure industries. Korean films have an exchange value that makes them develop into a commodity. Not surprisingly, this product is swallowed by women because the content is a mixture of drama, fantasy and romance, which can be emotionally nurturing. So these women are carried away when watching because they encounter the same experience as the life the films offer. The fact that these women watch the films at home on their televisions in a domestic medium makes them more comfortable while doing other activities, such as cooking, and cleaning the house during the day. The next question is why they choose to watch Korean films instead of other films. Some women consider Korean films to be addictive. In my opinion, this is because they are designed to never end. Well, it doesn't mean that the story has no endings, but the genre has been permeating other dramas. Therefore, these women are eager to lay their eyes on Korean films that show the same genre and themes.

Additionally, the women's faithfulness in Korean films and TV shows doesn't only engender their habits of watching, but it also constitutes a pattern of escapism. Speaking about escapism has something to do with the word "avoidance." When a woman viewer avoids reality by taking into her mind an imaginative situation, she is definitely trying to detach from the world in which she lives. Korean TV shows and films allow her to forget about the problems of her life. A housewife's daily routine sometimes makes the women sick and tired. The enjoyment that they get while watching is reconcilable with the fictional nonsense that the films offer. Sometimes, these housewives wish they were the characters in the films. It's brilliant if they want to have the same good qualities of the characters. However, it is different if these women want to be like Song Hye-kyo or Park Shin-hye. This is what I mean by escapism. This signifies that these women have the desire to flee their hardships in life by identifying themselves with role models on screen. Whether this escapism is acceptable or not depends on the outcome that these women receive. Withdrawing from the misery of their life into a wonderful world of fantasy may have positive or negative consequences.

Eventually, these women, despite their attachment to Korean films, receive their gratification. This sort of reward is inarguable since they are empowered in the sense that they may be inspired by watching the shows. In some ways, the shows also provide an outlet for their problems removed from their routine activities. On the contrary, as escapists from reality, they don't think clearly, as they're seriously engaged in the films they're watching. It's also dangerous to shrink away from the life in which they are, because, socially, they might alienate themselves from their husbands or even children. Having an intimate time with their family, in my opinion, is more significant than spending their time watching Korean movies and TV shows. In the end, the familiarity of life on the shows and escapism have now been formed among the women fans of Korean shows and films. Female audiences get either a remedy or a loss when they start becoming such devotees.

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