Korean Dramas as Social Action: The Collective Memory of a Nation

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By

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Abstract

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Genre is typically defined as a category of artistic composition, as in film, music, or literature, characterized by similarities in form, style, or subject matter. Carolyn M. Miller’s and Anis Bawarshi’s definition of genre, however, exceed the form or category of discourse, and define genre as a site of social action. This new definition of genre allows for rhetorical theory to be applied to various communities and subcultures, such as South Korea’s media industry, with distinct conventions as well as social, political, and cultural influences. This paper examines the South Korean television drama, known colloquially as K-drama, a television genre that serves as escapist entertainment for its Korean citizens with recognizable television tropes and formulaic storytelling. However,
through Miller and Bawarshi’s definition of genre, the K-drama transforms into a genre of social action that serves as a site of collective memory which keeps tradition, cultural history, and national injustices, such as the Asian Holocaust, alive for future generations.
References
