

Some Trends in Korean Movies after the 2000s

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1. South Korean society and movies in the 21st century

Korean movies began to be known worldwide when they won awards at various international film festivals since 1980s. Since the 2000s, various movies with artistic and social awareness issues were paid attention at international film festivals. However, not only the atmosphere of the commercial importance of the film expands, but also the desire of the K-Culture expands, and the location of experimental films and art films are narrowed. After 2000s, Korean movies have pursued commercial films rather than artistic films. Nevertheless, since the 2000s, Korean movies were pursuing communicating with the audience through a variety of material and wide ranges of topics. The purpose of this article is to analyse some major trends in Korean movies since the 2000s.

2. Criticism and satire on power class

Since the 2000s, South Korea was fallen in a deep gap between the rich and the poor as the result of the economic crisis, IMF and Neoliberalism. Due to the economic recession and the precarious life, South Korean people have been suffering from anxiety and relative deprivation. During this period, South Korean movies represented the complaints of the people on the immorality and greed as well as violence of the privileged class. South Korean Movies criticized the fallen politicians, religious leaders, public authorities.

<Memories of Murder, 2003>, <Save the Green Planet, 2003>, and <Veteran, 2014> are important movies which were made at this time. Since the 2010s, Korean movies have made a fantasy that to solve social absurdity through personal revenge.

3. Representation and appropriating of history or reminiscence

Since the 2000s, characteristics of the historical movies are that they are pursuing the type of faction (fact+fiction). This is the way to transform the recorded history which portrays issues on consciousness of modern society. Accordingly, this reduced the solemnity and seriousness of history. This transforms history into a subject of amusement and interest rather than viewing history as a subject of reflection. Because it does not reflect the present through the past, history itself has been transformed into a commodity.

Some examples are as follows : <King and the Clown, 2005>, <Soldiers of Heaven, 2005>, <Forbidden Quest, 2006>, <Radio stations are Days> (Radio Days), 2008>, <Modern Boy, 2008>. These films have commercialized its own history through fantasy and merchandising.

However, films such as <Jiseul, 2012>, <National Security, 2012>, and <The Attorney, 2013> are movies that criticized the violence and tragedy of modern Korean history. These movies strongly criticize how the nation and public authorities destroy people.

On the other hand, <The Spirit of Jeet Keun Do-Once upon a Time in High School, 2004>, <Sunny, 2011>, <Architecture 101, 2011>, and <Ode to My Father, 2014> are movies of retrospective bent. These movies beautify the past with romance and pure time.

4. Rebuilding the nation-state

As the prolonged economic recession, fatigue and anxiety of the people was amplified the Korean people gradually lost confidence in their country. As a result, the movies emphasizing the identity and greatness of the Republic of Korea have emerged.

Those examples are: <Lost Memories, 2001>, <Taegukgi, 2004>, <Soldiers of Heaven, 2005>, <Ode to My Father, 2014>, <Roaring Currents, 2014>, <Northern Limit Line, 2015>, <Assassination, 2015>, and <the Age of Shadows, 2016> etc.

These movies emphasized the significance of the country and nation through Admiral Yi Sunsin, the Korean War, South Korean history in post-war era and the independence movement of the Japanese Colonial era. These movies had played a role to teach the importance of the country to the people who suffer from the anxiety of surviving in post-modern Korean society. Therefore, these kinds of movies included conservative national ideology.

5. Dystopian imagination of the risk society

Movies such as <Memories of Murder, 2003>, <Save the Green Planet, 2003>, <The Chaser, 2007>, <Doomsday Book, 2010>, <Helpless, 2011>, <Deranged, 2012>, <HAN GONG-JU, 2013 >, <INGtoogi: the Battle of Internet Trolls, 2013>, <Alice in Earnestland, 2014>, and <Tunnel, 2016> show the dystopian imaginations and the loss of outlook for the future of Korea. All of these movies have negative view about the future of Korean society. In that sense, these movies contain the cynical and pessimistic views of history.

6. Between entertainment and art

While Korean movies attract popularity inside Korea, Korean movies that were acclaimed at international film festivals have rapidly disappeared. Now it is difficult to pursue a variety of movies. After all, the way to develop Korean movies will surely depend on the composition of the environment that can guarantee the variety of films.

KEYWORDS

Korean movies in the 21st century, historical movies, dystopian imagination

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