

# Analysis of the Success of The Netflix Korean Drama the Glory from The Perspective of Cross-cultural Communication

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**Abstract:** Korean TV dramas have been popular in Asia since the late 20th century and continue to be widely watched in countries like Japan and China. Initially focusing on romance and idol dramas, Korean dramas have expanded their themes to include innovations inspired by Western productions, covering genres such as zombies and politics, resulting in an increasingly diverse range of content. Moreover, in recent years, collaborations between Netflix and Korean TV dramas have further enhanced Korea's cultural exports. This article will analyze the success factors of Netflix's collaboration with Korean TV dramas, focusing on aspects such as scriptwriting, audiovisual language, and marketing strategies, using the TV drama "The Glory" as a case study.

**Keywords:** Korean TV drama, Netflix, The Glory.

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## 1. Introduction

Traditional television programmes are now able to make their way onto online video platforms as a result of the rapid growth of new media within the context of the Internet and the widespread availability of mobile devices such as mobile phones and tablets. This is possible as a result of both of these factors. The subject matter of web series is getting more and more broad as they go through the process of development, and the modes of collaboration are getting more and more varied as well, which reflects the blending of international cultures as they go through the process of development. According to Yonhap, the number of Korean subscribers to the Netflix app set a new record after the launch of *The Glory 2*, after the United States video platform Netflix collaborated with South Korea on the web series *The Glory*, which topped the Netflix global charts on its third day online. The series *The Glory 2* was produced in collaboration between the United States and South Korea in the early years of 2023. This is not the first time that a Korean drama has teamed with Netflix; the premiere of *Squid Game* in 2022 had incredible results, making it one of the most successful Korean dramas ever produced. With *The Glory*, from *Top Floor* to *The Squid Game* to *Anna*, the "evil for evil" genre is becoming more and more popular, and the "all-villains" trope is becoming more and more common. *The Glory* is a drama that was written by Kim Eun-sook and directed by Ahn Gil-ho. It depicts the story of a young woman named Moon Dong-eun who is determined to end her life after suffering from both school bullying and her family's financial struggles. Moon Dong-eun eventually gives up on her quest for death, drops out of school, and finds work in a factory after making several unsuccessful attempts to end her life as a result of being ridiculed at school and ignored by her family. Because of Moon Dong-eun's diligence, she is able to enrol in university and eventually become the teacher of the daughter of Park Yeon-jin, the person who was responsible for the bullying she endured in the past. Moon Dong-eun's plot for revenge kicks into high gear at that point, and she makes it her mission to exact retribution not only on those who were directly responsible for the wrongs committed against her but also on those who were complicit

in those wrongs.

This paper will discuss the reasons for *The Glory's* success from the perspective of cross-cultural export, divided into three main sections. The first is *The Glory's* outstanding plot setting and characterization, the second is *The Glory's* audiovisual art, and the third is the mutual selection of Netflix and the Korean drama industry and Netflix's marketing strategy.

## 2. Reasons for The Glory's Success

(1) Metaphors for society in characterisation and script writing

The composition of the scripts for *The Glory* has contributed to its success, both in terms of plot and characterization. Korean dramas on Netflix have a wide audience, not just among Koreans. Edward Hall, an American anthropologist, discusses the concept of 'intercultural communication' in his book *The Silent Language*. Intercultural communication refers to the exchange of cultures or the dissemination of information between individuals of different cultural backgrounds. Intercultural communication refers to the interchange of culture or dissemination of information between individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds. *The Glory* is an important part of intercultural communication because it reflects the social problems and cultural background of Korea.

Similar to the film *Parasite*, *The Glory* is a drama that demonstrates a distinct class distinction and provides foreign audiences with a sense of the 'plutocracy' of Korea. In the drama, the authority of the Korean 'plutocracy' is evident. Once, Lenin stated, "Now that monopoly has been created and manipulates billions of dollars of capital, it is absolutely inevitable that it will permeate every aspect of social life." Characteristically, Moon Dong-eun is tormented and bruised by persistent sexual harassment, acts of bullying, and acts of violence. Even if she contacts the police, her abuser's parents can make things right with money. She was born into a single-parent family with an alcoholic mother, and when she approached her class teacher for assistance, she was regarded differently than her wealthy abuser due to her disregard for family relationships. After requesting assistance, she was met with even greater violence. When her studies and life were in

shambles due to her abuser, her mother was persuaded to abandon her, and she even attempted suicide. But Park Yeon-jin, the main abuser, is able to rely on her family to fulfil her desire to become a weather anchor, despite her poor grades, and has married and had a happy family. Despite being uneducated, she is able to pay someone to write her daily weather reports, and in their first meeting as adults, her first words are, "I thought you were going to be a poor man marrying another poor man and having a bunch of little poor men." This character and plot make Moon Dong-eun appear defenceless and make the audience detest and despise Park Yeon-jin, raising the question of why the victim's life is so messed up while the perpetrator's is so fulfilling. Due to the conflicting characters, the script is also dramatic.

Additionally, the other characters are well developed. For instance, Joo Yeo-Jeong, whose father was murdered by one of his patients and who was born into an affluent family and appears sunny and cheerful, becomes Moon Dong-eun's assistant and falls in love with him. A housewife named Kang Hyeon-nam, who endures domestic violence because of her daughter, begins to assist Moon Dong-eun in exacting vengeance in exchange for murdering her husband. The first two, like Park Yeon-jin, are affluent. When they reach adulthood, Son Myeong becomes Jeon Jae-joon's driver, and Choi Hye-Jeong is frequently mocked by others for his low status, despite having been companions in high school and having bullied others together. In addition, Park Yeon-jin's family is happy, and her spouse is kind and handsome, but she is cheating on him with Jeon Jae-Joon, and their daughter is the result of her infidelity. Lee Sa-ra appears to be a painter, but he is a drug addict who cannot quit. According to an article by Peter and Fran, the EU Children Online initiative discovered in 2010 that 19% of children were bully victims and 12% were bullies. This means that one out of every five students has experienced physical or verbal abuse at school. School bullying is also a serious issue in Korea, with many celebrities announcing their departure from the entertainment industry at the height of their careers due to bullying behaviour. This choice of topic allows viewers to "empathise" with the school experiences that can make us feel the extreme repression that lies behind such violence. In addition, the drama includes sexual assault, teacher violations of students, and domestic violence, and there is a stark contrast between the characters and their actions. Behind all this glitz and glamour is Sara's father, who is ostensibly a priest who cleanses people's souls and leads daily prayers at the church. However, he is actually a madman who enriches himself by breaking the law and shielding his daughter, a drug addict. In addition, the 'police' cover-up enables the 'villains' in the drama to repeatedly evade justice. In the midst of the constant struggle between good and evil, the villains become increasingly entrenched, and each time they use their class and affluence to overcome obstacles, the audience speculates more and more about their ultimate fate. The setup of these subplots adds numerous dramatic elements to the main revenge story, allowing the audience to appreciate them and enriching the plot.

In terms of script writing, 'school bullying' is the focal point, and the driving force behind Moon Dong-eun's survival is 'revenge', with the writers following the logic of 'deprivation before giving'. The glory, which has been a source of pain and excitement for countless viewers, is created by creating this sense of loss and then finding opportunities to satisfy it, and the 'delayed gratification' makes it more exciting for viewers,

which makes it more exciting for the audience. In addition, there are a number of other brilliant set pieces in the script. Firstly, *The Glory* does away with the stereotype that the bad guys will be forgiven for their mistakes as long as they can change them, and from beginning to end, the bad guys only get worse, and the heroine never wants to forgive those who hurt her. Secondly, *The Glory* does not have the utopian love story of a Korean idol drama where the prince saves the princess. The heroine meets Joo Yeo-jeong, a wealthy family man, but never thinks of relying on him to redeem herself. When she encounters setbacks, she also does not wallow in pain and sorrow but once again considers how to act. Thirdly, in the context of the third feminist movement, the drama demonstrates the power of "girl help girl. There are many female characters in this drama, their outward appearance and inward appearance are not necessarily the same, there are more layers of characters than in a typical cool drama, women of all ages and situations are covered, in addition to the mothers, there is the most pathetic girl who is pregnant as a result of rape and is pushed off a building, the girl who is bullied but has to work for the bully, the girl who fights back, the girl who helps others, the girl who sees her mother suffer domestic violence and has no choice, the girl who stands up for herself. Female teachers, from helplessness to resistance ..... These women in supporting roles have moments of vulnerability, fear and timidity, self-protection, but also moments of determination and bravery to take responsibility for something, and this layering of different colours makes them more than mere supporting characters. *Girls help girls* is about girls summoning up the courage of other girls rather than just giving them a hand. So much so that I don't think the removal of all the male characters detracts from the story's foundation and development. They are the vases of the play.

Mohammad and Roghayeh's article suggests that in the context of COVID-19, there is a significant decline in the quality of life as well as a significant increase in perceived stress levels and difficulty in emotional regulation. There are many topics that are the focus of *The Glory*: the lack of affection, school bullying, gender violence, patriarchal oppression, capitalist exploitation, etc. Every viewer can recognise their own reflection on the television. The heroine is able to take on our emotions, and the success of her revenge, in the end, makes the audience feel that they have been vindicated. In a drama produced in a cross-cultural context and taking into account the psychological situation of people around the world in recent years, each punishment of the bad guys in the drama is somewhat psychologically satisfying for the audience. The relevance of the plot and characters to the period is undoubtedly a big factor in the success of *The Glory*.

## (2) The audio-visual art of *The Glory*

The editing, soundtrack, and filming of the television series *The Glory* are all of a very high calibre, making it one of the best shows on television. The application of colour The art of literary narration is incapable of producing the effects that can be achieved via the deft use of colour in conjunction with the language of reflection and the subject matter of the images. The drama has a cooler and darker tone since the memories of high school are full of violence and harassment, particularly in the sequence where Moon Dong-eun tries to commit suicide, and the colours of the sky and sea are low. This contributes to the setting of the story, which is set in a place with low temperatures and low light levels. It can feel as though all of life's wrongs and the indelible wounds they

leave behind are coming down on us like a tsunami, which can be a very oppressive feeling. However, the scene in which Dong-eun and Yeo-jeong play Go is one of the rare scenes in the entirety of the film in which the colours are so brilliant that even the ginkgo leaves on the ground are golden in autumn as the leaves are dropping. This scene demonstrates the warmth and friendship that Dong-eun and Yeo-jeong share with one another.

In addition to this, the game of Go is a very significant component of the drama; the way in which Dong-eun gets to know Ha Do-yeong is through the game of Go, and this is also the way in which Dong-eun becomes closer to the male protagonist. In the case of the hero, the chessboard in the hero's room represents their agreement: "Come here and play a bit when you think of it, so that I know you've been here. However, in the case of Ha Do-yeong, Othello is a figurative representation of the silence in which Dong-eun and the villain encroach on and progressively take over each other's territory. Even Moon Dong-eun's wardrobe is reminiscent of Othello; she almost never wears a colour that isn't either black or white. Memory moments that are so striking to the eye are given a significant amount of weight in Korean dramas. Additionally, Dong-eun's background colour in the character posters is black, although the backgrounds of all of the other characters are coloured. Since black has the highest coverage of any hue, this is another indicator that Dong-eun will be successful in obtaining revenge on all of them.

It is especially important to pay attention to the scene that depicts Sara's heroin addiction because the colours and the music work together to put you in Sara's headspace and make you feel as though you are dreaming. The yellow-green tones of the ruined temple, the illusory Garden of Eden, and especially the iron frame in the foreground, which is blocking the upper end of the cross in the background, accentuate the feeling of the absence of God's presence, of ruin (fig. 1), while the mobile phones and flashing lights protruding from the windows on either side take the place of God's judgement. The layout of the scene in which Sara eats the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden is intended to be a stronger satire of her church daughter's status, why Sara Live can make such a big deal out of it, and therefore, in the presence of the cross, which is more explicit and direct than poison, a blasphemy against God. This is to be understood from the perspective of religion.

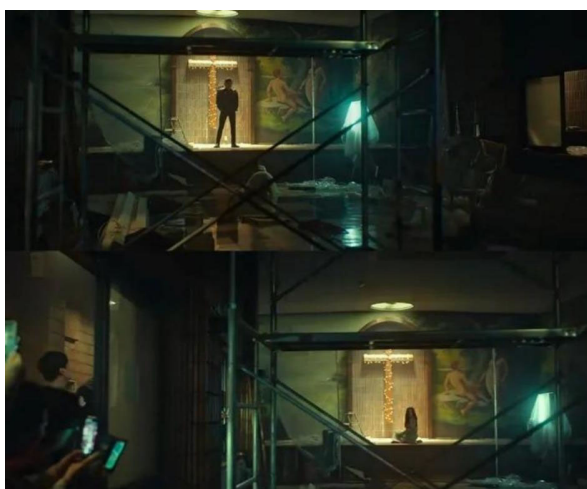


Figure 1.

Maurice Schiller in his book 'Cinema, the Art of Space' has said: "As long as cinema is a visual art, space seems to be its

total form of infection, and this is the most important thing about cinema." The Glory is also very good at using space to create differences, taking the chess scene as an example, all the scenes where Dong-eun and Yeo-jeong play chess with the two men sitting flat (Fig. 2), while in the scenes where Dong-eun and Ha Do-yeong play chess, Dong-eun is always on top (Fig. 3).



Figure 2.



Figure 3.

It is also evident here that from an emotional and psychological point of view at the beginning, Dong-eun and Yeo-jeong are equals, and that the two of them are helping and warming each other. The meeting and acquaintance with Ha Do-yeong is all orchestrated by Dong-eun for revenge, and the moment Ha Do-yeong starts to take an interest in Dong-eun, he is on the down side from an emotional and rational point of view, and the space gives a good account of the relationship as well as the differences between the characters.

Not only does the music in television dramas serve to heighten the mood and emphasise the theme, but it also has strong echoes with the tale, even as the lyrics complement the unspoken parts of the camera language. This is because music has the ability to amplify emotions and draw attention to themes. There are a number of soundtracks in The Glory that are incredibly significant and feature quite frequently in different episodes of the programme. These soundtracks serve a variety of purposes, including building suspense, contributing to the storyline of the story, and creating the basis for the progression of the story.

During the final two minutes of the most recent episode, for instance, we hear a piece of music in which Dong-eun is paying tribute to a girl who passed away in high school as a result of school bullying, and the chanting in the background becomes louder as the car door opens; at this point, Dong-eun has been successful in getting her revenge, and those who wronged her have been appropriately punished, having spent her life spending her time and energy getting even with those

who wronged her. She has invested the most productive and successful ten years of her life in exacting retribution, and it is now time for her to move on to the next stage of her life. However, the music that is playing in the background is a requiem. Gabriel Urbain Fauré, a French composer who lived in the nineteenth century and wrote this requiem, once stated that his attitude towards death was not one of fear but rather one of joyous relief and hope for the future. This requiem is unique in comparison to others of its sort and was written by Fauré. Therefore, this requiem has a serene and lovely melody that works wonderfully with the action that is taking place in the present day. First, it is a tribute to the deceased girl in the hopes that she will know in heaven that all of those who bullied her in the past have been duly punished. Secondly, it is a declaration by Dong-eun that her quest for revenge is complete, that the girl who once lived for revenge has passed away, and that she is now the one who is beginning to look forward to a new life in the future.

Even though the languages of the various countries are different, *The Glory* has grown popular in a number of different countries because the social issues that are reflected in the content provided resonate with human beings. This is true even though the languages of the various countries are different. In addition to this, the show is consistently graphic and has high levels of violence throughout its entirety. Some examples of this include skin being burned with curling irons, people being killed with blunt weapons, and different instances of school violence that stimulate the human sensory system within the context of a violent aesthetic. The so-called "Korean Wave" has moved into a new phase of its evolution, which might be described as "multinational capital channels + Korean participation in production." From its abstract cultural notion to the real growth path it has taken, the "Korean Wave" functions as a supplement to the Hollywood cultural order. Therefore, it cannot be considered to be completely autonomous. As part of its push towards globalisation, the Korean Wave is currently striving to maintain its status as just subservient to or 'compatible' with the old cultural order of the American elite, such as Hollywood. Therefore, while working on the drama, the creative team behind *The Glory* has successfully piqued the interest of audiences in both Europe and the United States by exploiting the 'violent aesthetic' to its utmost extent. Human artistic and literary production is created out of the need to give vent to the original wants of the ego, which are subject to moral limits and strong regulation by the ego. This need gives birth to the creative impulses that give rise to artistic and literary works. *Glory* is the physical manifestation of a wide variety of destructive human drives and desires. Because the bullying gang enjoys picking on other people, they switch up who they pick on all the time. Additionally, there are individuals who don't want to be bullied so that they can win the approval of the second female. Following the first murder, Park Yeon-jin goes on to hurt people again and again because she wants to cover up the fact and commits a second murder after she has already done so. The audience experiences a significant release from the normally repressed sensations they have as a result of the successful execution of revenge after all this bloodshed.

(3) Mutual choices between Netflix and the Korean TV industry in a cross-cultural context and marketing method

In the Chinese Tiktok, the number of views on the subject of K-pop has reached 14.7 billion, and Xiaoli's article mentions that Korean dramas have achieved multiple gains in

the process of foreign distribution. These gains include the export of dramas as well as a number of commercial chains, including those in tourism, apparel, food, and electronic and digital products. Xiaoli's article also mentions that Korean dramas have achieved multiple gains in the process of foreign distribution. At the same time, Korean dramas have been responsible for the export of their own way of life and values, and they have even contributed to the formation and transformation of an image of the country to some extent. In Asia, Korean pop culture, as well as television and film productions, have done an excellent job of "exporting culture," even to people who are not familiar with Korea. This has led to the growth of the tourism industry in Korea, with several TV spots becoming must-see destinations for travelers. But as Sujeong Kim (2009) points out, even though Korean media material has been effective in East Asia, it has nonetheless managed to create a rift in the Western-centric globalization process. However, the advent of Netflix has expanded the market for Korean television dramas beyond East Asia and into the rest of the world. The decision to work together was made by both Netflix and the Korean drama business. This is significant when looking at the issue from the point of view of cross-cultural distribution. Although Netflix is the most well-known operator in the world, its rivals are getting more and more powerful as the media business as a whole continues to expand. Disney and Pixar, two of the most well-known film and television production companies in the United States, are also exerting a lot of competitive pressure on Netflix's expansion. Exploring new markets is the most effective method for relieving the pressure, and Asia is the region with the greatest potential for paying customers. Netflix may source its content from several nations in Asia that have robust film and television production sectors, but South Korea is unquestionably the region's strongest contender in this regard. For instance, out of the three East Asian countries, the most prominent culture in Japan is anime, which comes from Japan. Filming and scripting can be hampered in China, and Chinese audiences are now unable to utilize the Netflix platform without the use of a virtual private network (VPN). China has very restrictive rules for the production of films and television shows. K-pop has swept over all of Asia, in contrast to South Korea, which has been actively spreading its culture to other countries for years, and Korean dramas have always enjoyed a solid international reputation. The recognition of the Korean cinema industry returned when "Parasite" by Bong Joon-ho was awarded an Academy Award.

In its cross-cultural journey, South Korea is likewise in need of assistance from Netflix. To begin, Netflix has supported the growth of the Korean television industry by making significant financial investments in the sector. Because there are so many new dramas being produced, the old model of creative production will not be sufficient to support future development. Because of this, the necessity of creative writers cannot be overstated. The authors of once-popular Korean dramas have stated that Netflix does not provide any advice or feedback, only financial assistance. According to the classroom reading Amanda (2018), we can see that Netflix currently takes a 'cost plus' approach, paying a percentage of other fees after paying all disbursements. Anecdotally, the percentage going outwards in prestigious projects even reaches 90% back, and for most projects the percentage is closer to 25%. Netflix teams all over the world are working towards the same aim, which is "to create the



most local and resonant stories," and as a result, Netflix allows a great level of creative leeway to its film and television production teams. The remaining ten percent of Netflix's investment in Korean drama goes towards paying the actors, while the other ninety percent is put into the production of new content. Additionally, despite the fact that there are currently many Korean TV stars in Asia, it is tough for Asian faces to build a name for themselves in the international arena. However, Netflix provides the Korean TV business with fantastic potential to expand internationally. Finally, the traditional television market in Korea is no longer able to satisfy the demands of its viewers. The Korean television manufacturing industry has advanced from *Dae Jang Geum* to *You Who Came From the Stars* to *Please Answer 1988*. The essence of the product is still emotion, but emotion alone is not enough to satisfy the market at this time. The Korean drama business now has access to more contemporary creative resources as a result of its cooperation with Netflix. One plus one can result in more than two when you combine the 'violence and gore' that the West is so excellent at with the 'emotional output' that Korea is so good at. And *The Glory's* broadcast mechanism also fits into the 'delayed gratification' mentality by splitting a drama into two parts, creating non-stop buzz and buzz about the drama in the intervening months, with viewers speculating on subsequent episodes from existing interviews and storylines, allowing anticipation to build, which also allows Netflix users to renew their membership at Netflix and increase their financial returns.

In addition, the British evolutionary biologist and animal behaviourist Richard Dawkins, in his book *The Selfish Gene*, refers to the term 'meme', which he describes as replicators with the ability to reproduce in the course of cultural development. They reproduce by self-replication and dissemination of content and form, and in the process undergo unpredictable cultural mutations. After the launch of *The Glory 2*, countless viewers began to greet the drama using the line 'Hi, Yeon-jin', and many netizens could be seen commenting in this tone on whatever social media platform. This spread and even secondary creation of the drama's content has had an impact in various countries, and this marketing technique has naturally engaged viewers and made them part of the continuation of the drama's popularity. *The Glory's* broadcast mechanics are in line with the 'delayed gratification' mentality, splitting a series into two parts and creating non-stop buzz and buzz about the series in the intervening months.

### 3. Conclusion

From the point of view of cross-cultural communication, this essay examines the reasons for the success of *The Glory*, a drama series that was produced in collaboration between Netflix and the Korean drama manufacturing business. To begin, the many cultural backgrounds of the people involved in the production of the script bring together a variety of socially sensitive subjects that occur all over the world, such as violence in schools, sexual harassment, and other similar topics. Because of this, a sizeable portion of the audience may get the impression that they, too, have been subjected to these unfavourable experiences; furthermore, having such expectations can contribute to the victorious completion of the heroine's plan for vengeance. In addition, the audio-visual language art of the drama demonstrates that the drama's tone and music are closely related to the development of the plot,

which makes the drama more immersive. Furthermore, the inclusion of Netflix enables the Korean drama to move away from the 'warm and fuzzy' route and add the bloody and violent elements that Europe and America are so good at, bringing the aesthetics of violence to the screen embodied, using the clash of colours and acts of violence to release the pressurised emotions of the audience. In conclusion, the reasons why Korea and Netflix decided to work together were highlighted. The film and television manufacturing business in Korea is very successful in Asia, and Netflix is in critical need of the Asian market in order to grow its subscriber base. Netflix's marketing strategies are also outstanding, taking into account the current trend of watching video in fragments and integrating viewers in the secondary creation of television to sustain the popularity of the series. These strategies offer a fantastic template for the marketing of succeeding web series and are wonderful examples of how to market web series. In an era marked by the rapid growth of new forms of online media, there will be an increase in the number of online television programmes. Behind an excellent and highly communicative television series is not only the excellence of the production team but also a lack of cultural integration and concern for audiences in other countries. We should try to export our own culture and social challenges, blend them with the greatest models from other nations, and generate dramas that can "empathise" with viewers all over the world. In the future, we should work together with other countries to create transnational collaborative dramas.

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