

**GENDER CONSTRUCTION IN JAPANESE SERIAL DRAMAS:
FROM FICTION TO REALITY****Elizabeth Kristi Poerwandari, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia**

The research aims to capture gender construction in Japanese serial dramas, how does it reflect the reality of Japanese people, and whether the dramas are constructing new or different gender roles and values. Five Japanese serial dramas are studied: **Anego**, **Jotei**, **Magerarenai Onna**, **Ohitorisama** and **Freeter Ie O Kau**. The results can be clustered into some dominant themes. (a) The majority of women are still trapped in the stereotypical roles of chasing ‘wealthy and promising man’, to become house-wife, to sacrifice own needs and happiness, and to prioritize family matters above anything, and in a specific context: to ‘sell’ sex to reputable men. When they try to fight for their independence, women would face lots of real obstacles and misery. (b) Some small number of women (the main casts of the dramas) take different paths though, even with lots of internal conflicts and huge challenges, by remaining single, fighting to be the ‘number one hostess’ for revenge, or to raise child with no male partner. (c) The difficult economic situation brings out burden to the people, women and men. The young generation finds it difficult to get secure and good jobs, and felt distressed due to the situation. And the last important finding is that (d) the serial dramas suggest new construction of gender ideology and relations, in which women and men can develop more equal partnerships at home and in professional life, as well as more liberated un-stereotypical sexual relations of older women and younger men.

Conclusion can be made that the serial dramas selected are reflecting the complex real lives of the people in the current Japan, as well as the challenges faced in the context of economic hardship of the country. They also represent the dream or fantasy of different new possible lives in regard to gender relations.

Media plays a very significant role in influencing the people and constructing new ways of life. From time to time media reflect and construct gender ideology. While the research is focusing on the serial dramas, it can be concluded tentatively that Japanese pop culture provides fantasy in a sophisticated way. With the growing changing in gender ideology and relations, pop culture particularly serial dramas are gradually transforming fantasy as the new real lives of the young generation in the current Japan.

Key words: Japan, Japanese serial dramas, gender construction, sexuality, gender relations, cultural studies

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.):
Hopefully I can present the research finding in the Gender Studies Program, Ochanomizu University, Tokyo, during my stay (as research fellow under the grant of Japan Foundation), around 17 September to the end of November 2012

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.):
I will submit the research article to ASIAN JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S STUDIES, published by Ewha Womens University Press; will submit in early July 2012

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.):
Do not have any plan yet.