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The Cult of Individualism: The Cultural Politics of Global Reality Shows in a Local Site

The ultimate purpose of the paper is to reveal the nature of cultural globalization and its practices in the site of reality television programs. The massive transnational consumption of television programs are most clearly demonstrated in the phenomenal popularity of various television reality shows. Interestingly, the popular reality shows and their formats in global dominance are most from Europe and US. In this context, it is important to identify the textual characteristics of the globally popular reality shows and the socio-cultural meanings embedded in them. This paper will conduct textual analysis of two foreign reality shows, *America's Next Top Model*, and *Project Runway*, which have been so popular in Korea as to produce Korean editions. This paper intends to reveal the distinctive forms and meanings affecting Korean television programs not only in terms of the forms but also the tastes and values. In specific, the cultural politics of those reality shows will be highlighted on the ideas of individualism. By partly comparing those Korean editions with the original ones, this paper will also demonstrate the behavior patterns of the participants and values which cannot be easily contained by those rooted in the original.