

How fangirls are unfairly judged

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What comes to your mind when you hear the word “fangirl”? A teenage girl crying hysterically about how she loves Harry Styles? Or a BTS fangirl going crazy about how Jimin looks in a music video?

Regardless of whatever we picture in our heads, we describe a fangirl with crazy, hysterical and any other intellectually demeaning word you can think of.

This is becoming more relevant as we see the rise of K-pop craze in Bangladesh. The rapid shaming of this enthusiasm extends to arguably everything that is the interest of teenage girls and thus, is deemed to be largely, a “feminine and superficial” enthusiasm.

This trivialisation is primarily rooted in sexism. While a teenage boy screaming at his screen during a football match is considered to be “passionate,” a teenage girl shouting lyrics at a One Direction concert is considered to be “manic” and “obsessive.”

It’s not that it is only fangirls who are looked down on. Any art, be it a film or music, that society assumes has a major female fan following is ridiculed by the masses and often not taken seriously by critics. It is even assumed that fangirls simply adore musicians because of their



appearance and appeal, which is statistically improbable.

Even if the general appeal of an artist or celebrity could be a factor that plays a role in a fangirl’s enthusiasm, to dismiss the entirety of a fanbase because of a gross generalisation is simply illogical and can only be attributed to misogyny.

This form of gendered characterisation of enthusiasm isn’t only confined to interests that are socially perceived to be “feminine”.

Women who express interest in otherwise traditionally masculine things like sports and superheroes are frequently dismissed. They are often accused of

liking these to seek attention or are said to be seeking validation from their male counterparts, and unless they are able to explain what an offside is or are able to go through a slew of other irrelevant trivia, their interest is deemed superficial.

As a fellow university-going fangirl, Tahziba Ahmed, explains, “I once shared my love of K-pop at a presentation and was booed by the whole class. I’ve even had to take down a Facebook post about a K-pop band I liked because everyone told me how ‘uncool’ and ‘lame’ it made me. I suspect they said worse behind my back.”

To ridicule female enthusiasm is to diminish the mental faculty of a whole gender, and dismiss a whole genre of art because it has a female fanbase, you imply that a woman lacks the intellectual capacity to judge or understand art. Even more than that, when the shaming of fangirls is so culturally normalised and widespread, it teaches young girls to be constantly vigilant about their behaviour, and to never show their excitement to escape this ridicule.

Isn’t that truly sad?

Nushba is uselessly raging about the patriarchy and obsessing over the new Batman movie. Kindly send help at nushba.tajreen@gmail.com

What we mean by “look good, feel better”

KOUSHIN UNBER

At initial glance, the concept of making yourself look good in order to be respected in society seems like a sham.

While it is true that my self-worth is not determined by how good I am at doing makeup or wearing expensive clothes, the more people I meet and the more real-life experiences I gain, I have begun to realise that the way we present ourselves to the world plays a dominating role in how we are perceived and treated by others.

Even though we may not want to feel this way, there still exists a preconceived notion in our subconscious that is formed from the outward appearance of a person. When we’re meeting new people, one of the first things we notice is how they have carried themselves. This can include things like choice of outfit, how well-groomed they are, and how much effort they have put into making themselves look nice.

Not only that, we must also recognise the many benefits that dressing up can bring.

Dressing up is an excellent form of self-care. When you know you look good, you get an instant boost of confidence that you wouldn’t be able to get

anyway else. For me, looking good will inevitably come when you feel good. This works in a cycle. On days I’ve let myself go I automatically feel gloomy and much less productive.

However, there seems to exist a harrowing idea that continues to plague our society where people who go the extra mile to make themselves look good are seen as superficial, or fickle. This is especially true for women. “She cares too much about how she looks”, “she wears too much makeup” and “smart girls shouldn’t be worried about their appearance” are heard too often by girls growing up in South Asian families. The very existence of the phrase “beauty with brains” is an insult in and of itself, because it perpetuates the notion that an intelligent person is not usually attractive, which is completely false.

The idea that simplicity goes hand in hand with intelligence or knowledge is one that has existed for generations. I used to once take pride in not being a “girly girl” and not caring about makeup or fashion. Perhaps this came from years of social conditioning, or it was just internalised misogyny showing itself in the form of self-expression.

The older I grew, however, the more I realised how misinformed I was. I

think it is quite important for people to get in touch with their aesthetic side as it plays a huge role in self-love and wellbeing, regardless of their gender.

There is a certain feeling of unmatched gratification to put together outfits, do your makeup and hair, and head out for the day. It brings routine and control into our lives, and

has numerous positive and holistic effects on an individual.

Koushin is trying to justify spending too much time putting together an outfit instead of being productive. Tell her to stop scrolling Pinterest at koushinunber27@gmail.com



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