

JUSTICE FOR THE FANGIRLS

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I am a devoted fan, and unapologetically so. I am a Swiftie, but I also belong to the Beehive and Directioners (yes, I'm still a Directioner!). I will stay up late to listen to midnight album releases, watch every interview, and memorize every single one of their lyrics. I can already feel people judging me through the pages.

The truth is, fans are the foundation of the entertainment industry, whether it is for sports, television, movies or music. Fandoms have evolved into integral subcultures of American society, leading to increased socialization. Entertainment is about connection and bonds, and expressing this passion is a way for people to socialize. However, there is a double standard: female fans face a lot more scrutiny than male fans.

According to Brianna VanCant, an expert in Cultural Studies from Chicago's Columbia College,

“Fangirls are often criticized for their intelligence by both mainstream fans and those outside the fandom.”

The media has portrayed them as obsessive young girls who shriek and shed tears at concerts while splurging on overpriced merchandise. This is not only disrespectful to the fans, but also the artists themselves, whose talent is undermined.



The lack of respect for female fans is nothing new. Elvis Presley for instance, who is now considered one of the most iconic entertainers of all time, had a large female fanbase. They were often dismissed as obsessed and irrational, accused of valuing Presley's looks over his music. Elvis himself became a sex symbol and his fans were labeled "easy." This condescending attitude is sexist and insulting, as it implies that women are not smart enough to appreciate music.

Even The Beatles received negative reviews from critics because of the demographics of their fans. Fans would go to great lengths to catch a glimpse of their favorite band by waiting outside of their studios and hotels. Beatlemania resulted in The Beatles not being taken seriously. Many looked down upon them, calling them too cheap and commercial. At the end of the day, though, the entertainment industry is a commercial business and fangirls are important consumers. They deserve to be treated as such. This pattern has persisted; with fans of The Backstreet Boys, One Direction and BTS receiving unwarranted backlash.

It is disheartening to see that an artist's talent can be diminished when they are accused of "only having teenage fans."

Taylor Swift, whose Eras tour is estimated to generate over a billion dollars in sales, still finds her music being ridiculed. Despite all of her success, her skills as a businesswoman are underestimated because of who her fans are.

This judgment stems from misogynistic beliefs held throughout the music industry.

Women are expected to be quiet and agreeable. When women show their love for music, it is against social norms society has put in place.

