

The Reconstruction of Korean Wave in Indonesian Fan Fiction

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Abstract

Recently, literary world is enriched by the emergence of a new form of fiction called fan fiction, which refers to a fictional writing produced by fan writers as an expression of love towards their idolized stars. The emergence of fan fiction in Indonesia recently is in line with the attack of Korean wave or Hallyu to Indonesian showbiz. This article is talking about Indonesian Korean fan fiction reconstruction based on several approaches proposed by Jenkins (1992). The approaches, which cover recontextualization, expanding the series timeline, refocalization, moral alignment, genre shifting, cross-over, character dislocation, personalization, emotional intensification, and eroticization, are used as the ways to guide fan writers in reconstruct a story about an idol that cannot be found in real life. Using those approaches, a fan writer can freely express their adoration toward the figures they idolize. This article aimed at specifically cutting open some Indonesian fan fictions entitled “*Tormented*”, “*Wonder Boy*”, and “*Way Back into Love*”, based on Jenkin’s approaches, using descriptive qualitative research method. The analysis shows that there are six approaches used by the writers in reconstructing the stories; refocalization, moral alignment cross-over, character dislocation, personalization, and eroticization.

Keywords: character dislocation , cross-over, eroticization, fan fiction, Korean wave, moral alignment, , personalization, refocalization.

1. Introduction

Hallyu, or Korean Wave, is a term referring to the popularity of Korean pop culture all over the world. The wave covers the drama, movie, music, fashion, and even the food. In Indonesia, Korean pop music is now becoming a great and powerful phenomenon influencing not only teenagers, but also young adults; Super Junior is one of the examples. Their concert entitled Super Show 4, which was held in 2011, was a great success with more than 20.000 tickets sold, and the concert was extended by two days. The second concert, Super Show 5 which was held in 2013 was also successful; the two-day concert was another precious for more than 16.000 Indonesian everlasting friends of Super Junior.

The craze of Super Junior is reflected by the emergence of fan fictions; novels, short stories, and writings produced by fans aimed at fulfilling their desire to be closer to their idols as well as showing their bunches of love toward them. The

fan writers explore their imagination about their idols' life in a story; they copy the names and adjust the characters based on the real characteristics of the stars.

This article is going to discuss some approaches in reconstructing some Korean Wave through some stories written by Indonesian fans; those fan fictions are “*Tormented*”, “*Wonder Boy*”, and “*Way Back into Love*”. Jenkins (1992) proposes ten approaches in reconstructing a fan fiction; recontextualization, expanding the series timeline, refocalization, moral alignment, genre shifting, cross-over, character dislocation, personalization, emotional intensification, and eroticization.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Hallyu (Korean Wave)

Firstly coined by the Chinese Press more than a decade ago, Korean wave (‘Hallyu’ in Korean) has become a global phenomenon. The term reflects the popularity of Korean Popular Culture worldwide. Started from Asia, it spreads to attract audiences from Middle East, Africa, Europe and America. A wide range of cultural products are exported to the various countries and creating a new trend in people’s life.

The popularity of Korean popular culture started when Korean television dramas was broadcasted in China in the late 1990s. *What is Love*, a Korean drama which was run by China’s state-run CCTV in June 1997, can be said as the hallmark of the success of Korean drama in Asian Countries. Chinese audiences enjoyed the drama as they found similar values with the Confucian values they adopted in their life. Subsequently, various Korean drama are widely accepted by other Asian countries. The success of Korean drama generates the increasing popularity of Korea as a new tourist destination. People who become the fans of Korean Drama want to visit the shooting scene of their favorite drama, as such Nami island, one of the most popular site where the famous Korean drama ‘Winter Sonata’ is set.

The high rating of Korean Drama is also followed by the popularity of other Korean Popular Culture. Korean music, for example, are able to gain the top chart in other countries. Korean groups appeared as new idols who inspire other

musicians and influence consumers' taste on music. Korean idols do not only offer different music preferences, but also exhibit different fashion which is adopted by their fans and teenagers worldwide. This Korean craze permeates people's life style; we can find a vast array of Korean products in our life, such as cars, cosmetics, foods, mobile phones, among other.

Indonesia has also become one of the biggest consumer for Korean Popular Culture. Korean drama 'Autum in My Heart' opens the booming of Korean Popular Culture in Indonesia. It was aired on Indosiar television from July to August 2002 and gained an 11 percent audience share during its run. The success of Autumn in My Heart is then followed by many other dramas, like Winter Sonata, Ful House, Princess Hour, Boys Over Flowers, and many others. As in other countries, a wide range of Korean popular cultures are welcomed in Indonesia, and soon become the trend-setter which permeate Indonesian people's everyday life.

2.2 Approaching Fan Fiction

It may seem like a joke, but for many the rise of fanfic is "the end of the world". Fanfic is seen as the lowest point we've reached in the history of culture – it's crass, sycophantic, celebrity-obsessed, naive, badly written, derivative, consumerist, unoriginal – anti-original. From this perspective it's a disaster when a work of fanfic becomes the world's number one bestseller and kickstarts a global trend. (Ewan Morrison, theguardian.com)

Fan Fiction, also known as either fanfic or FF, is one of the phenomenon that many scholars critically concern within the study of fan culture. As the negative standpoint, as Ewan Morrison stated above, fan fiction is considered to be a 'trash' culture, that it's not deserved to get appraisal and popularity. Related to fans, another critical perspective is also noted by Joli Jenson in Storey (2009: 223) who suggests two types of fan pathology; the obsessed individual (usually male) and the hysterical crowd (usually female). Fans are seen as the deviant and dangerous 'others' in modern life. Fandom is what 'the others' do. Fandom is assigned as the cultural activities of popular audience, while dominant groups are to have cultural interest, tastes, and preferences. This notion, as Jenson further

notes, claims the distinction of class culture, which is supposedly confirmed by ‘the object of admiration’ and sustained by ‘the method of appreciation’. Popular audiences are deemed to display their pleasure to emotional excess, while the audience of dominant culture is claimed to be able to maintain their ‘respectable aesthetic distance and control’. The defective traits of fans evolve as media frequently shows fans as psychopaths who conduct violent and antisocial forms to show their frustrated fantasies of intimate relationship with stars or unsatisfied desires to achieve their own stardom. Fans are described as unstable, socially maladjusted, and dangerous (Jenkins, 1992: 13).

Despite the media-fostered stereotypes of fans as cultural dupes, there is another approach in studying fans as *active producers and manipulators of meaning* (Jenkins, 1992:23). Michel de Certeau (*ibid.*) proposes an alternative in viewing fans’ ability to ‘*construct their cultural and social identity through borrowing and inflecting mass culture images, articulating concerns which often go unvoiced within the dominant media*’.

Commonly defined as stories written by fans by using characters or settings of the original work, fan fiction reflects what de Certeau coined ‘poaching’ as the active consumption of text.

“readers are travellers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across the fields they did not write” (Michel de Certeau in Storey, 2009: 222)

This French Cultural theorist rejects the assumption of passive reading; that readers are passively receive the author’s /the text’s intention. He challenges the traditional model of reading which serves reader as passive recipient of authorial meaning, similarly as what Storey calls as ‘textual determinism’, the view that the value of something is inherent in the thing itself.

The idea of reading as poaching reveals the activity which lies within the act of consumption. De Certeau argues that consumption is ‘devious, it is dispersed, but it insinuates itself elsewhere, silently and almost invisibly, because it does not manifest itself through its own products, but rather through its ways of using the products imposed by a dominant economic order’ (Storey, 2009:222). His reading analogy of poaching suggests the fluidity of interpretation and the process of

making meaning, which fans encourage to make their own meaning over those imposed by the producers.

Fan reading involves intellectuality and emotion of the fans. By integrating the media content into their everyday life, engaging with its meanings and materials, fans consume the fiction and make it their active resources (de Certeau in Storey, 2009: 223). The process of reading brings some degree of compatibility between the ideological construction of the text and the ideological commitments of the fans, and the affinity of meanings produced by the fans and of those located in the original story. As Elaine Landman says about 'The Beauty and The Beast': "It was as if someone had scanned our minds, searched our hearts, and presented us with the images that were found here" (Jenkins, 1992: 34)

Fan Culture is not only about enthusiastic readers; they are also cultural producers (Storey, 2009: 224). Fan Fiction proves the activity of fans in response to their favorite programs/stories. It brings the fans' fascination with the programs/stories as well as their frustration for the producer's/the author's refusal or inability to tell the kind of stories they want to see/read. Hence, fan writer rewrite the original text by repairing or dismissing the unsatisfying aspects, developing interests not sufficiently explored. Jenkins (Jenkins: 164; Storey: 224) notes ten ways in which fan writers rewrite their favorite shows:

- a. *Recontextualization*: writing vignettes (missing scenes), short stories, and novels to fill in the gaps in broadcast materials and suggest additional explanations for particular actions
- b. *Expanding the series timeline*: producing vignette, shot stories or novel which provide the background of characters, without giving suggestion on the future development beyond the period covered by the broadcast narratives.
- c. *Refocalization*: moving the focus of attention from the main protagonists to secondary characters.
- d. *Moral Alignment*: inverting the moral order of the broadcast narratives (the villains become the good characters)
- e. *Genre Shifting*: relocating the characters of the broadcast narratives to different genre of the new narratives

- f. *Cross-over*: combining characters from different narratives.
- g. *Character dislocation*: relocating characters f broadcast narrative in a new situation, with new names and new identities
- h. *Personalization*: inserting the fan writers into a version of their favorite television programme.
- i. *Emotional Intensification*: producing stories in which favorite characters experience emotional crises.
- j. *Eroticization*: exploring the erotic side of a character's life.

These strategies show the multiple way of fans in rewriting the orignal narratives. They also reflect the creative interventions of fans which result in different perceptions.

3. Research Methodology

This research employs descriptive qualitative research method to gain the purpose of this research, which is to reconstruct Korean Wave in Indonesian Fan Fiction. Textual analysis approach is applied to analyse the objects of the study, those are: *Tormented*, *Wonder Boy*, and *Way Back into Love*. Jenkins' theory of fan writing becomes the main theory adopted. The data were primarily taken from those fan fiction and analyzed by correlating them with the theories and other supporting informations.

4. Analysis

After reading *Tormented*, *Wonder Boy*, and *Way Back into Love*, we found some strategies that fans used to reconstruct their Korean idols, Korean favorite dramas, and even Korean places in their writing. Using Jenkins' teory, there are six approaches found in those fan fictions.

Moral Realignment

According to Jenkins (1992), moral realignment is the most extreme form of refocalization in which the moral universe of the primary text is inverted. It is likely to happen in fan stories where the villains transform to the protagonists or vice versa. We can take an example of that approach in the fan fiction entitled

“*Tormented*” which involves some Super Junior members’ names as the names of the characters. “*Tormented*” consists of eight romance short stories, in which some Super Junior members appear as the main characters. In the short story which is entitled “*My New Life with Your Love*”, moral realignment is shown when Kyu Hyun tries to rape the female protagonist, Jung Eun. Kyu Hyun, in reality, is the *magna*, or the youngest member of Super Junior who is known as a shy as well as a playful man. The author of this fan fiction reverses Kyu Hyun’s characterization from a protagonist to an antagonist. In this story, he is depicted as an evil character, the blood brother of hero, Jung Soo. Kyu Hyun hates his brother and always tries to destroy everything that belongs to Jungsoo, including his brother’s girlfriend, Jung Eun. In real life, Park Jungsoo is the oldest member of Super Junior, and is also the most favorite *hyung* (older brother) of Kyu Hyun’s. As often shown in many shows, it is obvious that Jung Soo and Kyu Hyun are close to each other, and the fact pleases the fans in such a way that sometimes they think of how would it be like if those two are “rivals”.

Moral realignment can also be seen in one of the short stories compiled in “*Tormented*” entitled “*One Love, One Destiny*”. The character that is inverted to be an evil is Lee Dong Hae. Unlike Kyu Hyun who is known to be playful, Lee Dong Hae is a Super Junior member who is known to be calm and warm. In this story, Dong Hae is depicted as a cold-blooded mafia leader who will do anything to reach his ambition. The part that shows Dong Hae’s devilish personality is a realignment of the real character, and it may be a reflection of crazy love of the author toward him. The author wants to give the readers a wild imagination about their idol’s alter ego; a perfect imagination of a perfect bad boy. Unlike common antagonists, Dong Hae is described as a mysteriously perfect antagonist that can make the readers flutter by imagining his devilish yet brave actions.

Personalization

Personalization is an approach used by fan writers to destroy the gap that separates their real experience and the fictional space of their favorite programs. This approach can be seen in “*Way Back into Love*”, a fan fiction in which some Super Junior and Girl’s Generation’s members are used as the main characters. In

addition to those two leading K-Pop groups, the author also involves some Korean stars like Kim Tae Hee, Lee DaeHee, Lee Seunggi, Bigbang's G-Dragon, and some other K-Pop idols. The author depicts the romantic relationship between Park Jungsoo, Super Junior's leader, and Kim Taeyeon, Girls' Generation's leader. The idea of the story comes from a rumor saying that those two happened to have a special relationship. Their fans really hope that they can be together in the real life, yet, the fact says different things. It leads fanatic fans to make fan fiction about those two idols either by making fan videos or by writing a fan fiction story. Through writing, fan writers can freely develop the ideas based on their 'wildest' imagination about their idols' life as well as express their admiration toward their idols through the characterization in the story. They characterize the figures in their works in such a way so the readers can feel that the story they are reading is real. To make the story flow more nicely and more real, the authors involve some popular names in Korean showbiz to support the story line.

Another example of personalization is found in another fan fiction entitled "*Wonder Boy*" in which the author is inspired by Super Junior's journey to the success. The story talks about each of Super Junior members' life and struggle to reach the glory in such a way so that the readers can get involved in the journey. The author put them in a fantasy genre of fiction with some exaggerating moments and actions to show how heroic they are in the eyes of the fan readers. Those fifteen members are characterized as the descendants of the king of Romelfdia, who later are in charge of keeping the glory of their kingdom. Romelfdia itself is the representation of the Super Junior fans community called *elf*.

The author shows her adoration towards them by depicting each of them as a prince of perfection. For example, Leeteuk or Park Jungsoo, the oldest member as well as the leader, is portrayed as a handsome and smart prince with angelic personalities as his fans call him the angel without wings for his kindness towards others. As for the second prince, Kim HeeChul, he is depicted similarly to his real characteristics as a handsome yet extraordinary prince. The third prince is Han Geng, or Han Kyung, who is portrayed as a handsome, calm and smart prince.

The fourth character is Yesung, a handsome and mysterious-looking prince who has a beautiful voice, and in real life, he is one of Super Junior's main vocalists. The fifth character is Kangin, depicted as a determined figure, cool-looking guy with lots of hidden talents. After Kangin, the next prince is Shin Dong, who has a little bit different appearance from other princes. He is described similarly to his real character; a chubby boy with lots of extraordinary talents. Other characters are depicted similarly to the real figures to make the fan readers feel close to their idols' lives that are not exposed in the media. The story is the reflection of what happened to Super Junior and how they reach their glory under SM Entertainment kingdom.

Cross Overs

Cross over tends to blur the boundaries between a character in a text with another character in different texts. Some characters appear in more than one story because the author wants to explore her imagination on those characters. For instance, Khu Hyun appears in *"Everything's Gonna Be Alright"* as the hero who loses his girlfriend as she turns out to have an affair with Kyu Hyun's older brother. In addition to this story, Kyu Hyun also appears in *"My New Life with Your Love"* as the hero, a very different character from the previous one; Kyu Hyun appears as the younger brother of Jungsoo, the hero. Here, Kyu Hyun is characterized as the devil, while Jungsoo is characterized as the angel.

Besides in those two stories, Kyu Hyun also appears in *"One Love, One Destiny"* as a police officer who later falls in love with a girl who turns out to be a mafia member. He is characterized as a calm and determined police officer who is trapped in a dilemmatic love because the girl whom he loves is a mafia member.

Character Dislocation

An even more radical manipulation of generic boundaries occurs when characters are removed from their original situations and given alternative names and identities. The program characters provide a basis for these new protagonists, yet the fan-constructed figures differs dramatically from the broadcast counterparts. An example of character dislocation is found in *"Hyuk Jae and the*

Destroyer”, a short story included in *“Tormented”* fan fiction collection. The story is based upon the story of Doraemon comic with character changes. The character of Lee Hyuk Jae replaces Nobita, and Lee Dong Hae replaces Doraemon. In the real life, Hyuk Jae and Dong Hae are best friends; both of them are Super Junior members who also collaborate in duo projects. The other characters involved in this story are RyeoWook who replaces Suneo’s role, and Shin Dong Hee who replaces Giant.

The author explores her imagination by putting those figures in a fictional adventure by portraying Dong Hae as a cute and kind boy who has a magic backpack and always helps Hyuk Jae who is portrayed as a spoiled boy. Their adventure begins when Dong Hae unintentionally sneaks into Hyuk Jae’s dream through the magic pillow. Together with Hyuk Jae, RyeoWook, Shin Dong, and Song Ha Ri, Dong Hae starts the adventure that brings them to a dream world. They land in a magic world, meet a group of wizards, and then get involved in a conflict there.

Character dislocation is also shown in the story, when Dong Hae and friends enter the dream world. The wizard characters they meet are the wizards existing in Harry Potter, but in this story, the original characters are replaced by the author’s characters. The character of Harry Potter is represented by Choi Siwon, while Ron and Albus Dumbledore are represented by Kim Jong Woon and Park Jungsoo.

Refocalization

In this approach, fan authors make a less popular figure the main protagonist. Kim Jong Woon, who is better known as Yesung, is a Super Junior member who does not get too much publicity, especially on his love and personal life, although he is one of the main vocalists in the group. To offer the readers a satisfying piece of imagination about Yesung’s romantic life, the fan writer makes him the main protagonist in a short story entitled *“Tormented”*. Here, the readers are given such an imagination of how Yesung is in his real life, how his romantic life is, and how determined he is in reaching his dream. For Yesung’s fans, the plot of the story gives an alternative enjoyment that cannot be gained

from other media. Yesung, who is now joining the military service, is known to be calm and is often teased by other members of Super Junior as “the ordinary one” because of his natural cuteness and personality. His romantic relationship is not widely exposed, so the fan fiction that emphasizes on his story is like a cure for the fans for they cannot monitor his activities in his real life.

Eroticization

Fan writers often want to explore characters’ erotic side which is not shown in the programs in which they appear. In “*My New Life with Your Love*”, the writer explores a little bit Kyu Hyun’s erotic side by putting him in a scene where he is trying to rape the heroine.

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis, the researcher concludes that the fan writers tend to personalize the real figures of the Korean stars in their fictions by putting the figures in a fictional story based on their imagination and sometimes based on the issues of the stars. In addition to personalization, the writers also use character dislocation to make the story more interesting for the readers. The next approach used is cross over, which is done when the writers have more interest in certain figures. They show their interest by putting those figures in different stories and for different characters. Besides those approaches, there are three more approaches used, namely refocalization, which focuses on portraying less popular figures, moral realignment that focuses on the reversal of the antagonist-protagonist characters, and the last one, eroticization, in which the writers explore their imagination on their idols’ erotic sides. However, since these fan fictions are segmented only for teenagers, this approach is not used as much as the other approaches.

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