

## CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

**1.1 Background of the Study****1.1.1. Fans and Fan fiction**

Jaejoong panted slightly, willing his body to relax. Yunho moved his finger in and out slightly, smiling as Jaejoong's muscles relaxed a bit. He then re-entered Jaejoong with two fingers, stretching him a little more, spreading his fingers apart. He made sure not to press inside too deeply; he wanted that surprise to wait for now (iloveboojae).

Yunho and Jaejoong in the story are the names of members of a South Korean boyband, Dong Bang Shin Ki or Tong Vfang Xin Qi (동방신기, 東方神起, DBSK, TVXQ, THSK). It is not known whether they are homosexuals in real life, but that kind of story portraying them as a couple can be found easily in the internet. They are not written by professional writers but by DBSK fans. DBSK fans – just like any other fans - will spend their time in front of computer to search for news of their idol or share stories with friends from the virtual world about the idol. Then, what is fans?

Experts have a variety of opinions about the unique characteristic of fans. In the book *Adoring Audience*, Lisa A. Lewis said that fans are the most visible and identifiable of audiences (1). Lewis thought that fan culture can give gratifications and coping mechanism for fans to deal with everyday life.

According to Henry Jenkins, the term 'fans' come from a Latin word 'fanaticus' which means people who are belonging to the temple, a temple servant, and a devotee. The term fans first appeared in the journalistic accounts of 19<sup>th</sup> century where journalists described the followers of professional baseball teams. The term soon expanded to include all sports/commercial entertainment devotees. Additionally, Jenkins also state that because of the impression of fans fanaticism, news report sometimes characterize fans as 'psychopath.' This is because fans are often seen by non-fans to build their own fantasy world of intimate relationship with stars or unsatisfied desires to achieve their own stardom take violent and antisocial forms (13). In this sense, fandom is always a social thing, because fans also do not like to do their fan work alone, for instance they will come together in a blog, forum, or gathering event to share their idol stuff.

One of the most prominent fan products is called 'fan fiction'. Fan fiction is a story which is produced by fans using characters and situations from popular films and comics or original work. Fan fictions talk about how fans develop their idea about story of the characters from original work (McLelland).

Henry Jenkins studied a form of fan fiction that is called 'slash fiction.' Slash fictions are stories written by fans about love story between male characters and this kind of story has already been known among Star Trek fans in the mid-1960s. In that time, that kind of story is called slash fiction. Slash fiction originally created by fans to tell the story of Kirk and Spock which are the characters in Star Trek (Jenkins 190).

This form of male-male love story written by fans is also known in Japan. There are two forms of this kind of story. The first one is called 'shonen ai' and the other is called 'yaoi'. Yaoi and shonen ai starts to emerge in Japan among the community of amateur manga/comic writers in 1980s. 'Yaoi' talks about love story between male-male characters and in general yaoi story is sexually explicit. 'Shonen ai' also talks about boy x boy love relationship however the story of shonen ai are not sexually explicit like in yaoi story (McLelland). Yaoi is an acronym for the phrase, "Yama nashi, ochi nashi, imi nashi" (No Climax, No Resolution, No Meaning). Both 'yaoi' and 'shonen ai' is very popular among female readers (Thorn 171).

Although yaoi and slash both talk about male and male love relationship, there are some differences between them. Slash portrays the relationship as non canonical homosexual relationship. Fan fictions attract a lot of female fans because they talk about some of the most important issues in a woman's life like the issue of sexuality and equality in a discreet, 'relatively safe' way. Freud once said that women were forbidden to tell about her personal problems to the others especially if these problems are related to issues concerning sexual relations. Patriarchy term in society was developing since we were a kid. The term which said that women do not have any right to tell another people about their experiences makes women cannot be free to express their desire and sexuality (Thorn, 84). However, Henry Jenkins try to argue Freud's statement by using fans and fan fiction as objects that will break Freud's hysteria. In Jenkins' book *Textual Poachers* it is mentioned that women also has their rights to express their

desire upon their idols and one of the way to do it is by reading or writing yaoi fan fiction..

### **1.1.2. Hallyu / Korean Wave**

The Korean wave or also known as *Hallyu* wave refers to spread of Korean culture around the world. This term emerged in China in mid-1999 by Beijing journalists because they were surprised by the fast growing popularity of Korean entertainment and culture in China.

In Indonesia, hallyu wave began in 2002 when one of popular drama *Winter Sonata* is aired in one of Indonesian TV station. This drama got a very good attention from Indonesian's viewer and the main actor of that drama, Bae Yong Jun became a very popular character who is being admired by Indonesian women.

Then Korean Pop Music which is also known as K-Pop or abbreviation of Korean Pop becomes a large part of Korean Wave. K-pop's popularity has been attributed to talent and individualism, the entertainment companies sometime also takes a chance to collaborate with international producers. Yoon Ja Young once said that in recent years, Korean entertainment companies have started to recognize YouTube as a key component to the international spread of Korean culture.

### **1.1.3. Hallyu fans (drama and music)**

There are a lot of Hallyu fans around the world. For example the impact of Korean wave in Korean drama in 2005, KBS exported \$43 million-worth of content abroad. In 2004, the network's exports reached \$65 million, going to 38

countries (Lara Farrar for CNN). Another example is Bae Yong Jun who is the leading actor in *Winter Sonata* caused 'Yonsama fever' in Japan. When Bae Yong Jun came to Japan in 2008, around 3,000 people turned out to greet him at Kansai International Airport on his arrival (Japan Zone Entertainment News).

On the other side, the K-Pop. One of the most successful K-pop acts in recent history is the boy band Dong Bang Shin Ki, who has around a million fan club members in Korea and Japan alone. Debuting in December 2003, Dong Bang Shin Ki has a recorded 800,000 members of their fan cafes, called Cassiopeia, which put the boyband in Guinness Book of Record as the boy band with the biggest number of fanclub members (KBS World News). The boyband became very successful throughout their career that when three members of DBSK held a concert under the name of JYJ in Japan, there are around a million people from 58 countries who streamed their performance which again proves the immense popularity of Hallyu abroad (soompi).

#### **1.1.4. Activities of Hallyu / Kpop Fans**

There are many English language forums, blogs, or groups on the internet which discuss about Korean entertainment, especially Korean music like Dong Bang Shin Ki, Super Junior, SS501, and etc. In those forums we can find news, schedule, or picture from boy band that we like. From that forum we can also find some of fandom of the idol. The forums are the place where global fandoms are usually established because they are the place where fans from all over the world interact with each other. It is in these forums that fans can share anything related to their idols such as fan-fictions, fan videos (fanvid) or fan arts.

### 1.1.5. Dong Bang Shin Ki

Dong Bang Shin Ki is a 5-membered boyband from South Korea, the members are 'U-Know' Jung Yunho, 'Hero' Kim Jaejoong, 'Micky' Park Yoochun, 'Xiah' Kim Junsu, and 'Max' Shim Changmin.



**Figure 1.1 Dong Bang Shin Ki.** From left to right: Xiah Kim Junsu, Micky Park Yoochun, Hero Kim Jaejoong, Max Shim Changmin, and U-Know Jung Yunho.

They debuted in Desember 2003 under SM Entertainment, one of the biggest entertainment agencies in South Korea, and they had a very successful career both in Korea and Japan until mid 2009 when the group went into hiatus as three of their members, Xiah, Micky and Hero filed a lawsuit against their company. The other two members, U Know and Max continue their activities under the name of Dong Bang Shin Ki while the three works under the name of JYJ.

According to the study of Su Jung (2009) about pan-east Asia soft masculinity, Dong Bang Shin Ki is a group which has *bishonen* image. *Bishonen* means 'pretty boys.' 'Bishonen' or 'kkotminam' (flower boys in Korean) is a term to describe young men who have smooth and fair skin, silky hair, beautiful facial features and a somewhat feminine manner. The members of DBSK as shown in

the picture above seem to really possess these characteristics. Kim Jaejoong especially is often called the ‘visual shock’ of DBSK due to his ‘bishonen’ image.



**Figure 1.2 ‘Hero’ Kim Jaejoong**

#### **1.1.6. YunJae Fandom**

YunJae fandom is a term known both in Korean and international DBSK fandom as to refer to the ‘couple pairing’ of Jung YunHo and Kim JaeJoong. It is a somewhat common practice in Korean and Japanese pop culture fandom to have ‘couple pairings’ of same-sex members. In many cases, couple pairings are seen as the proof of close friendship/brotherhood between members of the boy bands but in some cases, fans consider couple pairings as the indication that the members are actually couple in real life.

That fans can consider ‘couple pairings’ as something ‘real’ is sometimes instigated by the behavior of the members themselves in public. For example, Super Junior, another famous Kpop boy band, is known for this kind of ‘fan service’ – with member Heechul often mouth-kisses fellow members during live concerts.



**Figure 1.3 Fan service: Kim Heechul from Super Junior is kissing his fellow member on the stage.**

The management companies themselves often enhance this concept of couple pairings by releasing products that strongly hint ‘romantic relationship’ between pairs. DBSK’s documentaries ‘All about DBSK’ are known for their segment called ‘Couple Talk.’ This is a segment where members as ‘couples’ talk about their band.

DBSK fans themselves see the group as a family. Jung Yunho, who is the leader, is described as a handsome appa (father). Kim Jaejoong is the beautiful mother, and the rest of the members are the sons of the group. This loving family image probably cause DBSK to have a lot of loyal fans.





**Figure 1.4 Fan-art : Fan portrayal of DBSK as family.** Yunho (left) - father; Jaejoong (middle) as mother with Yoochun, Junsu, and Changmin as their children

Yunho and Jaejoong characters as father and mother in their group made fans called them YunJae couple, the abbreviation of their name. From the image of family that owned by DBSK fans began put two characters as yaoi couple, they are Yunho and Jaejoong. YunJae couple is the most favorite couple in DBSK. When we try to type YunJae in Google then there will be more than 1.260.000 results of that keyword. An obvious difference between YunJae with the result when we try to type another couple name like HanChul, a couple from Super Junior, who only gets 305.000 results or Yunho and Jejoong's band mates couple YooSu who only gets 467.000 results.



**Figure 1.5 YunJae couple**

The image of Yunho and Jaejoong being a couple in Cassiopeia fandom is strengthened by their variety show program called Banjun Drama with the series title "Dangerous Love". In that drama, there was a scene where Jaejoong thought that Yunho love him after he read a fan fiction about YunJae. The realization of an image that created by fans makes YunJae's fans more enthusiastic over YunJae

character. It is interesting that even though the group has broken up but YunJae fandom remains and there are still a lot of fans who write stories about them.

The Dong Bang Shin Ki fan fiction community still exist and can be found on the internet. Many Livejournal owners especially Cassiopeia write about YunJae fan fiction in their account. The biggest forum of Dong Bang Shin Ki fan fiction in Livejournal is Hug community. The members of Hug community have been contribute around 31.479 journal entries. About 8.176 of that journals are YunJae whereas Yoochun and Junsu or YooSu couple only have 5.421 fan fictions. This amount of fan fictions which are made by fans make Yunjae couple has their own Livejournal community which is called Jaeho\_Detox. In Jaeho\_Detox the readers can find 21.835 journal entries and 8.899 YunJae fan fictions. Not only in Livejournal, there are some fan fiction forums like Winglin and AsianFanFics.com which also have many YunJae fan fictions. Those fan fictions not only can be shared in fan fiction forum, the reader also can find it in facebook groups or twitter. The authors of fan fiction usually publish their works at their facebook, in a forum like Winglin and AsiaFanFics.com, or blog like Livejournal and Wordpress. There is no exact information about the general age and gender of these authors but they mostly claim themselves as girls/women and around the age of 15 – 25.

In this study, the writer will use theory from Henry Jenkins about slash fan fictions. As the writer mentioned before that slash fan fiction and yaoi fan fiction are different yet in Dong Bang Shin Ki fan fiction, especially YunJae fan fiction, the term that fan fictions' writer use is from slash term. Yaoi itself only a name

that fan girls use to call male-male love story in Dong Bang Shin Ki fan fictions. From that condition, Jenkins' theory of slash fan fiction can be applied in YunJae fan fiction. There are four elements in Jenkins theory, slash as women pornography, slash as androgynous romance, slash as fantasy identification, and slash as homosocial desire. Those four aspects will be used to find the reasons of female readers like to read YunJae fan fictions.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Based on the background of the study above, the statement of the problem as follow:

1. What are the reasons for these fans to like YunJae fan fictions?

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The objective of the studies is managed to achieve this following point:

1. To know the reasons for these fans to like YunJae fan fictions.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

By analyzing female reader who like to read yaoi fan fiction, the writer wants to give some information about the reason why homosexual theme becomes the most interesting theme in fan fiction. This study is about how female fans react and receive YunJae fan fiction. For the first time when the writer went to a

web site about Dong Bang Shin Ki fan fiction, the writer found many stories which tell about homosexual relationship between the member of Dong Bang Shin Ki group. It made the writer curious because in this patriarchal society which has a term that homosexual is a wrong relationship but it becomes the main theme in fan fictions.

Mostly the readers and the writers of those fan fictions are women. In patriarchal society women cannot show their desire freely however nowadays women try to break down that thinking by many ways and one of it is by fan fiction. Although those fan fictions are talking about homo erotic relationship between men but fan fiction is not something about homosexual men but about women.

Another thing that makes the writer interest to do this research is fans usually called YunJae fan fiction as 'yaoi' while yaoi means that it is a form of amateur manga or comic which tell about homoerotic relationship between boys or young men (McHarry).

## **1.5 Definion of Key Terms**

1. Fandom : The community that surrounds a tv show/movie/book etc. Fanfiction writers, artists, poets, and cosplayers are all members of that fandom.
2. Fanfiction: is a fictional story which is made by fans according to plot, characters, and setting that already made by the real author.

3. Fans: is an abbreviated form of the word “fanatic,” which has its roots in the Latin word “fanaticus.” In its most literal sense, “fanaticus” simply meant “Of or belonging to the temple, a temple servant, a devotee” but it quickly assumed more negative connotations, “Of persons inspired by orgiastic rites and enthusiastic frenzy”.
4. Yaoi: acronym for the phrase, “Yama nashi, ochi nashi, imi nashi” (No Climax, No Resolution, No Meaning), which was coined in the late 1980s to describe this new genre of amateur manga. Yaoi also has a meaning story about boy-boy love.