

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the last few years, an increasing number of South Korean cultural forms such as television dramas, movies, pop songs and Korean celebrities has gained a huge popularity. News media in Asia have recognized the rise of South Korean popular culture then dubbing it as “Korean Wave” (*Hallyu* or *Hanryu* in Korean). In fact, this term was coined by the Chinese press a little more than a decade ago to refer to the popularity of South Korean pop culture in China (*Korean Culture and Information Service* 2011, p. 7). Korean Wave actually is a phenomenon of Korean trend which is spread through the South Korean Pop Culture to all over the world by the medium mass media, internet and television. According to Visser, this phenomenon is an expansion of South Korea in Asia (Shim, 2006, p.25). All Korean products are starting to get a big attention from Asian, from food, music, until the eyebrow shape and shoe style. It is surprising enough, whereas popular culture of Tokyo and Hollywood have dominated Asia for a long time and become Asia’s orientation previously. Through the entertainment industry, South Korea is able to compete with America and some European countries.

K-Pop is one of the most famous Korean pop cultures. It combines dance, electronic, rock R&B and hiphop. The popular incorporation of rap in 1992 by Seo Taiji and Boys is widely credited for the birth of modern K-Pop. The lyrics are sung in Korean and English, many groups producing versions of their songs in Mandarin and Japanese for their markets. The popularity of K-Pop is tied to the internet and largely attributed to social media (Chua 2012). In 2011, Kpop got its own Billboard Hot 100 chart due to its widespread global popularity.

The huge popularity of K-Pop in the worldwide also get a great attention from Indonesian, especially from the adolescents. The success of the Korean Wave expansion was followed by the outbreak of boyband and girlbands. In 2010, boyband and girlbands like Super Junior, TVXQ, SNSD and Bigbang are able to make K-Pop fans in Indonesia so infatuated with their good looking appearance, music, dance and fashion. The phenomenon of Korean boyband and girlbands according to Seoul Broadcasting System (also known as SBS) has been booming from several years ago, actually in the millennium era:

In the late 1990s, a regional music television channel, Channel V, featured Korean pop music videos, creating a huge K-pop fan base in Asia. In particular, the boy band H.O.T found itself topping the pop chart in China and Taiwan in 1998; the band was so popular that album sales continued to surge, even after the band's break-up in mid-2001. Following H.O.T.'s successful concert in Beijing in February 2000, many K-pop stars such as Ahn Jae-wook (an actor-cum-singer who starred in *Stars in My Heart*), boy bands NRG and Shinhwa, girl band Baby V.O.X have held concert in China, attracting crowds of more than 30,000 Chinese youth for each concert (Shim, 2006, p.28).

Their domination in Indonesian music industry, especially for boyband and girlbands in the recent years is influential enough for Indonesian entertainment

industry. It is marked by the emergence of the look-alike Korean boyband and girlbands like SM*SH and Cherrybelle.

In a short time, Korean boyband and girlbands have a lot of growing number of fanatic fans in Indonesia, mostly dominated by the adolescent. It showed clearly when the writer attended on the event and gathering of K-Pop lovers, most of them are teen-aged who are still in the middle and high schools.

Actually, it is explained by Ingersoll (1989) that adolescent is a phase which is full of emotional feeling, conflict and facing a crisis identity. Adolescent period actually is a transitional period from a child to be a mature person. It is a period when a person tries to find the identity of her/him. In order to construct the self identity, a person is usually going to find people who have the same interest and passion to a certain thing. In this research, it is experienced by the fans of the Korean idol group.

The K-Pop fandom already becomes a common phenomenon around the K-Pop lovers in Surabaya. Surabaya as the biggest city in the East Java, frequently become a city with so many fans events or gathering every year. The biggest fandom of K-pop lovers and still exist untill now is KLOSS (Korea LoverS Surabaya) in Surabaya. There are various kind of event or gathering about K-Pop, the most popular event which is able to attract K-Pop lovers untill now is dance cover competition. Dance cover becomes one of self-expressing form from the K-Pop lovers to their idols.

K-Pop dance cover is a term used to describe the imitation of K-Pop artist's dance choreography. The focus of dance cover is to follow the dance movements and other gestures in order to create the feeling of watching a real dance performance in a K-Pop concert or music video. The point of perfection of dance cover is not about the creativity, but about the resemblance with the idols starting from the detail movements, costume, body posture, and the expression while performing on the stage (*Korea Tourism organization, 2012*). With the “realness” as the principal focus, dance cover emphasized the accuracy of the original movement from the idol. Dance cover is very popular among K-Pop lovers. It can be seen immediately while the writer attended several event of dance cover competition. The event always full of adolescents, either from the contestants or the audiences. With their “realness” on the stage from the dance cover performers, there is an interesting issue to be examined. It is from the cross dressing performers in the dance cover activity.

Cross dressing has existed from the old era until modern era. We can find cross dressing in Greek mythology, folklore, literature and music. For example, in Greek mythology we can find Hercules is wearing outfit kind of skirt on the movie and Athena often goes to the aid of people in the guise of men in *The Odyssey*. Some people related cross dressing with homosexuality or transgender, but actually the word “cross dressing” has nothing to do with those things. Cross-dressing is the wearing of clothing and accessories commonly associated with a gender within a particular society that is different as the one usually presented by the dresser (Ekins 1996, p.9). Cross dressing has been used for

disguise performance art and as a stage performance for example from the Japanese rock band in modern era, L'arc-en-ciel (Paramita 2012)

In Indonesia, when we see a boy wears skirt, maybe people will laugh or probably mock at them. Even, as a parent we may not allow our son to put on lipstick, but they will teach their daughter to put it on. In everyday life, people are performing through acts, dresses, the way of speak and attitude to show their gender identities. There are two performances in nowadays society which represent two gender available: feminine and masculine. Women should perform feminity and men should perform masculinity (Stets & Burke 1999, p.1). This rule is constructed by the society through education, family, religion and other social factors. We live in the world which divided into two such as bad and good, black and white, good and evil, we also divide gender and sexuality into two. This is called the binary opposition which is a way of seeing the world in polar opposite where one is superior to another (Tyson 2006, p.100). The binary opposition then become the main rule of how man and woman should perform like what has been stated above. The gender performance in our society still shows the very contrast differences between man and woman since the Indonesian society is heteronormativity society (Davies 2010). Furthermore, the binary opposition also helps the society to construct heteronormativity norms.

The concept of heteronormativity refers to an interdependence of gender and sexuality (Ingraham 1996) which defines gender as a binary category and naturalizes sexual attraction as directed at the oppositional gender. Therefore, we

can make a difference of category between man and woman from the gender performance. There are some differences representation of gender performance between man and woman according to Janet Saltzman Chafetz (Cited in Sihombing 2008). The area of masculinity in society physically are athletics, strong, does not care to appearance and age. On the other hand, in the feminine area physically comparing with man has smaller face than man's, bigger size of breast, longer legs, shorter waist and longer and curly eyelash (cited 1974 in Sihombing 2008).

The focus of this study is masculinity. Talking about masculinity, the concept of masculinity in heterosexist society is a dominant masculinity. According to Easthope, dominant masculinity is the myth of heterosexual masculinity as something essential and self-evident which is tough, masterful, self-possessed, knowing and always in control (Easthope 1986 cited in Storey 2006, p.159). The explanation above is supported with similar notion about characteristics of masculinity from Deborah David and Robert Brannon point out that real men should avoid any behavior or characteristics associated with women (1976 cited in Sihombing 2008, p.3). Masculinity is not an essential quality of embodied subjects but a matter of representation. It is constituted by the ways of speaking about and disciplines bodies. In general terms, traditional masculinity has encompassed the values of strength, power, stoicism, action, control, independence self-sufficiency, male camaraderie/mateship and work, amongst others. Devalued were relationship, verbal ability, domestic life, tenderness, communication, women and children (Barker 2012, p. 312).

The concept of masculinity above is different with the male dance cover performers who try to imitate the members of Korean girlbands by wearing feminine stuffs, covering the dances and songs, and also using make-up like girls. There are two male dance cover performers who totally impersonating the member of Korean girlband in Surabaya. In the circle of the K-Pop lovers they may become amazing people on the stage with their professionalism as dance cover performers, but outside of the circle for the non K-Pop lovers people may have the opposite opinion. Those people outside of the circle of K-Pop lovers may do not care about the professionalism issue as dance cover performers, in their mind those male dance cover performers may have the same gender identity in everyday life. On the contrary, the writer assumes that from the gender performativity, there is a change of view about their professionalism in the dance cover performance when they are willing to negotiate their masculinity as a man toward the feminity of Korean girlbands. Those consideration stimulated the writer to make a research in order to know how the masculinity of the male dance cover performer is performed while impersonating their idol performance in doing dance cover. Therefore, people outside of the circle of K-Pop Lovers do not underestimate their activity as male dance cover performers by revealing their masculine identity on the stage. Their activity of repeating, citing and imitating in dance cover while impersonating Korean girlbands is in order to become a particular gender on the stage (Butler 1993, p.2).

According to Butler, in heteronormative's view, we tied in the discourse of masculine and feminine which has been formed before (Cited in Gauntlett

2008, p. 150). For instance, female must be feminine and male must be masculine. This theory is compatible in exploring the masculinity of the male dance cover performers. Based on the observation, from several dance cover groups there were only a few male that totally impersonates Korean girlbands while doing dance cover. Totally impersonates here means that they were doing cross-dressing. Otherwise, most the male dance cover performers who covers Korean girlbands only imitate the gestures and the movements of Korean girlbands without wearing female stuffs like the participants of this research. The participants of this research are Alanda Putra Pamungkas and Bayu Rizky, later they will be called as Alan and Yuki for their nickname. The writer assumes those different standard in covering girlbands between male dance cover performers without cross-dressing and the participants in this research when impersonating Korean girlbands emerge since in our society a man totally performs his opposite gender is still uncommon for some people. The way we perform our gender mostly will affect people's reaction to us. Sometimes, if we are women and wearing dress, make up and having a long hair people will praise us, even tell us that we look like an angel. On the contrary, if we are men wearing dress, make up and have a long hair people will mock, avoid and even abuse us. Therefore, it can be concluded that the society believes that the performance of our gender reflect our true identity. It perhaps become the main reason why most of people are very concerned about how they look (perform) must be suitable with their gender and only a few people are willing to negotiate their gender identity toward their opposite sex identity.

The writer concludes that Butler's statement is against the identity principle has beginning and ending like our society. Butler also disagree that sex determined our gender identity. There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender because identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results (Butler 1999, p.25). In other words, gender is a performance; it is what you *do* at particular times, rather than a universal *who you are*. Therefore, it can be understood from the Butler's view, it is normal that sometimes, someone has masculine identity and in the other time has feminine identity. Butler's notion indicates that we cannot resist from performing the gender as the society asks. Therefore, in any circumstances male performer cannot perform as female one unless they are ready to be punished by the system. Therefore, the best strategy to perform a gender is by maintaining the binary opposition of the gender between masculine and feminine.

This study will focus to know how masculinity is performed while doing dance cover by the male dancer while impersonating the member of Korean girlbands through gender performativity by using case study research strategy. Furthermore, it examines how the dancer put himself between his masculine identity as a man and feminine identity of her idol that is being performed. Figure 1 and 2 are the images of the impersonating activity of both subjects in the dance cover contest. It can be seen the different process of negotiation between the two of them.



Figure 1. Alan while performing dance cover (Facebook fan photo, 2013)



Figure 2. Yuki while performing dance cover (Mike December 30, 2013)

B. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

How is the masculinity performed by the male performer while doing the dance cover?

C. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to reveal the masculinity of the male dance cover performer on the stage, whether the performer totally lose their masculinity or maintaining their masculinity.

D. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In our society, while we see cross-dressing performers on the stage most of us may laugh, and mock them. Even, we may have thought that outside of the stage those people are also the same with their personality on the stage. It is also happen with the K-Pop dance cover performers with cross-dressing looks on the stage. The audience from the K-pop's fans maybe fond of them so much,

particularly with the male performers who impersonate the Korean girlbands. However, non K-Pop fans may have the opposite opinion. The male dance cover performers seems losing their masculinity while performing. Even, some people also have thought that those people are too effeminate. That said, this research has the focus on the attempt in revealing about the masculine identity of the impersonator while performing dance cover in order to examine their masculinity with their impersonation activity. Therefore, the writer expected that this research will contribute in enhancing the understanding about performativity of gender. Through the performance of masculinity which is done by the male dance cover performers through theory of performativity by Judith Butler that the male dance cover performer do. This research is different since in Indonesia as developing countries, study masculinities is not yet a lot being studied. Gender discourse is also usually discussed about the patriarchy ideology, gender inequality and women oppression. In addition, this study is aimed to give valuable contribution from English Department students of Universitas Airlangga, especially those who take cultural studies as their major.

E. DEFINITION OF THE KEYTERMS

K-Pop dance cover : K-Pop dance cover is a term used to describe the imitation of K-Pop artist's dance choreography. The point of perfection of dance cover is not about the creativity, but the resemblance with the

idols (original dance performance), from the detail movements, costume, body posture, and the expression while performing on the stage (Korea Tourism organization, 2012)

Cross-dressing : The wearing of clothing and accessories commonly associated with a gender within a particular society that is different as the one usually presented by the dresser (Ekins 1997, p. 9)

Masculinity : The construction of a man, (where he) should be assertive, tough, and focused on material success (Hofstede 1998 p.6)

Gender performativity : The act of repeating, citing and imitating practice to become a particular gender (Butler 1993 p.2)

Heteronormativity : (The) Norm in the society that stated sexual relationship must be among opposite sex (Beasley 2005 p.109)

Feminity : The construction of woman (where she) should be modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life (Hofstede 1998 p.7)

