Literary Visitors' Experience to the Edensor Village

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Abstract — **This research paper explores the visitors' experience of the Edensor village (UK). The primary question is how visitors experience the place (Edensor village) and what they have experienced there. The research project was inspired by reading Andrea Hirata's works, particularly the Edensor novel (firstly published at 2007). Related studies (i.e., Squire, 1994; Herbert, 2001; Busby & Klug, 2001; Stieble, 2007) were consulted; and to walk in their footsteps a phenomenological approach using depth interviews was followed. The interviews; were conducted with Indonesian participants, who lived in the UK and had visited the Edensor village. Participants; known as fans had read the Hirata's novel and were inspired to visit Edensor whilst non fans had been motivated to visit by other media such as Laskar Pelangi's movie and shared experiences of fans that an Indonesia author had visited Edensor. We, therefore, wanted to explore the differences in the visitor experience. The findings showed that the visitor experience of fans has been primarily motivated by their reading of Edensor novel which shaped their preconception of the Edensor, prior to their visit and their perspectives whilst experiencing it. The fans and non-fans responded differently regarding the meanings they consumed during their visit to Edensor with fans recreating and understanding the meanings of places and spaces based on the novel. On the other hand, non-fans developed their own meanings. It was also found that authenticity is needed by fan visitors; who expect to be transported into and feels feel experiences they had read about in the book. Non-fan visitors do not have prior expectations. It is recommended for the tourism business related to include literary tourism within their longer-term strategy, promote themselves through many media channels, and encourage visitors to share their experiences through media; particularly when referring to Edensor as this inspired non-fans to visit. Methodically, without identifying and separating participants by fans and non-fans during data gathering process provided us with a more interesting output, both theoretically and practically.**

Keywords— literary tourism, authenticity, UK's visit experience, Andrea Hirata

I. INTRODUCTION

Andrea Hirata is an Indonesian author who shot to fame through several works known as 'Laskar Pelangi' (Rainbow Troops) novels. Published in 2005 by Bentang Pustaka, Jogjakarta (Hirata, 2006), Hirata's novels were best sellers and sold more than 27 thousand copies and continue to be reproduced legally and illegally.

Edensor is a novel within the 'Laskar Pelangi' series. The story is about the journey of its main character; named Ikal, who travelled to several cities in Europe, as a part of his study at Master level. Ikal had a scholarship to study in France and England and his journey; travelling as a tourist for the first time, dramatically changed his life .

However, for this research project the important part of Ikal' journey here is his visit to a classical village in the UK namely Edensor. Following the publication of Hirata's novel the village became popular among Andrea Hirata's readers; particularly because the cover of the novel showed the author pictured in front of St Peter's, the Parish Church of Edensor and Pilsley. Edensor is a village near Chatsworth House; a stately home located in the Peak District National Park in Derbyshire. Despite the novels popularity, the Edensor village is not major tourist destination (Orchard Gate, n.d.). Indeed, prior to Hirata's book it seemed the village per se did not include tourism within their strategic plan as there were few tourist attractions within the village. One interesting exception that may have appealed to some US tourists is Kathleen Kennedy (sister of President Kennedy) who is buried in the churchyard at t St. Peter's, and borne on her table of stone is a record of J F Kennedy visit in 1963. However, points of interest, souvenir shops and a Tourist Information Centre were missing from Edensor. However, following the popularity of the Edensor novel, the village changed as many readers of Hirata's novel (fans) and general Indonesian visitors (non-fans) began to visit Edensor (Augusta, 2014); particularly to visit St Peter's the main landmark of the Edensor village.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Literary Tourism

'Literary tourism' can be defined as a type of cultural tourism that is usually linked to popular books or authors (Squire S. , 1994; Busby & Klug, 2001). Literary works about spaces and places attract visitors to a real or 'constructed' location related to stories in novels, social media, blogs and so on (Hoppen, Brown, & Fyall, 2014). For this paper, Edensor is a literary place visited and associated with the literary figure of Ikal, and the connection to Hirata's novel.

Based also on this concept, literary tourism typically starts from the literary works (Stiebel, 2004) that has successfully visualized certain destinations as perhaps a 'wonderful, holy, unique,' place and/or has sparked the

imagination of the reader through unique limages captured by the author (O'Connor and Kim, 2014). In this way, literary works function as a great promotion for interesting literary places in order to inform and invite potential consumers' to become inquisitive and eager to visit (Ridanpää, 2011: p.104).

Furthermore, literary places are certain spaces and places that are usually associated or regarded to have some associations, with an author or the created characters within the story, such as house he/she lived in, where they went shopping or the café where they drank tea (Herbert, 2001; Fairer-Wessels, 2010; Squire, 1993). Interestingly, the spaces and places can be authentic places or imagined places (Herbert 2001). Real literary places are commonly associated with literary writers in their real lives (Smith, 2003) and imagined places are linked purely with authors' creativity in their works of imaginary heroes, heroines or simply everyday characters (Herbert, 1996). In addition, tourist bloggers or local tourist boards on the back of the author may also create and construct literary places as a way of promotion to attract potential visitors (Jia, 2009) thus developing what the original author had in their literary works.

Literary pilgrims are an important part of the literary tourism experience as they have unique characteristics compared to general visitors. Primarily literary visitors have certain reasons to visit such a literary site in which normal visitors do not (Smith, 2003). Literary visitors normally have a high curiosity to know and understand the place more than general visitors have. Further they can be also motivated by their inner spirit to fulfil this curiosity to personally engage in their personal sense of authenticity and sense of place (Jia, 2009).

When compared to other visitors, they are characterized with respect, understanding, and usually have some literary awareness of literary heritages (Butler, 1985; Hoppen et al., 2014). As visitors, they are actively involved in meanings reproduction and reinterpretation (Squire, 1994; Marques and Cunha, 2013), as a result of their status as fans or part of a cultural mythology (Herbert, 2001). Likewise, a visit also gives a chance for visitors to reconstruct some of the meanings provided of literary sites by an author (Squire, 1994), that can be developed internally and interconnected in many ways between the authors, consumers, and developers (Johnsons, 1986 as cited in Squire, 1994; Herbert, 2001).

B. Literary Tourism Experience

Although the word experience has strong connectivity to travel, tourism, and adventure (Lash, 2006), literary tourist experience is a complex phenomenon. It is a psychological process of tourists (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010; Cutler et al., 2014) and includes all tourists' activities within the whole travel process since they leave their home, along trip activities, until they arrive and enjoy on-site activities, and return to their own home (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010).

The visit for literary tourists, therefore, goes deeper and draws from a desire to see the place from the eyes of the author (Rudanpää, 2011), as visitors believe that the real visit

is the best way to identify themselves as fans of authors and/or their works (Smith, 2003). Emotional connection built when visitors feel their visit as a way to display their love for the authors, but visitors who have more academic logic see their relation with the authors or those literary places (Herbert, 1996; Ridanpaa, 2011).

Conducting a visit also gives a chance for visitors to construct some meanings of literary sites (Squire, 1994). Thus, those meanings constructed however are not static, but can be developed and growth, and interconnected altogether in many ways by the authors, consumers, and developers (Johnsons, 1986 as cited in Squire, 1994; Herbert, 2001).

Thus, literary visitors experience is a thing comes from literary places consumption (Herbert, 2001). Receiving intended meanings produced by sites developers, literary consumers have their own opportunity to reproduce and reinterpret meanings they have consumed (Squire, 1994). It is little bit different that literary tourism experience is resulted by combination of their preconception while reading literatures and their real visit experience to such a literary place (Herbert, 2001; Stieble, 2007; Fairer-Wessels, 2010). Experiencing a landscape enables literary visitors to feel more understanding of linkage between the site and literature (Smith, 2003) and to view and touch literary sites with the eye of the authors (Busby & Klug, 2001; Herbert, 2001).

III. METHODOLOGY

As a social investigation attempts to be neutral, empty-bias, and value-free, the research needs to be procedural in order to achieve a rigor research (Slevitch, 2011). In order to get a deeply understanding of the visit phenomenon, participants are allowed to develop their own interpretation (Egon & Lincoln, 1994) and valued as respondents who are actively recreating the meanings (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

As stated; literary tourism occurs as a result of connection between literatures and places in the mind of potential customers, which began since they read about the places in related books, and led them to have some images of places that encourage them to conduct a real visit (Herbert, 2001; Stieble, 2007), therefore, it is important to let the participants speak freely about their connection to the places and spaces they have read about and visited. Below is how the connection is figured out:
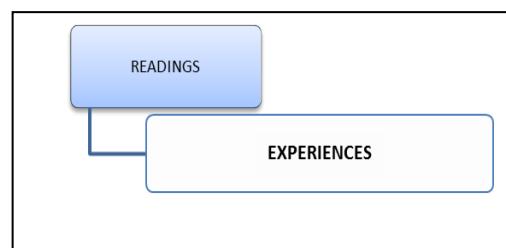

Figure 1. Connection between Readings and Experience

To better understand the phenomenon of visitors' experience, the study uses the qualitative approach, by asking participants 'what participants experience by being there?' (Earl, 2008: p. 402). Depth interviews allowed

participants using their own words to express their feelings (Squire, 1994), their literary awareness their connection and experiences of the place and authenticity to them.

The phone and face to face interviews were used; no significant differences occurred (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). During two weeks in April 2014, four participants who visited Edensor were interviewed deeply one by one in about 30 to 45 five minutes (Brotherton, 2008).

IV. DISCUSSION

Confirming the connection between readings and experience, participants are asked about their Hirata's novel and their status as a Hirata fan or non-fans. The connection between reading novels, curiosity and being fans of the author or his works is real, in which fans readers do not stop at books, but continue to the author.

Fan participants confirm Stiebel (2007) that literary tourism starts firstly from literature and the visitors generally have the desire to know about the author (Herbert, 2001). They have most of Andrea's novels or at least know about them from other sources include film and listed Laskar Pelangi and Edensor as most read books. However, especially among non-fan readers, completing the readings is not necessary and direct reading is not required as well. It seems that popularity of Andrea's works; such as social media/films becomes the strongest magnet for them more than the work itself. Therefore, their curiosity tends to stop at books, and does not continue to the author. As non-fans readers, they do not see the importance of knowing about its author. At this level, non-fans seem more realistic while fans seem more emotional. The link here is popularity of the book, and visitors (disagreeing Herbert, 2001) are not merely big fans of the authors or their works.

Therefore, other media related has important role for them, such as films and travel writing in shaping their experience. This is because the fact that one participant who has not read anything of Andrea''s works said: "I only watched the film, …[therefore] Edensor should be seen." He never read the story and did not understand Edensor as the novel setting. He just knew that the author was there, from the film.

A. *Understanding the connection*

Experience is a combination of familiarity and strangeness (Cohen, 1972). Participants looked for any information helps them how to get there includes access and transportation. Participants tried to understand the village more than that what they could get from the novel. Useful information is gathered from offline sources such as map or online by googling, reading blogs or comments from Tripadvisor.

All outside elements such as 'how to get there' and 'with whom' influenced their experience. Their using of public transportation such as bus and train does not merely indicate that they have strong desire to visit, but also as a way to get same experience with the author. This manner has a special touch and is different when they travel in their country by using private car. Furthermore, going there with friends and

or families is also perceived as one important factors influence their experience for each participants. Using public transportation is excited for them and going with family and friends is fun by spending two nights in Sheffield. However, in spite of many advantages of going with friends, going alone might enable to pay more attention to surrounding environments. As an individual experience (Lash, 1999; Noy, 2008), set up by such elements outside of tourists (Cutler et al., 2014), they might experience the place by different ways such as hiking with family, enjoying excited public transportation, traveling together with a special person or friends to get more pictures.

Length of visit was also various, even though a few hours were enough as having extra time seems unnecessary for some reasons. For example their awareness that Edensor is not a tourism destination when they were there and then decided to keep moving to Chatsworth; and lack of tourism facilities also disallow them to be there for a long time.

Consumers value literary sites for the linkage with the writer or the settings (Herbert, 2001). Therefore, they maximize their time to understand this connection. Fans-readers build the connection since they travel from Sheffield, where Sheffield Hallam University is located and Andrea also has studied, and the participants began their live dreams.

Reading novels would influence respondents to visit a literary place (Fairer-Wessels, 2010). The visitors are usually encouraged to experience the authors' world and their works (Herbert, 2001). Here almost all readers recognize the influence of reading Edensor their visit experience. However, this influence depends on their understanding of the story and its connection with the place, whilst the visit itself help them to understand more about the story, as literature suggests (Pocock, 1967; Smith, 2003).

B. *Experiencing the place*

Experiencing the place is one main motive for travel (Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987). Edensor visitors experienced the site uniquely, not only by looking the place with the eye of the authors, but also by finding something new, unpredictable but enjoyable things. For them, walking on the author's footstep looks likely a first step to reinterpret the place with their own meanings (Squire, 1994), by not only following the place according to the story, but also by feeling and creating their own meaning along the visit.

Regarding the prior knowledge of the setting, whether it has more influences or not, the answer seems related to their status as fans. Fans participants said very clearly about the story and remembered it along the visit, whilst non-fans have not more attention to the story for their visit. It is similar for the scenic environment and beautiful view of Edensor, which fans are 'really interested in the situation', and bring the atmosphere to feel what exactly Andrea Hirata has experienced.

Their experience was a result of combination from the visit experience and their readings of the novel. They compared what they read such as settings and what they have seen at the destination. Such as sunshine, bird chirping, dick statue, the village gate, and tried to look for them during the

visit. The result is also various, some of them were disappointed while others are happy. Disappointed visitors may look for authenticity they cannot find, while happy visitors seek for new experience, more than what is mentioned in the novel. However, all participants acquire the beautiful scene and view of the village and consider them as a way to increase their visit experience.

Finally, everything suggested in the literature that increase or reduce tourists' experience: prior knowledge, the on-site setting and scenic environment, views, range of facilities such as tea cottage and souvenirs shop (Herbert, 2001), all of them can be found within Edensor visitors. However, lack of facilities and tourism promotion of the village did not reduce their experience. As they may understand the village is not main site for tourism, and the 'the biggest attraction for the village is Chatsworth House', after physical visit (Li, 2000).

C. Main Sensations

Two main sensations literary visitors may feel when they visit to a literary place are to view and touch (Busby and Klug, 2001). Participants accepted that the village is very quiet. They are very 'excited' by viewing and feeling the sensation to be there, while some of them felt the experience since following the author's trip from Sheffield by bus, to understand 'why Edensor is really affecting Andrea Hirata's life."

Those feelings are stronger amongst fans visitors than amongst non-fans. Here fans have a desire to feel and recreate the meaning by their own, while non-fans being there to prove whether the village is as beautiful as written in the novel.

D. Genuineness

Literary visitors also raise question about genuineness (Herbert, 2001). There are different responses between fans and non-fans visitors about this. Authenticity is not an important thing for non-fans visitors, while it is very critical for fans visitors since they hope that place as authentic as Andrea has seen before. Authenticity is important because this kind of visitors will feel some disappointed feelings when they unseen what they predicted to see.

They valued authenticity in experiencing on-site situations and felt that Andrea was honest when figuring out the place as beautiful as they have expected. However, visitors with less literary awareness and less understanding of literary connection will have less attention to the genuineness.

V. Conclusion

A. Conclusion

The research accepts that reading of Edensor novel has influenced visitors' experience. Every items suggested within the literature influence on the experience can be found within Edensor visitors, include viewing and touching during the visit. They felt to view the village from the view

of the author and much more, and found the village as peaceful, beautiful, and quite. Those feelings are stronger amongst fans and weaker amongst non-fans.

The visitors with preconception prior visit also valued authenticity since they think it is important to keep the place as authentic as the author has ever seen, in which non-fans participants pay less attention.

B. Recommendations

Some critical notes are distinguished as below:

a) The related tourism business to include literary tourism within their longer-term strategy. This is regarding the fact that the Edensor village has become a destination for Andrea Hirata's readers. It will be useful by considering the thoughts and opinions of the fans and non-fans memorable experiences already occur, as a beneficial way to invite more potential people to Edensor;

b) The tourism businesses to promote themselves through many media channels. This is regarding the importance of benefitting other media, as well as books, in shaping visitors' experience;

c) The tourism business should also encourage visitors to share their experiences. That can be done both amongst them or through media, inclusively or privately, both online and offline. This is because Peer to Peer communications also drive consumers to choose what kind of tourism businesses to visit.

d) Methodologically when choosing participants do not just choose fans. In this research project for example, inviting all Indonesians to partake in the research makes us discover that fans and non-fans are not same; and the non-fans data provided us with some of the more interesting theoretical and practical output.

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