Visual Reception of Ainu Folklore Hima Na Konabe

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Abstract—Ainu people live in Hokkaido archipelago, Northern Japan and Southern Russia. Ainu are the Japanese indigenous people sustainably maintaining the local wisdom in their folklores. The folklores carry information on their predecessors’ social life and knowledge. Ainu folklores contain the local wisdom preserved by the supporting society. The local wisdom of the Ainu people is their belief on the God of Bear. Each of things possesses soul (kamui) and every offering ritual is the effort to protect the nature. This study is aimed to reveal how the aesthetic experience, subjectivity and the reader self-evident [3]. There are three phases of artistic transformation in the aesthetic reception. First, sign and meaning come while reading; Second, social history and third, aesthetic. The aesthetic reception – in the art history – can be understood by the person him/herself, the creative process and the producer. The aesthetic reception depends on the inter-phenomenon contextual in the “sense for relationship”.

The relationship among the phenomenon meets in a certain context. The actualization of the aesthetics reception is considered as an aesthetic process [3]. The aesthetics matter is not only understood in the self-actualization. The aesthetic quality is the function of a sign structure. Thick aesthetic value predicates such as balanced, serene, dynamic, graceful, vivid, tragic and delicate quality [4]. The implication of the aesthetic matters is the first reception of the work including the aesthetic values in the comparative works being read. The aesthetic reception depends on the active parts of the past aesthetic experience of the reader. Aesthetic experience depends on emotion, affect, ideas, and impression [5]. The production of aesthetic reception in the text realization is on the reader reception, reflective criticism, and the author in the context of sustainable productivity. The reception of the text interpretation considers the context of experience on the aesthetic perception. The questions on the interpretation subjectivity and the reader’s taste distinction or the reader’s signifying level, trans-subjectivity and the understanding condition is influential to the text. The illustrators’ aesthetic reception depends on the self-evident (masterwork), the aesthetic experience, and the illustrator subjectivity. The beautiful form of a work becomes a self-evident and an indisputable eternal signification [3]. The reception and interpretation as the process of meaning construction focus on the interaction among texts [6]. Veronica M.F Adamson divides it into six approaches of studying reception, they are: theme, politics, area, channel, temporality and geography [7].

In doing the interpretation of art works, there is an intersection between text and context. The text has dialogue with the context. Text becomes the sign determined by two things; representation and composition. The working process of
an illustrator is making signs in a composition. An illustration is a text in a certain context so that the dialogue between text and context emerges on an illustration picture. The relation is seen on the diegesis. Diegesis is a distribution of actor on a canvas in a space of perspective, position, gesture, and visual contact. It is how the character is depicted in the space. On the Ainu folklore, it is how the God (Kamui) is depicted visually in the space of perspective, position, gesture, composition, and how the illustrator subjectivity is constructed. Perception or art reception involves both activity and passivity [8]. The Form of perception and experience are objects, persons, scenes and events [8]. The following is the picture of the aesthetic reception:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art work (how art works?)</th>
<th>Artistic Transformation (how artistic matters are transformed?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERCEPTION/ART RECEPTION</td>
<td>Interaction between criticism and production (how is the interaction between art production and art criticism?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1. Design of the aesthetic reception.

II. METHODS

The study applies visual reception and the analysis of the aesthetic reception. Reception analysis focuses on the meaning-making “decoding” practices of readers [10]. The process of aesthetic reception is as follows. First, the HE students read the folklore Hima Na Konabe for several times to establish their reception as the dialectics process. Second, the HE students looked for references about Ainu and the visual style of Japan arts. The references led them to have assumptions on the concept of visual works to be made. Third, the HE students were given 7 days to make illustrations from the Ainu folklore Hima Na Konabe. Hans Robert Jauss states that there are three analysis categories: a. Poiesis or the aesthetic productive experience, b. aesthesis or the reception independence, c. catharsis or the communicative aesthetic experience [3]. From the process of the aesthetic reception, the HE students redefined and made assumptions of the story being read. From the process of reading the Ainu folklore, the students gained spontaneous pictures or visualization on their mind. The picture was then visualized into an illustration form. On the reception process of Hima Na Konabe folklore, there was an interpretation from the context of the aesthetic reception experience of the students. The text identification by the students was related to the context they had never known before. This would influence the visual picture of the story.

The visual reconstruction of Ainu folklore was received by the illustrators when they listened to the Hima Na Konabe folklore and the individual re-read the folklore to give them understanding on the object they would make. The reception received by the students when they read had already formed the meaning they gained and was then followed by making the illustration to establish the aesthetic reception on the illustration being made.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The bear character was pictured with different color compositions; brown, black, and blue. The postures of the Bear character are standing, crawling, and sitting on the outside realm of the nature, for instance, in the forest, and there is a mountain from the far sight.

Both pictures A and B have similarities on how they depict the Bear. The character of the Bear is depicted on a tree trunk beside a river with blue water flowing from the mountain. The domination of brown and blue color on picture A with a white waving line that seems like a mountain and a man in purple holding fans on his right and left hand. Unlike figure A, figure B is dominated by green, blue and brown color. From the far sight, there is a mountain with white peak. There is a male character in blue beside the Bear.
The similarity of depicting the Bear character and the male kid can be seen in the figure 4A. The figure 4A depicts the Bear who is sitting with the male kid in blue T-shirt and crossing his legs. The color of the t-shirt is the same as the figure B. The character of the male kid is wearing blue t-shirt. This is the same color as the background color behind the characters. The tree in the figure A is depicted tenaciously with rings on the trunk signing that the tree has been thousands years old. Meanwhile in the figure B, the tree is depicted smaller and on the trunk there are green buds. The figure A depicts various meals in a pan in front of the both Bear and the male kid. Unlikely, the figure B depicts the position of the kid beside the stone and leaves in the middle of forest. A pan is being hold by the Bear behind the kid.

The Bear character is pictured sitting with a girl hugging him tightly in a room. The way of the figure A and figure B pictured are almost the same. The bear and the girl are standing in a dancing position in a room. The brown colors used are almost the same on both figures. Moreover, the attires worn are also the same, the red legging and the red outfit the girl wears.

The blue Bear was pictured behind the main characters of the story who are wearing colorful kimonos. Picture A shows the light blue Bear on the cloud, while picture B depicts the dark blue Bear standing behind the three characters who are wearing red, yellow, and green kimono. The Bear character in picture A is shining with yellow lines over His head.
The icon of “bear” and “mountain” exist almost on all pictures because the word “bear” and “mountain” are written on the first paragraph of the story. The second paragraph adds the visual element of “human” or Ainu in the story, however not the whole pictures depict human. The fourth and fifth picture show visually “residence”, “house”, “hut”, and “hill”. The following paragraph shows “tree”. The word “konabe” (small pan) is written in the title, the middle part of the story, and the conclusion of the story, so that there are no many pictures depicting pan in the visualization. It shows that first, the illustrators made the visual concepts based on the icon they found from paragraph first to sixth. Secondly, the illustrators made the visual concepts based on the reception of the title of the story, the first to sixth paragraph, the middle paragraph of the whole story, and the summary or synopsis of the story. The context of the story which is “the japan art” and “Ainu culture” is not yet firmly focused on the visualization made. This stimulates the recommendation for other researchers to give a lecture on the subject of Japan art and Ainu culture before illustrators visualize the Ainu folklore. On the other side, there are not a lot of reading references on the Ainu culture in Indonesian language.

IV. CONCLUSION

The sentences or the first paragraph determine the visual background of the story. The Bear and the Mountain can be seen almost on the whole pictures drawn. The second sentence adds the visual elements of “human beings” or Ainu in the story. However, not the whole pictures depict a place that shows “residence”, “house”, “hut”, and/or “hill”. The next sentence is “tree”. The word konabe or small pan is written in the title, the middle part, and the synopsis of the story so that not many pictures depict the picture of a pan. It can be concluded that, first, the students merely made the visual concepts based on the icon they met from the first to sixth paragraph. Second, the visual concepts were made based on the reception of the story title, the first to sixth paragraph, the sentence on the middle part of the story, and the synopsis.

This present study recommends next researchers to conduct some research on “Japan art” and “Ainu Culture” due to they are not mainly presented on the visuals given above and in order to support illustrators visualizing the Ainu Folklores by attaching these materials on the visuals. Moreover, references on Ainu Culture in the Indonesian Language are not a lot and easy to find.

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