CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Otaku is a technical term for obsessive fans, a phenomenon that is being widespread from Japan to worldwide. According to Mizuki, Okabe and Tsuji (2012) –cited in interview article by Jenkins- entitled 'Otaku Culture in a Connected World':

> Otaku culture is a technologically literate segment of the population which is characterized by their impassioned engagement, skilled reworking, and intellectual mastery over elements borrowed from many aspects from popular culture" .The otaku-culture already moves not only focusing on manga and anime (Japanese comics and cartoon), but also on popular culture activity and lifestyle.

Following the argument above, woman otaku have a particular activity that distinguishes them from woman in the common society. They have their own lifestyle and 'another life' in smaller community. A research that conducted by Midori Suzuki entitled, 'The Possibilities on Research of *Fujoshi* in Japan', indicates that fandom studies, especially under the topic of otaku-woman research need to be conducted:

> As consumption of male-male romance by women became more widespread, research into the phenomenon began to emerge, with researchers evincing a particular interest in the idiosyncrasies of women who like works of male-male romance.' (Suzuki, 2013, p.4)

In conventional society like Indonesia, research of woman activity in the particular fandom is rarely seen. Researchers found that the existence of woman as fans doesn't authorize as much as man doing their adoration. There are a lot of researches about people interest towards musics, sports or movies, while the research focused on woman enjoying gay fictions is rare. This

1

condition encourage researcher to find the meaning behind these woman activity, supported by the idea about the importance of fandom studies provided by Lewis (1992, p.1) in her book "The Adoring Audience":

> Perhaps only a fan can appreciate the depth of feeling, the gratifications, the importance for coping with everyday life that fandom represents. Yet we are all fans of something. WE respect, admire, desire. We distinguish and form commitments. By endeavoring to understand the fan impulse, we ultimately move towards a greater understanding of ourselves.

As explained above, fans appreciate a works through a different point of view than non-fans. It's a common rule that every fans labelling theirself with particular name. While trekkies stand for a Star Trek fans, women who loves a gay fiction -especially Black Butler comics- labelling they as *fujoshi*. As a slash/*yaoi* otaku, *fujoshi* has similarities and differences to distinguish them from another fan community. Different from Trekkies who openly admit their adoration through texts and musics, gathering in a crowded place, watching Star Trek together and discussed every episodes; *fujoshi* expressed their support towards their favorite series through a discreet role-playing in smaller community and closed group, they only gathered after a long scheduled meeting through social media. Their exclusiveness is quite difficult to be emerged, but it is the interesting point. As a contemporary pop culture that existed but is not recognized yet, a research to gain further information about woman otaku and its activity is important to conduct.

In Kompas newspaper (Isacchi, 27 February 2013) entitled 'Otaku, Riwayatmu Kini', the writer argues that otaku has already become a culture that can not be detached from Indonesia, especially Indonesian youngster. It is
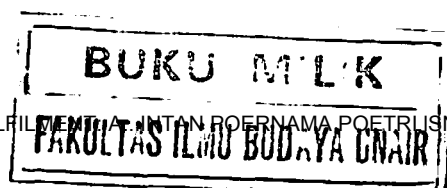
also explained that there is no certain number of otaku in this entire world, but there is a certainty that otaku society spread in every country, including Indonesia.

Another indication of otaku existence in Indonesia is from their consumption and cyberworld activity. In example: Animonster, known as the biggest anime magazine in Indonesia, has 97.096 fans in its facebook fanpage and the language that is used in the page is Bahasa. Those fans' activities are sharing their information and interesting topics to each other. The amounts of fanfictions, fanmade, fansubs, and a lot of various things labelled with "fans", indicate a huge activity of people expressing their love to something.

Nowadays, otaku forums are fulfilled with fangirls' scream, guys with a seductive pose in posters, and pairings of anime (Japanese cartoons) characters. The terms of otaku expressed in many ways, one of them is being a *fujoshi*. In fandom studies, *fujoshi* posseses wide meanings and practice, with a various definition that needs to be explained further. From it's etymology, the word "Fujoshi" in kanji character countains ' joshi'= woman, added with 'fu'= rotten. From this basic understanding, It could be concluded that the meanings of fujoshi is: woman with a rotten thought process. Why they called "rotten"? Assuredly because their thought in enjoying gay romance and dealing with such taboo things. The simpler yet more academic definition of fujoshi provided by Suzuki Midori in her journal, 'The possibilities of research on *fujoshi* in Japan', as: "a word refers to women's love of unique

and deviant acts of imagining and expressing romantic relationship between men (2013, p.4)

The biggest Indonesia *fujoshi* forum (www.facebook.com/IndonesiaFujoshiForum.html) belongs to 11.641 fans and one of their activities is creating an online magazine to be shared among fans. Those *fujoshi* regularly conducts a gathering in particular place such as butler cafe. Before we move further, we should know "what is butler cafe?"

The origin of butler cafe idea came from Japan in 2006, in Tokyo. The concept of "a place where woman is treated as a princess and meet their prince charming" was offered due to the fact that woman does not get a proper treatment in real society. Butler cafe is a following trend after maid cafe or cosplay cafe, where the servant do a role-playing into some characters, following the visitors request. While man are having an authorities to showing their preferences in woman through visiting Maid Cafe, woman following the practice by doing a visit to butler cafe. According to Agence France Presse' 'Tokyo cafe taps into women's Prince Charming fantasies' (2008), one of the correspondences admits that: "At first I was really shy about the concept of this cafe, but all the butlers are very cute, cheerful and sweet and, above all, the fact that they're foreigners helps us to escape from reality."

Such opinion, becomes one of basic matter that envolves otaku woman in sociology, psychology and cultural studies researches. One of the prominent works that presents butler story is Black Butler (2006) created by Yana

Toboso. The story involves two main characters, Sebastian Michaelis as the butler and Ciel Phantomhive as the master. Both of them are men, but there are a lot of scenes indicating their role is more than just an employee and employer. The female readers see this as a 'canon', an official work that can be re-created, distributed, and simultaneously interpreted as a text through both dominant and oppositional reading (Jenkins 1992, p. 178)

As the adaptation from *fujoshi* activity in Japan, there are also several butler cafes in other Asian country, such as Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. One of the worldwide famous butler cafes is "Atelier Royale", where the butler comes from Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippiness and Singapore. They hold their service yearly, along with an event named AFA (Anime Festival Asia) that becomes the biggest gathering venue for Asian's otaku. In Indonesia itself, there are several butler cafes that are established, along with their unique concept in serving their woman guests. From several field researches, the writer could mention Platina Parlour (Jakarta), Heta Café (Jakarta), JW Café (Surabaya) and Serviteur Phantom (Surabaya).

Fans and fan community always encounter a problem about how the society sees them as deviant, specifically when they are involved in a sub-culture practice. Jenkins (1992, p. 10) labelled this case of 'get a life', while the fans have their own argument about their life and interest. These kinds of activity become an interesting topic that being discussed in this research. According to C&Rdigital (7 September 2013) article, AFA butler cafe's costumer needs to pay IDR 150.000 until IDR 190.000 for a single service,

including 1 menu set, served by 1 butler. Taking photos secretly with the butler is strongly prohibited. In addition, they have to pay IDR 50.000 for an instant photo, taken by the butler cafe staff. Such secretive manner and rules indicates a hidden meaning that needs to be explained and observed intensively.

This research provides an explanation about *fujoshi*, or boys-love/slash fiction story fans in Surabaya. The *fujoshi* term only refers to female, and literally means as "rotten woman" because their way of thinking is considered as uncommon and indecent. This "uncommon and indecent" word comes from Bauer's (research entitled 'The Strange Case of Female Cross-Voyeurs? Slash Fiction, Boys Love Manga, and Other Works by 'Faghagging' Women in the US Academic Discourses'. Fag -hag is a sarcastic expression to describe a slash-fan. Fag means 'worst' and hag means 'old-wicked woman'.

For this research, the age range for *fujoshi* in Surabaya is between 15-25 years old, with various occupations from junior high school, senior high school, university students and working woman.

1.2. Statement of problem

Since this research focuses on fan activity in society and specializes in otaku woman as a subject and its connection with Jenkins' textual poachers theory, the statement of problems for this research are:

1. Why *fujoshi* visiting butler cafe?

2. What kind of meaning they gained by visiting butler cafe?

1.3. Objectives of The Study

Providing the question above, the objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the reasons behind Surabaya's otaku woman in visiting butler cafe.

2. To analyze the activity of visiting butler cafe through textual poachers theory and find the meaning behind this activity.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The studies about otaku fandom recently become one of interesting field in cultural studies. According to Volker (1990, p.5) in his work, 'Japanese Otaku-Kids colonize the Realm of Information and Media. A Tale of Sex and Crime from a faraway Place':

> In Japan, the term otaku has had many predecessors in the debates about contemporary popular culture. This condition showing a complexity of being fans, especially when we involved into Japanese culture fandom and it's practice.'

This research has a signifance in adding further information about fandom studies, because the term 'yaoi, fujoshi' has been used in English-speaking Internet domains to such a degree that it has been adopted into common fan-language and terminologies (Youssef 2004, p.14). Furthermore, this research is also expected to be a useful and helpful source for scholars, especially scholars in English Department Airlangga University who are interested to conduct similar studies.

## 1.4. Outline of Thesis Structure

It is essential to make an outline of the thesis structure. Therefore, the writer employs the format of thesis to the following organization strategies:

The first is Chapter 1, Introduction. Chapter 1 contains the introduction of otaku woman their characteristics, and their activity in the butler cafe as the topic of this research. This chapter also briefly explains the methods used to conduct the research along with theoretical background that will be the spectacles.

The second is Chapter 2, Literature Review. This chapter contains reviews of the studies that will help the research. The writer chooses in depth-interview to enable the deeper research and conduct the analysis precisely. For this research, the writer uses textual poacher's theory by Jenkins (1992). In book "Textual Poacher, Television Fans and Parcipatory Culture", Jenkins argues that fans have an ability to create a new text by their own self, but still related to the original source. This activity is labelled as poaching.

The third is Chapter 3, Method of the Study. This chapter contains the methods that are conducted to obtain the results. There are explanations about the data sources, data collecting, and data analysis.

The fourth is Chapter 4, Analysis. This chapter contains research analysis that is conducted from non-random sampling interview. This chapter also contains the discussion indicating textual poachers' activity in Surabaya fujoshi.
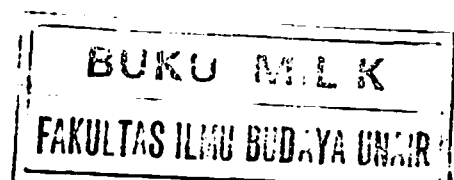
The fifth is Chapter 5. This chapter contains conclusions from the analysis and discussions in chapter 3. The suggestion is also provided for future research about similar topics and/or similar objects.

Definition of Key Terms

Textual poachers : an activity of fan which simultaneously interprets a text through both dominant and oppositional reading, allowing reader to stick as closely to the 'canon' (official rules and principles put forward in the original text) as they wish (Jenkins, 1992)

Yaoi : a slang meaning 'boys love' or homosexuality that is used in the Japanese language. Popular with fangirls who like their favorite anime guys to kiss.

Fujoshi : a word refer to women's love of unique and deviant acts of imagining and expressing romantic relationship between men (Suzuki 2013, p.5)

Otaku culture : technologically literate segment of the population which is characterized by their impassioned engagement, skilled reworking, and intellectual mastery over elements borrowed from many aspects from popular culture. (Jenkins, 2012)

Butler cafe :following trend after maid cafe or cosplay cafe, where the servant do a role-playing into some characters, following the visitors request.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW