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## An anthropological study on the practices in the fanfiction community: Rivalries and arbitrations over "love"

This research's target is "Fujoshi", girls and women who love gay fiction and imaginative stories. It studies their fanfiction activities and usage of media, aiming to understand how a boundary that separates in and out of a community is formed. It also seeks to discover what connection and shared knowledge exist among people who come together because of common hobby and interests, when their relationship is based on media and other forum, reality and virtual reality.

Existing Fujoshi studies agree that these women-only communities play a healing and self-acceptance role for ladies who feel oppressed in male-dominated society. In addition, some studies captured Fujoshi as a creative group because of the fact that some participate in expressive activity called fanfiction. However, not much argument has taken place that considers Fujoshi as a both conflictive and creative community built on artistic interest, where members compete for attention for their respective piece of work. Moreover, Fujoshi community's media use has evolved along with spread and development of IT devices. This has caused changes in their style of creative activities and consumption, as well as interaction among members. However, I have not come across a research that explores in detail Fujoshi community and their use of media, particularly in regards to current practices of Fujoshi in the complex real society.

This research aims to qualitatively analyze what network of factors and items are required to comprise a Fujoshi community. It stands on an assumption that characteristics and psychology of Fujoshi are not a product of Fujoshi themselves, but of a complex interaction of various items and people. That is the uniqueness of this study, together with that it includes a perspective as a native Fujoshi, while striving to understand Fujoshi community through a participatory observation from culture anthropological viewpoint. In addition, it introduces the same viewpoint to the topic of

reality versus virtual world, which has been a common theme in IT, social science and cognitive science.

This research utilizes theories of social structure to describe the Fujoshi who are involved in fanfiction among other Fujoshi, as a more multi-layered and evolving group of people. It successfully reveals Fujoshi, regarding what context and perspective these women have in interacting with others, items and surroundings. It also talks about the ways in which these ladies share and evaluate knowledge, maintain and form communities. Fujoshi has always been considered negatively as something that cannot be understood by ordinary people. However, this research exposes a part of their lifestyle and real practices from a perspective of a native Fujoshi, in a way that an outsider could access and comprehend it.

This study revealed that Fujoshi shows "love" toward their subjects by creating fanworks and fighting over the value of said "love" within their community. This "love" takes the form of their interpretations of their subjects, but since these are built upon their various knowledge and experiences, all of these interpretations differ from one another. Due to this, it is possible for conflict to arise amongst differing interpretations in the community. However, Fujoshi conceal their differences within such internal standards as "everyone is a friend" and "accept any and all expressions," attempting to connect through positive communication. The reason for this is that, although they pit their "loves" against each other within their community, the ones evaluating said "loves" are also members of the same community. Furthermore, they learn about and compare differing interpretations, and try to secure their own originality. Rather than sharing identical interpretations and forming a connection in this way, they treat each individual interpretation as part of an open source. By accumulating interpretations within the community and sharing the thus formed database of interpretations among fellow members, they feel a connection between one another. At the same time, it was revealed that through forming relationships with high amounts of anonymity, they are not bound by their physical attributes (age, marital status, birthplace, etc.), allowing them to construct an ideal space where they can develop their ideas freely and

without observation.

It was revealed that fanfiction-creating Fujoshi communities contain two conflicts. (1) The conflict between the self who is an "ordinary person" and the self who is a "fujoshi" who deviates from the standards of ordinary society, both of which exist simultaneously. (2) The conflict arising from forming relationships with information communication devices as a method of expressing their "love," forcing them to constantly put their private works in a place where a large unspecified number of people gather.

In addition, fanfiction-creating Fujoshi communities that use the Internet as their main venue of communication construct an ideal space where they can develop their ideas freely and without observation through forming relationships with high amounts of anonymity, not bound by their personal information in reality (birthplace, age, education, ethnicity, etc.). Since people in this kind of space are connected by exceedingly private matters, the community must be exclusive in order to protect individual identities. However, it was also revealed that this exclusiveness further strengthens their sense of community.

Key word : Fujoshi, community, fanfiction, "love", fight and arbitration