

Scandal, Ritual and Media in Postwar Japan

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論文の内容の要旨

論文題目 Scandal, Ritual and Media in Postwar Japan
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While drawing on theoretical arguments from media studies and cultural sociology, this thesis addresses the role of scandal in postwar Japan. I present an outline of what can be labeled as scandalology, and introduce the historical background of scandal in Japan and the West. Furthermore, I locate the social phenomena of transgression and scandal in a wider field of social practice, and provide a theoretical package for critical analysis of media scandal as framed narrative and spectacular (pseudo)event. While utilizing the scope of contemporary neofunctionalist thought, I approach the social function of scandal as social drama and performance, semantically located between ritual (motivated expressive behavior) and strategy (conscious strategic action). After addressing the role of scandal, media and corruption in Japanese postwar society, I closely elaborate on three selected scandals: the Sakai Noriko celebrity scandal (2009), the Ozawa Ichirō political scandal (2009-12), and the corporate scandal of the Olympus Corporation (2011-12). Based on the output from these case studies, I offer theoretical implications for the scandal mediation process in contemporary Japan, while highlighting the *modi operandi* of the mainstream media, weekly tabloids, and other outside media as the key players in a scandal-network of collusion and collaboration. Furthermore, I develop a model of scandal mediation in Japan, during which the mainstream media, the power elites, the business circles, and other interdependent forces intersect in sociopolitical and journalistic fields of struggle. While approaching media scandal as a commercialized product of the journalistic rituals of objectivity, I also touch upon the performance of scandal as a mediatized ritual of pollution, purification through exclusion, and reintegration. My basic assumption is that scandal is a multifaceted social phenomenon: while simultaneously serving the interests of capitalistic media institutions, the scandal-rituals define social norms, reflect the values of society, and manage social transgression. If exposed scandals often represent highly popular media commodities, but they do not seem to prevent future elite deviances, and they do not make the collusion of power structures in Japan more transparent.