

論文の内容の要旨

論文題目 Niconico *Utaite*: Platformization of the Creative Culture in Japanese Social

Media

(ニコニコ動画の歌い手：日本のソーシャルメディアにおける

創作文化のプラットフォーム化)

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The creative culture of amateurs has existed for a long time in Japanese society. *Dōjin* culture, a collaborative creative culture existing among people who have shared the same interests, has been rooted in Japan for more than a century. Participants in the *dōjin* culture have created, shared and collaborated with others with regard to their creative work, using the existing distribution system (the postal service) or gathering at places in small groups. The *Dōjin* culture used to be considered a subculture when it was compared with the mass culture in the mainstream media. Those who adopt this culture may be perceived as adopting a grassroots movement, acting against the dominant commercial media which consists of small groups of professional people as senders in the communication process to a largely passive, compliant group of receivers.

After the advent of social media and mobile technology, however, which created novel digital platforms for people to access, anyone can now be both a sender and / or producer. Social media and mobile technology accelerate the possibility of a creative culture, as well as the potential to create new production practices and circulation processes within the emerging platforms.

I have selected *utaite*, Internet singers on Niconico, a prominent Japanese video-

sharing site, as my research subject. Using *utaite* as an example, this dissertation aims to examine how the existing creative culture in Japan has transformed its methods of production and circulation in the age of social media. I have adopted ethnographic fieldwork as my methodology and have conducted participant observation, both offline and online, which have included being a research intern on Niconico as well as acting as a staff member at the Comic Market. I have also participated in various *utaite*-related events from 2011 to 2019. Additionally, I have conducted in-depth interviews with three *utaite* as well as less formal interviews with *utaite* fans.

The main timeframe for analysis of this dissertation was from 2011 to 2014, and data collected from 2015 to 2019 was used to support my thesis. *Utaite* are regarded as one of the early adopters of Japanese social media, and the main timeframe for my research was the period when the creative culture of amateur creators in Japanese social media was formed in the emerging new media ecology. In this respect, therefore, the creative culture of *utaite* represents the early adopters of creative culture in the age of social media in Japan.

In Chapter 1, I have explained my theoretical and conceptual framework, and have proposed a conceptual model called the “Triangular Prism of Creative Culture.” I have used this to show the creative culture of *utaite* in this dissertation. In Chapter 2 I have focused on the research subject, *utaite*, and have explained the terms and research methodology that I have used, together with the limitations that occurred during the qualitative interviews. In Chapter 3 I have examined the historical and cultural backgrounds of the social place, Comiket, and the digital platform, Niconico, on which *utaite* participate. From the results of the analysis I undertook, I found a different ethos in each of these two communities, which may lead to conflicts and compromises that *utaite* have had to deal with. Chapters 4 and 5 have comprised the core analysis part of this dissertation. Chapter 4 focuses on the production process of *utaite* singing clips on digital platforms, while Chapter 5 is geared

towards *utaite* themselves and their activities in physical and virtual spaces. In Chapter 6, I have summarized the findings of this dissertation, using a conceptual model to demonstrate the creative culture of *utaite* in the age of social media, and also how to adapt this model to other types of creative culture on social media.

In the production process of *utaite*, a collaboration between users has been found. The networked creative culture is one of the important findings in this dissertation, which confirms the strong impact of social media that both encourages and eases creative production in the digital age. Without the Internet and social media, people need to gather in one particular place to distribute what they had created, or send their work via postal services. This takes up much more time for amateur creators to produce, share, and distribute their creations than it does if they use digital platforms, and it is also more expensive.

My research has found that the creative culture of *utaite* does not stop with their use of Nico Nico. *Utaite* also engage with physical places (such as the Comic Market, *dōjin* stores, and live houses) to circulate and expand their activities outside the digital platform. The record industry has also participated in this culture when *utaite* culture became more popular on the Internet. Creators both move from, and expand, places and platforms for creating, collaborating, distributing, circulating, and exhibiting their creative work.

Using my conceptual model, this dissertation has depicted the creative culture of *utaite* which is formed by a mixture of celebrity and *dōjin* cultures; professional and amateur producers; and utilizing mainstream media and User Generated Media (UGM). The current (2019) emerging creative culture is neither superior nor inferior to the former dominant creative culture in the mass media era of the twentieth century. It does not eradicate the previous creative culture; rather, it creates a new media ecology that includes both mainstream and alternative media, culture and producers.