



Activities and Participation in the Aesthetic-Rhetoric Field of the Japanese ‘Subculture’ ; Focusing on the Interinstitutional System of the Japanese Animation Contents Industry, the...

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Activities and Participation in the Aesthetic-Rhetoric Field of the Japanese 'Subculture'; Focusing on the Interinstitutional System of the Japanese Animation Contents Industry, the *Dōjin* Culture, the *Cosplay* Practices and the *Vocaloid* Scene

日本「サブカルチャー」の美的・レトリック的なフィールドにおける活動と参加—日本アニメコンテンツ産業、同人文化、コスプレ実践とボーカロイドシーンの間制度的システムを中心に—

神戸大学大学院人文学研究科博士課程

後期課程社会動態専攻

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Introduction

In this research, I examine dōjin productivity, cosplay practices and the complex network of creativity and participation beyond the ‘Vocaloid scene’. Each of these elements is part of a ‘subculture’ in Japan that was developed in close relation with the consumption of the cultural texts produced by manga (Japanese comic books), animation and the games content industry. The main aim of this research is to understand the role of cultural texts in contributing to the formation of collectivities through the observation and evaluation of these particular activities and their actors.

In Japan, ‘dōjin activities’ refer to a variety of practices whose main goal is the creation of fictional texts produced by amateurs and fans of entertainment forms such as comics and animation. ‘Cosplay’ is a word used to describe the practice of creating a costume and dressing up like a fictional character. Both are popular activities in Japan among enthusiasts of manga, anime, movies, video games, fantastic novels and other genres. The ‘Vocaloid scene’ refers to a mix of dōjin activities mostly focused on the amateur production of music, songs and several derivative works based on the Vocaloid’s fictional characters, including cosplay. This ‘scene’ merges the amateur orientation of dōjin activities with the market and profit-making orientation of several content industries associated with the Japanese subculture of anime, manga and similar genres. ‘Vocaloid’ is a voice synthesiser developed by Yamaha as a software used to produce a singing voice, and it is commonly used with several different voice libraries. Among the most popular of these voice libraries are those developed as anime-like fictional characters who sing the lyrics and songs produced by the software users. Therefore, the songs produced by the software users and the image and concept of the characters become the raw materials that give shape to the Vocaloid scene through the networking of activities and participation.

In this research, I regard these different activities as the building blocks of institutions where actors can interact according to several ‘logics of orientation’. By ‘logics of orientation’, I am referring to the principal orientations and goals that guide the action of the persons engaged in the activities observed in this research. For example, the activities of the industrial actors and their relation towards the cultural texts are oriented towards the production and/or management of cultural texts as a profit-making commodity. This orientation contrasts with the dōjin activities and the derivative use of fictional characters, which are mostly oriented towards non-profit activities based on the emotive consumption of the texts. The Vocaloid scene, shaped by the mixture of these different orientations, is oriented, above all, towards a logic of

participation. In other words, it involves the integration of several activities into the logic of the Vocaloid scene, which is regarded as a movement. As all these activities are patterns of action organised into roles focused on each particular orientation, we can understand them as being shaped by different institutions in interaction.

Although all these activities include different genres and objects and are composed of different actors with different orientations, they altogether shape a system of institutions that are closely related to each other. In this research, I regard this system as an ‘interinstitutional system’ composed of various fields of interaction and the cultural texts that circulate among the actors as the embodiment of the values that animate and link together several different actors and orientations in a particular field of interaction. As this field of interaction maintains a direct relation with the nature of the cultural texts, I am addressing it as an ‘aesthetic-rhetoric’ field.

In other words, what I regard here as an interinstitutional system is the organised relation between several different institutions. I regard institutions as structures or linking mechanisms of role-patterns with a particular focus on action. Therefore, each institution has a different logic or orientation and shapes a particular field of interaction depending on its orientation. The field of interaction outlines the particular social relationships and action that the set of roles and orientations as well as the distribution of resources provided by each institution allows. In the case of this research, I focus on four types of orientation that shape four institutional fields. All of them represent distinct orientations towards the cultural text I mentioned above.

Therefore, I focus on 1) the institutional field of the cultural or contents industry, which is oriented towards the market, 2) the institutional field of the Cool Japan strategies, which is oriented towards cultural policies, 3) the institutional field of the so-called *dōjin* culture and cosplay, which is oriented towards activities through the appropriation of the texts and 4) the institutional field of the Vocaloid scene, which is the particular field oriented towards participation based on texts related to the Vocaloid software Vocaloid produced by Yamaha. As the actors who interact within each field interact with each other, these fields shape an ‘interinstitutional field’ that is composed of several fields belonging to several institutions. This field, in particular, enables social action and interaction through its particular connection to cultural texts. Consequently, as texts are intentional symbolic forms shaped by aesthetic and rhetoric elements, we can regard this field as an aesthetic-rhetoric field.

In the present work, I introduce the empirical research I conducted and will organise it alongside the literature review on the topic at issue, as three different sets of institutions which compose Chapter Two, Chapter Three and Chapter Four of Section

One. In Section Two, I explore the theoretical elements that are necessary to understand the dynamic interaction that takes place in the field composed by the interplay of institutions observed in Section One. The final chapter of Section Two (Chapter 6) provides a narrative analysis of the qualitative interview research conducted on the Vocaloid scene.

This final chapter shows, in an empirical manner, the ways in which the different logics of orientation towards cultural texts unfold within the Japanese subculture to shape action and interaction through participation in a particular aesthetic-rhetoric field. The interplay of values and action that animates this particular field, ranging from the production and management of cultural texts from the side of the Japanese content industries, textual appropriation and productivity from the side of the *dōjin* culture and cosplay practices and the networking of those activities in the logic of participation of the Vocaloid scene, is an example of how the cultural texts we observe in the Japanese subculture can play a key role in increasing the formation of collectivities.

This work is the collection of several research strategies and first-hand observations pertaining to the field of the Japanese subculture. I express my deepest gratitude to all the persons that participated by sharing their opinions and explaining their understanding of the nature of this particular field.

Chapter One. Exploring the Japanese Subculture Fields

This research is based on a straightforward objective: to understand the role of cultural texts in advancing the formation of collectivities. In order to do so, I am following an approach that focuses on institutions and fields. Here, the concentration on institutions is as a way to understand several different orientations towards the cultural texts. Moreover, the focus on fields provides a picture of the empirical ground in which those institutions are enacted, while also allowing us to address the actual dynamic interplay of several orientations and, therefore, several institutional orders. In most cases, the activities and the persons that have collaborated as the subjects of this research understand themselves as being and are understood by others within the framework of what is referred to in Japan as the ‘subculture’. More specifically, the present research focuses on the following activities: the Japanese animation industry and other industries related to the production and management of cultural texts linked to Japanese animation, manga and video games, the appropriative activities and textual productivity of the *dōjin* culture, the performative activities of cosplay practices and the networking of industrial activities and *dōjin* activities in the Vocaloid scene and its orientation towards participation.

Therefore, this is a broad perspective that includes the interaction of different actors and their roles, as well as the consideration of the environment of interaction and the imaginary constructions that shape the values that animate the action. To understand the characteristics of action in relation to texts and the formation of collectivities, I am focusing on values as an alternative to the typical models of self-identity. The focus on values is, on one hand, a broader focus situated from the perspective of the institutions. On the other hand, it is also in accordance with the social dynamics that can be observed in the field of this research. From this point of view, I indirectly approach to the issue of identities by focusing on the values that give shape to the imaginary universes that are instituted in the fields of interaction.

1.1 General Research Framework: Exploring Three Fields associated with the Subcultures

I began this investigation on Japanese contents industries related to the so-called ‘subcultures’ and its consumers in the spring of 2010. The investigation was composed of several studies with different subjects of research, methodology, scope and theoretical presuppositions. As expected, each research method solved some problems and posed

new ones. As such, the task was to follow the development of those problems as they unfolded and to attempt to make sense of them with the theoretical tools at hand.

However, notwithstanding the new problems that unfolded and the changing of perspectives and scope in the research, each research component and investigative technique presented a different way to address the same essential problem: to understand the formation of particular collectivities around particular symbolic forms, which are, in this case, the cultural texts. From this essential problem derived specific research questions as the formation of fan communities through consumption; the relation between aesthetics and narrative media texts and the configuration of particular practices; and the nature of the interplay of different agents with different motivations in the same field of interaction.

Following these questions, the main research topics were as follows: 1) the participants of dōjin markets and the dōjin culture regarded as a fan community; 2) cosplay as an institution of appropriation within fan communities; 3) the Vocaloid scene as a field of interaction. Notwithstanding each research focus had its particular methodology developed in concordance with its object of research, the evaluation on each also focused on the following three elements: the texts, the activities and the places where the activities are carried out. These three constants in the research methodology were maintained to fulfil the general purpose of the present investigation. The first-hand data I analysed in the following chapters comes from these investigations and is the empirical basis of this work. In what follows, before introducing each particular research component and the general contents of the chapters, I will focus on some methodological problems common to each field of research.

1.2 Fixing the Categories for Empirical Observation

My primary interest in this investigation was to observe and describe the formation process of collectivities around the consumption of particular symbolic forms regarded as cultural texts. This problem was the result of my first approach to the research of Japanese animation fan groups in my home country Mexico, as an undergraduate student studying anthropology. It was also the result of my own experience as a member of some of those different groups since my childhood. The research in Mexico drew from certain anthropological theories such as the opposing perspectives of Levi-Strauss and Victor Turner regarding myth and ritual, (i.e. V. Turner's observation of rituals without a particular mythological system) as well as adopting the general framework proposed by J.B. Thompson for the analysis of ideology in the mass media.

The resulting framework of this first attempt can be summarised as follows. Anime enthusiasts will form a particular community, with its own 'myths' and its own 'rituals' and a particular 'place' to perform such rituals. One of the aims of my bachelor's dissertation was to explain the almost instantaneous formation and fast expansion and transformation of Japanese animation fan communities in Mexico after 1992, when the anime TV show *Saint Seiya* was aired. In other words, I departed from the perspective that it is necessary to observe the mutual relation between rituals and myths in order to understand such dynamism. For this aim and in the context of that research, the best place to observe such a mutual relation was the anime fan conventions. Consequently, following Eco and Barthes, I analysed the anime discourse as a way to approach the 'myth' (understood as a meta-structure behind anime narratives) and analysed the actors and their activities as a way to approach to the 'rituals' (understood as a process of structuration and de-structuration) (Hernandez, 2009: 125-6).

After concluding the dissertation, I approached to the work of Henry Jenkins and John Fiske, as well as many other perspectives that corresponded with the framework of cultural studies. Following that influence, I reorganised the categories for empirical observation as 'texts' and 'fan activities' linked by appropriation and maintained the 'places of interaction.' These are the same categories that have guided the observations in each of my studies.

1.3 Delimiting the Field of Research

The topics of each investigation were the Japanese fan communities and dōjin markets, cosplay and the Vocaloid scene. Each of these topics may be analysed from different perspectives and can focus on different elements. The common problem of all of the research included in this investigation was how to determine the object of empirical observation in each circumstance. In the following, I will briefly refer to the usual problems that the selection and discrimination of the concrete object of research posed.

Many of the studies concerning a similar area focus on subjects such as 'otaku research,' 'research on animation, games or manga fans' and 'research of Japanese subculture.' I am also following such categories (otaku, fan, and subculture) to guide my research in a broad sense. However, the strategy of focusing on categories like these poses several problems for the general aim of the present research. The most evident of those problems is the lack of explicit consent regarding the meaning and definition of the categories. They are, for the most part, evaluative categories that mix several stereotypes and assumptions that tend to change depending on the point of view and

aim of the researcher.

The category of 'otaku' is a good example of this. This category is not useful for delimiting a field of research as its use varies according to the subjects and their perspectives on it. The 'fan' category has, in addition to similar difficulties, also presented a particular problem in Japan as it has connotations that from certain perspectives might be regarded as opposed to the category of 'otaku'. This is due to the tendency of regarding fans in Japan as part of the mainstream culture while the otaku is tied to underground media or the so-called 'subculture'. Moreover, the category of 'fan' is also directly tied to a particular genre or object.

Therefore, in contrast to the category of 'otaku' that can stand alone as a set of stereotypes surrounding cultural consumption, social attitudes or a particular psychology, the 'fan' must be a 'fan of something'. In other words, it must have an object. One problem immediately presents itself: How can we determine which object should be focused on to have a representative idea of what it means to be a fan in the particular case of this field of research? The broad category of video games, animation, and comics which I am also using in this research is not reliable for delimiting the category of 'fans', as many of these genres encompass texts that are not relevant for the collectivities I am analysing in this research.

There remains the useful category of 'subculture' in which anything regarded as 'not-the-mainstream' can be added. The evaluative distinction in the base of the word 'subculture' is not useful as a research category if we do not clarify the criteria behind the meaning of 'sub' in culture. As studies on popular culture usually show, this category is based on class distinction and 'cultural elitism'. However, when it is used, as with the categories of 'fans' and 'otaku', it is tied to social dynamics that make it impossible to take it as a given independent variable. Moreover, as we shall see in Chapters Three and Five, the meaning of 'subculture' in Japan also has a particular use in distinction to 'otaku.'

In other words, each of these words is useful in regard to their broad meanings, but they are less useful as research categories at the time of defining the field of observation. If anything, they should be dependent variables and not independent variables in the research. As the aim of the present research was not in defining any of those categories, I use them only in a descriptive way.

In contrast, I followed a strategy focused on 'activities' and 'fields' in this research. As previously mentioned, the present research is focused on the relation between actors and texts and, in particular, on the formation of collective actors in relation to textual consumption. For that aim, the main focus was not on a given text or a particular

subject type or subjects but rather on the particular connection among subjects, texts and other subjects. This perspective ended in focusing on values among collective and individual actors interacting in an aesthetic-rhetoric field. For that reason, neither a particular set of texts nor a particular social group was able to be regarded as the criteria for selecting the field of observation in research.

1.4 Content of the Chapters

Against this backdrop, the main thesis that guides the present exposition of my research is that the dynamism that animates this aesthetic-rhetoric field is based on different attitudes towards the values of the cultural texts and the action that shapes those texts. Therefore, this dynamism is deeply connected with the different values at play in concrete and abstract form, as well as with their transformation as they move across the different actors, the different institutional fields, the different levels of action and the different stances from which actors approach the field. Hence, these values should be understood as commensurable and incommensurable values, moving across collective and individual actors.

Section One

To support the thesis mentioned above, in Section One I analyse the characteristics of some of the institutions representative of the interinstitutional system I am regarding. I then classify the institutions into four categories. These categories shape four different institutional fields of interaction with particular orientations towards the cultural texts and frame the action that unfolds within them as they are enacted in social life. One is an institutional field oriented towards the market. Here, I focus on the activities and characteristics of the animation industry in Japan, paying particular attention to the precarious 'horizontal system' it has shaped. Concerning these industries, I also address the 'media-mix' model and its close relation to the productive activities carried out by its consumers. The second is an institutional field oriented towards cultural policies. Here, I focus mainly on the set of strategies concerned with Cool Japan and the relation between these policies and the spread of Japanese animation in East Asian markets, as well as in relation to the strong orientation towards the home market in the Japanese animation industry. The third is an institutional field oriented towards textual appropriation and activities. Regarding this point, I approach the *dōjin* culture and its textual productivity and the performative

practices of cosplay as part of the same textual appropriative institutions. The fourth is an institutional field oriented towards networking and participation. Here, I approach the Vocaloid scene and its principal characteristics as linkage mechanisms of open networks composed of small, closed groups in interaction.

Chapter Two is focused on the first two institutions, which are both regarded as institutions of cultural commodities. Due to the extensiveness that this research topic entails, I am focusing on only some particular and relevant elements following different kinds of sources as well as original research. Concerning the contents industry, I focus on only some elements from the animation industry, such as the markets and production system. Similarly, in the case of the Cool Japan policies, I focus on the spread of the Japanese animation contents in East Asia, as well as on the transformation of the industry models within the framework of the so-called 'media-mix' in Japan and the widespread presence of the user-generated contents (UGC).

Using this approach, I focus in particular on the different understandings of the value of popular culture that shows the industrial actors, the policy makers and the media environment in development by the Kadokawa-Dwango ecosystem, which incorporates the consumers' comprehension of these values into its production system. From a general perspective, I address the usual opposition between the exchange-value and the use-value and regard how the different attitudes towards the meanings of the cultural good 'animation' indicates the actual existence of a plurality of values on which dynamism and all the different actors base their activities. These values overflow the abstract distinction between the exchange and use values and pose the important role played by incommensurable values between the markets and what can be regarded as an orientation towards a community. In this respect, the understanding of the simultaneous regard of intellectual property (IP) as a 'public good' as well as 'common-pool resources' was a key factor to seize the different postures from which industrial actors and policymakers are located.

Chapter Three focuses on the dōjin activities of textual production and the performative activities of cosplay as examples of institutions of activities. Here, I regard the dōjin events and the nature of the interaction that holds these places as gathering points. My research included questionnaire research conducted in two representative dōjin events in the Kansai region and the Kanto region: Comic City and Comic Market. It also includes, among other research, interviews and observant participation (as part of the staff) in the joint dōjin event Music Communication Kansai and Vocaloid Paradise Kansai. The main aim in introducing these examples is to understand the relation between the consumption and textual appropriation of formerly existing cultural texts,

as well as the formation of collectivities commonly regarded as fan communities.

Following the premise that I suggest in my approach to the institutions related to the contents industries, I address the collectivities shaped by the practices of the dōjin culture as 'institutions of textual appropriation' which are oriented towards dōjin activities. These institutions are geared towards closed groups shaped by means of a particular relation to cultural texts that is characterised by its textual productivity, emotive attachment towards the texts and an emphasis on an individual's drive. Productivity and social interaction appear in these groups as grounded on emotional ties mainly expressed towards the texts and, in particular, the fictional characters.

Therefore, I analyse the particular relations that the institutions of textual appropriations in the dōjin culture make possible by focusing on two different sides encompassed by the concept of 'appropriation'. These two sides are the appropriation of texts as the possession of resources for enabling action and the appropriation of texts as the dispossession of the self through the instantiation of the texts' fictional worlds and characters, enabling a source of self-understanding. In this case, I regard this self-understanding as, rather than as a definition in the sense of self-identity, as a non-definition or the adscription of the self to an impersonal category that works as a category of belonging. The mutual relation between these two aspects of appropriation (possession and dispossession) poses the issue of understanding the role of fictional worlds and, in particular, the role of fictional characters, in shaping collective and individual bodies.

The twofold role that appropriation plays in dōjin cultures is the foundation for understanding cosplay as a performative activity of textual appropriation within the dōjin institutions. In this approach, I analyse the results of the questionnaire research I carried out jointly with Dr Hayami Nanako in the Comic Market, in addition to the results of my research using an adapted version of the same questionnaire in Taiwan. To contextualise the results of my analysis, I also conducted several interviews among cosplayers and partook in observant participation in a cosplay event as the main photographer for a small group of cosplayers.

In my focus on cosplay activities, I am regarding the different approaches the players have towards the fictional characters with respect to the environment in which they take part. Here, I identified two axes defining the orientation of the performance. One axis consists of a differential focus on the aesthetic and narrative nature of the character. The other axis consists of three different orientations associated with the actor: orientation towards the text, orientation towards interaction through the text and orientation towards participation in the field.

I consider the role of ‘identity’ and ‘belonging’ in connection to the self in cosplay activities by focusing on these axes. The focus on ‘self-identity’ and fictional characters in the analysis of the performative activities in which cosplayers engage has become commonplace. Based on the former distinction between the two-folded meanings of appropriation and the analysis of my research, in the case of the analysis of cosplay, I regard the understanding of identity as belonging. This shift of emphasis has been partially developed by some scholars. In my approach, this shift represents the easiest way to understand a simultaneous regarding of textual appropriation as ‘narcissistic consumption’ (appropriation as the text becoming ‘ME’) and a ‘modern’ consumption (the text as an ‘Other’ that becomes ‘mine’ through appropriation).

Beyond the particular differences between the various activities that are integrated within the *dōjin* and cosplay practices, the field composed of them proved to have several elements in interaction. Among them, the presence of a plurality of small groups in interaction networked within the framework of the institutions of textual appropriation and their differential relation to the texts’ fictional worlds are a focal point of interest.

In Chapter Four, I address the Vocaloid scene by building upon the problem posed by the integration of these institutions and their groups’ internal dynamics, the industrial activities of the Japanese content industry and the changing environments of textual appropriation.

The Vocaloid scene had a particular weight in the field of cosplay practices by the time of the research. The iconic presence of the popular fictional character Hatsune Miku was the surface of a complex system where many different activities, genres, and players were connected in a particularly productive way that its participants used to regard as a ‘movement.’ My approach to the Vocaloid scene initiates by focusing on the role that the fictional characters had in boosting the textual productivity characteristic of the movement and on the configuration of a new relations between the *dōjin* institutions and the institutions of the contents industry. Here, I focus again on the role of appropriation, now as the mutual relation of the appropriation of value between the contents industry and the *dōjin* activities.

Additionally, I direct my attention to the particular institutional system that was born at the beginning of the Vocaloid movement and has made possible a mutual relation in the re-configuration of the industry as a ‘platform industry’, the best example of which is the Kadokawa-Dwango system in Japan. I observe the creativity behind the UCG that supports that system as rooted not only in the activities that compose the *dōjin* culture but also in the networking of their formerly closed networks

into open-closed networks.

The ‘participatory culture’ and the gift economy present here in a particular informational form are part of the context that explains the dynamics that the Vocaloid movement represent. However, the complex system of institutions, the different roles that appropriation have among them, the different nuances for property that it entails, in addition to the values that give sense and animate its productivity require a more accurate understanding of the way in which the texts and the actors integrate within the different institutions.

Section Two

This section includes two chapters: Chapter Five, of a theoretical orientation, and Chapter Six, of an empirical orientation. After exploring the basic issues that define each one of the different institutional positions I introduce in Section One, I focus on some key theoretical issues in Chapter Five in order to build an appropriate framework from which to understand the joint picture of the dynamics that those institutions pose. The elements I focus on are the interinstitutional system and the role that values play in it, the importance of regarding the dimension of culture as autonomous from social structures and personality systems, and the way in which action and meaning connect with each other to shape concrete individual and collective bodies.

This chapter finalises with an overview of some of the leading discourses that analyse and interpret the development and meaning of the ‘subculture’ in Japan from the perspective of Japanese scholars. I focus in particular on the evolutionist schemes that explain the different aspects that contributed over time to shaping the actual scene, as well as to the Japanese subculture and the role the figure of the fictional character has played in it. This last part, therefore, contextualise the way in which the general issues regarded in the first three sections of Chapter Five have their particular configuration in Japan.

The selection of these particular focal points discussed in Chapter Five has at its base the previous qualitative analysis of several interviews collected from the Vocaloid scene. Therefore, the elements that constitute this chapter were selected as the result of the analysis of the institutions addressed in Section One and, in particular, the insights posed by the qualitative approach to the several actors that composed the Vocaloid research. The main characteristics I observed in this research and the theoretical issues addressed in Chapter Five are condensed as the expression, the ‘aesthetic-rhetoric field’. This is a field of interaction composed from the interplay of several institutions, where

aesthetic and rhetoric elements have a particularly strong influence on shaping the dynamics of values that prompt social action.

In Chapter Six, I analyse the qualitative data I collected from 24 interview sessions with key representative players with different standpoints within the Vocaloid scene as an example of a particular development of an aesthetic-rhetoric field. The analysis of the qualitative data presents a general picture of the Vocaloid scene that enabled the discovery of an approach to the dynamics between several actors and their orientations towards texts, as a part of a complex field of interaction. The empirical approach of this chapter complements the theoretical approach of the former one and introduces in a concrete way the issues that are addressed in Chapter Five. It is also built upon the characteristics of the institutions depicted in Section One. Therefore, using the voices of the collaborators in this research, the main issues addressed in this research are shown in a narrative form.

A final section of 'General Conclusions' follows Chapter Six, summarising the main elements observed in this research.

Section I: The Field and its Institutions

Chapter Two. The Japanese Content Industry: Institutions of Cultural Commodities

2.1 Values in Contradiction and the Japanese Content Industry

The global visibility that the Japanese contents industry has achieved, in addition to recent policies that the Japanese government has implemented in order to promote and extend the Japanese cultural industry as a “soft power”, have, for some, amounted to an image of the Japanese cultural industries as a superpower, or as a ‘cultural empire’ (McGray, 2002; 杉山知之, 2006). However, upon closer examination, the emerging picture is more complex, and, in most cases, what we find is not a superpower but a fragile and domestically oriented industry (青木, 2006; 石坂, 2005; 谷口 & 麻生, 2010). This situation presents a remarkable imbalance between the low monetary profit of Japanese popular contents and the importance of their cultural influence.

This disproportion leads us to the centre of the argument. The popularity of Japanese contents cannot fully be explained by focusing on its markets, industrial practices or cultural policies; it also cannot be understood by solely focusing on social practices wherein different collectivities engage around its consumption. In order for a complete picture to be obtained, there needs to be a focus on and an understanding of the complex network of professional and amateur creators, consumers, enthusiasts and profit and non-profit organisations which are the hub of a dynamic field. As extensive literature on “fan” or “otaku” cultures has argued, consumers, enthusiasts and fans have played a crucial role not only in supporting and promoting Japanese animation markets but also in amplifying their cultural influence and dynamic creativity. The role played by this engaged audience or enthusiastic consumers is inseparable from the activities of the industry. Still, as the disproportion between cultural impact and economic profit suggests, this relationship is complicated.

As Hesmondhalgh (2012) notes, cultural industries are engaged in the management and circulation of creativity. All cultural industries’ success depends on the production of “extraordinary goods”; however, creativity is not a monetary value that generates profit by itself. It has a subjective nature based on the judgments of taste and distinction that determines certain choices in the market. The success of cultural goods depends on subjective judgment. The industrial logics of production oriented towards economic profit is an element of tension and conflict within the cultural industries

(Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011; Hesmondhalgh, 2010, 2012).

The Japanese industry and cultural policies such as ‘Cool Japan’ have encountered the contradictions generated by these tensions. How can creativity can be measured, managed or produced? How can personal preferences produce monetary profit? To whom do these cultural texts and their meanings belong? The cultural policies of Cool Japan seek to support the Japanese creative industries by protecting the intellectual property and prompting the spread of Japanese culture with the formation of a Japanese contents fan base (知的財産戦略本部, 2014). However, these two measures have a conflicting relationship that reflects different approaches to the value of cultural goods. Here, the cultural impact appears in tension with the economic profit. The protection of intellectual property through the copyright system ensures financial profit but limits the cultural expansion. On the other side, the spread and popularity of Japanese cultural industries stem from fan activities based mainly on the appropriation of Japanese animation as a ‘public good’.

Public goods are goods which are not destroyed by consumption (Hesmondhalgh, 2012; Wayne, 2003). Moreover, they ‘acquire their meanings and values and pleasures *because they are shared*’ (Wayne, 2003: 21). The conflictive aspect between public goods and private intellectual property has shaped the actual scene of Japanese contents industries, where both the cultural practices related to consumption, and the industrial practices are in constant contradiction to legal frameworks. For instance, there is a particular legal situation that permits the existence of massive amateur comic markets called ‘*dōjinshi-sokubaikai*’ in Japan, of which the most representative example is the famous ‘Comic Market’ (小糸, 2014; 小田切, 2010; 平木, 亀崎, & 佐々木, 2014).

Therefore, in order to understand the logics behind the Japanese contents industry and its dynamics, we need to focus on the relationship between the different organisations and players involved, as well as the interplay of the cultural and the logics of the market.

Because of the extension of the field that the contents industry may shape, in this section I will limit my focus to the cultural policies of Cool Japan in relation to the Japanese animation industry, its markets and its production system and the industrial practices that the Japanese industry refers to as ‘media-mix’.

2.2 Japan's National Cool and the Japanese Animation Market

The attention that Japanese animation has gained around the world is often regarded as an economic success, as an indication of a cultural superpower and even as cultural imperialism similar to that of the United States' cultural industries. In 2002, an article entitled 'Japan's Gross National Cool' in the *Foreign Policy* magazine stated the following:

Japan is reinventing [the] superpower again. Instead of collapsing beneath its widely reported political and economic misfortunes, Japan's global cultural influence has quietly grown. From pop music to consumer electronics, architecture to fashion, and animation to cuisine, Japan looks more like a cultural superpower today that it did in the 1980s, when it was an economic one. (McGray, 2002:44)

These words had an unexpected influence in Japan (小田切, 2010). They appeared in the middle of the so-called 'Lost Two Decades', a period of continued economic depression after the collapse of the economic bubble. However, McGray explained that 'Japan's global cultural influence has only grown' (McGray, 2002: 47). He defined this cultural presence as a 'mighty engine of national cool' which is 'a kind of "soft power" in regard to 'the nontraditional ways a country can influence another country's wants, or its public's values' (McGray, 2002: 53) and then comments that 'Japan already possesses a vast reserve of potential soft power' (McGray, 2002: 54). He focuses on franchises like 'Pokemon' and Japanese animation like Hayao Miyasaki's 'Spirited Away' or Sanrio's 'Hello Kitty' and suggests that these 'soft' industries can replace the 'hard' industry and generate a 'soft power' (an idea he borrows from Joseph S. Nye) to benefit Japanese national interests.

The words 'cool' and 'soft power' quickly appeared in the lexicon of Japanese policy makers, and the idea of a shift from an 'economic empire' to a 'cultural empire' (三原, 2014:92) became popular. In this context, Japanese animation began to be viewed as the key to economic recovery. For example, the general market of 'Pocket Monsters' was estimated as one trillion yen in Japan and about two trillion yen in the foreign market (青木, 2006:29). Before 2005, the general scale of the market of the content industry, including animation, was estimated as being up to 11 trillion yen, which is two times the estimated value of the steel industry, according to the Intellectual Property Strategy Headquarters of the Japanese government (石坂, 2005). Examples like these and the general public's high valuation of the quality of Japanese animation, mostly represented by the film production of Studio Ghibli, fuelled the idea of the 'subculture'

as a cultural ambassador of Japan and the development of the 'otaku market' as a matter of national policy. This is the beginning of the 'Cool Japan' as a set of political strategies centred on the use of popular culture to promote the international competitiveness of the country.

As Aoki (青木, 2006) notes, the 'Cool Japan' strategy is similar to the 'Cool Britannia' strategy that was promoted by Anthony Blair in the 1990s in the United Kingdom (青木, 2006). As Hesmondhalgh (2008) pointed out, the 'Cool Britannia' policies were related to the widespread enthusiasm among the policy makers towards the 'New Economy', 'Knowledge Economy' or 'Information Society' in the first half of the 1990s. This general perspective, to a large extent, was prompted by a consultant group focused on the sustainability of city spaces through creativity and information production based on innovation. The idea of 'creative cities' and 'creative clusters' that migrated from industrial sectors to public sectors involved cultural policies. Under the United Kingdom's neoliberalism, it was developed as a strategy focused on the markets of the cultural industries, crystallising in the 'Cool Britannia' (Hesmondhalgh, 2008; van Ham, 2001). This shift in the orientation of the cultural industries is regarded by Hesmondhalgh as the origin of the substitution of 'cultural industries' with the term 'creative industries' (Hesmondhalgh 2008).

In the case of Japan, this orientation towards the value of cultural or creative industries regarded from the perspective of the national framework was focused on the relative success and recognition of certain cultural products in overseas markets. However, as Ishizaka noted, the cases of 'Spirited Away' and 'Pokemon' are rather rare exemptions (石坂, 2005). As previous research has shown, rather than posing as a superpower, the Japanese animation industrial world is composed of, in most cases, many mediums and small companies facing numerous obstacles. Such obstacles include the reduction of anime markets, piracy, low profits due the sharing of the intellectual property among the companies involved in the production process, an increasingly competitive foreign market and internal conflicts among policy makers, rights holders and creators (三原, 2014; 杉山知之, 2006; 青木, 2006; 石坂, 2005; 谷口 & 麻生, 2010). In the following section, I will briefly address the overall situation of Japanese animation markets, the state of the industry and the production system and the Cool Japan strategies that are aimed towards improve the economic value of the animation industry. I will solely focus on the animation market as an example of the characteristics of the industry and the issues it faces. Thereafter, I will take a broader approach to focus on the media-mix in the Japanese contents industry

The complete history of the Japanese animation industry is one of financial struggles

(山口, 2004). According to The Association of Japanese Animations (AJA, 2013a), a general estimation of the sales of the animation industry in Japan and overseas shows an increase from the year of 2002 to 2005, and a fall from 2006 to 2009 (from 136.6 billion yen in 2002 to 224.4 billion in 2005 and 149.4 billion yen in 2009) with a small recovery from 2010 onwards (AJA, 2013b). In 2012, the general market was estimated to be worth 172.5 billion yen (AJA, 2013b). In addition to income from TV animation, the areas analysed include, incomes from many other categories like movies and theatres, videograms, distribution via the internet, licensing and sales of related products, music, overseas markets and pachinko and 'pasolo' machines. From these categories, incomes from television remain the highest (the highest point is 61.6 billion yen for 2012 and 58.4 billion yen for 2006 in the domestic markets). The overseas market represents, in each case, a small percentage (about 8%) of the total (estimated as 14.4 billion yens in 2012) (AJA, 2013b).

Many new animation companies were established during the period of growth which occurred from 2000 to 2006¹ and achieved a small period of success from 2005 to 2006. In this period, called 'Anime bubble,'² the so-called 'midnight anime', which is the anime oriented to adults and broadcasted mainly from 24hrs to 26hrs, showed particular growth (谷口 & 麻生, 2010).

From a broader perspective, HUMANMEDIA Inc. (2011) provides a different figure from that of the AJA, although it confirms the same tendencies. In its analysis, the market of anime is approached as one part of the contents market. The total domestic contents market had an estimated worth of 11.828 trillion yen (Humanmedia, 2011:12), where the animation domestic market was only about 218.8 billion yen (ibid: 32), which represents only 1.8% of the total³. In comparison, the market for Japanese comic books or manga is estimated as 409.1 billion yen (ibid: 55), which is approximately 3.4% of the total, and the market of video games is estimated as being 1139.1 billion (ibid 58), which is around 9.6% of the total.

The anime market, as analysed by HUMANMEDIA, is composed of the mixing of many media forms. Following the data for 2011, the categories in order of importance

¹ The period of growth may differ depending on the year of the initial market contraction. This year may vary between 2005 and 2006 depending on the categories included in the market analysis.

² According to HUMANMEDIA this 'bubble' period ends in 2007 (Humanmedia, 2011:80).

³ The data of the AJA, including the overseas market, shows a total of 153.3 billion yen for the same 2010 year (AJA, 2013b). Estimations from HUMANMEDIA for the domestic markets are in all the cases higher than those of AJA. This is due to differences in the research methodology and the categories included in each study.

are as follows: 1) sales from audio-visual software (DVDs, etc.) (46%), 2) incomes from advertising in TV anime programmes (36%), 3) incomes from the anime box-office (11%) and 4) incomes from downloads of anime audio-visual content (7%) (ibid 33).

It is remarkable that, in all the cases, the incomes from the market of anime broadcasting in television, which as we will see is the starting point in the process of TV anime production, is not enough to finance the costs of production. As such, the dependence on secondary uses of the original work is necessary, as are the sales of DVDs or the commercialisation of licenses in order to attain profits. However, in most of the cases, a large percentage or even 100% of the copyright remains in the television station companies, making it difficult for anime companies to directly exploit the secondary use of the work. This has led to a prolonged state of deficit in many animation production companies (神澤, 2007; 青木, 2006; 石坂, 2005; 谷口 & 麻生, 2010).

In the general context of the anime market contraction, the market of commercialisation of licenses and characters also experienced a decrease. From 2003 to 2008, a reduction of 1700 billion yen to 1540.6 billion yen occurred. If we consider that the market was worth about 2070 billion yen in 1999, this represents a reduction of 25% in the last ten years (谷口 & 麻生, 2010:41). The market of goods from animation characters and licenses is not included directly in the animation market figures, but it is one of the most lucrative areas related to the production of animation and represents one of the main incentives for sponsors. The reduction of this area also means a reduction in the investment and more difficulties for the production system. As the research of HUMANMEDIA has shown, this situation continued in 2010. The combined market of anime, manga and video game character license commercialisation for this year was worth 1383.2 billion yen (Humanmedia, 2011: 80). Under this business depression is difficult to obtain inversion, but, according to the latest AJA data, there is also a small recovery (AJA, 2013b).

The scene of Japanese animation in East Asian markets looks more favourable than the scenario described above. The East Asian market is the biggest overseas market for Japanese animation. The overseas market was estimated in 2005 as 3,130 million yen (the highest point from 2002) and in 2012 as being worth 1,440 million yen (which indicates a general decrease). Here, as the AJA report shows, Asia represents a major percentage (49.8%) for the total number of contracts for Japanese animation distribution in 2013, followed by Europe (24.8%) (AJA, 2013a). According to the AJA report, the most substantial markets for Japanese TV animation in the world were as follows: 1) South Korea (114 contracts), 2) Taiwan (104 contracts), 4) Hong Kong (66 contracts) and 10) China (39 contracts). However, as we will see below, the Japanese

animation industry and the Japanese contents industry, in general, face other difficulties related to cultural and political issues. Before addressing these difficulties, I will focus briefly on the system of Japanese anime production.

2.2.1 The Japanese animation industry and its production system

From a broad perspective, the general structure of the anime business is composed of the relationship among three components: 1) the film or television companies that make a commission from the production, 2) the anime production company that directly receives the commission and 3) a large number of subcontracting companies that specialise in different steps of the production process. In this system, the TV companies are primarily located in the higher position, while the anime production companies play a subordinate role (石坂, 2005; 谷口 & 麻生, 2010). Other related industries that have an important role are the sponsors who provide the initial investment to the television station, the toy makers who manufacture and sell character-related goods, the advertising agencies and the video-packaging companies that sell DVD, among others.

In general, the production system involves many companies, but the most of them are very small (石坂, 2005). In 2005, Ishizaka estimated there to be approximately 440 anime studios or producers, where around the 70% of these companies had fewer than 30 employees, and about 42% could be considered one-person companies (石坂, 2005).

The work is commonly carried out as follows: First, the anime production company receives the original commission from the TV station. The work entrusted can be the production of the full show or a part of the show, or the production can be a collaboration between the TV station and the anime company. However, in each of these cases, the TV stations retains the biggest (or the total) percentage of the copyrights (石坂, 2005; 谷口 & 麻生, 2010). Once the anime production company received the commission, the work is divided and entrusted to many subcontracting companies that specialise in the different steps of the production.

Among the sponsors of the TV station are the DVD, video games and toy makers; in the most of the cases, they own (or obtain) the rights of commercialisation, receiving their profit from the sales of products and licensed goods. However, since the budget given to the anime production companies in almost all the cases is not enough to cover the cost of production, the profit comes from the secondary use of the product as the sales of licenses. That is why in many cases the animation is only considered as a promotional means to sell goods, such as toys featuring the characters of the animated series. The big problem for the creative workers here is that because of the unequal

relation of power between the companies of animation, the TV station, the sponsors, and the restrictions concerning the copyrights that exists, the anime companies, the animators and the creative workers are in many cases excluded from this profit.

For Taniguchi (谷口 & 麻生, 2010) most of these problems are solved in part through the 'Production Committee' system. This system of production, which first appeared in the 1980s, has become increasingly popular; nowadays, around 80% of the animation is produced following this system (ibid). It allows many companies to participate in the production budget and distributes the copyrights in proportion to the amount of the investment. Through this system, the small anime production companies, which are unable to affront a sizable investment, can also participate in the secondary market of animation, although in a small proportion, alongside the sponsors and TV stations. However, animation producer Inoue Hiroaki, who is the former executive vice-president of 'Studio Gainax' and producer of several animation since the 80s, explained that the Production Committee system has many problems that have resulted in the need for a mix of former production practices.

The problems that Inoue identifies are the fragmentation of the responsibility of the conclusion and the management of a single project among several actors that ends in 'nobody taking the responsibility.' Inoue recognised another key problem: that 'nobody owns the product' in its totality. This, in turn, causes several small complications such as the impossibility of selling licenses to overseas markets and the worsening of the placement of the companies related to the production of contents in comparison to advertisement companies. For Inoue, the former is due to the impossibility for animation companies to own a product's intellectual property (IP), remaining manufacturers above all else. In comparison, TV companies and advertisement companies, as well as toy makers and other goods producers, can have revenues from other sources. In this regard, the example of Sanrio's 'Hello Kitty', who fully owns the IP of the character, is the kind of model that, in Inoue's view, may help the Japanese animation industry survive the fragmentation of markets and production (Interview with Inoue Hirokai, March 2015).

In sharp contrast, for Tanaka (田中, 2009), the 'Production Committee' system is the major strength of the Japanese animation industry. Tanaka defines this system as 'horizontally dispersed' in opposition to the United States' system, which is 'horizontally integrated'. The Walt Disney Company is the best example of the US system where a single big company monopolises all the rights. This system allows for concentration on the profits but also presents a greater risk and may obstruct the use of the contents in different platforms and media.

On the contrary, the ‘horizontally dispersed’ Japanese system is, as explained above, composed of many small companies that share the production and the contents. Under this system, it is easier to obtain the secondary use of the same content, as well as to develop franchises in different media and to adapt the original content (narratives and characters) in different derived new contents, pushing forward the licenses business and the so-called media-mix (田中, 2009). The character business model (神澤, 2007) is part of this model. This model also allows bears the high production risks that are common in the cultural industries and gives dynamism and diversity to the industry and the contents produced. However, the management and protection of the licenses become complicated, and this is in many cases a major obstacle in the decision making process and in the promotion and expansion of licensed Japanese contents to overseas markets (杉山知之, 2006; 田中, 2009) because each right holder has to give his or her agreement before initialising commercialisation.

Since the domestic market of TV animation has, in most of the cases, the most substantial economic impact on the anime industry, areas like licenses and the ‘character business’ in the domestic market alongside the media-mix play a major role, and areas like overseas markets are remain small. This factor plays a crucial role in the mainly domestically-oriented attitude of the Japanese animation industry—an attitude that often conflicts with economic policies oriented towards the external market like the Cool Japan initiatives.

2.3 Cool Japan’s Policies

Mihara defines the Cool Japan policies as an impulse through aid and funding support from the Japanese government in order to develop business projects overseas that are related to the Japanese creative industries (三原, 2014:189). The phrase ‘Cool Japan’ encompasses various initiatives and activities inspired in part by McGray’s ‘Japan cool’ and the soft power thesis realised by different governmental and civil groups. In general, it involves an emphasis on added values that appeal to the sensibility of the consumer (creativity) and linking that value with the local industry. This can signify promoting regional products within Japan or promoting Japanese goods overseas as representatives of Japan. It is mainly focused on the following nine areas: fashion, food, contents (animation or manga, among others), local products, habitation, tourism, advertisement, art and design (三原, 2013, 2014).

The first movement towards the Cool Japan policies occurred in 2002 when the

Japanese government inaugurated the Intellectual Property Strategy Council⁴ in February and announced the Intellectual Property Basic Act⁵ in December of the same year. This act is oriented towards the protection and exploitation of intellectual property in order to enforce Japanese industries (知的財産基本法, 2002). Following this initiative, the Intellectual Property Strategy Headquarters⁶ was established in 2013 with the same general objectives.

This organisation has prompted many important strategies for the development and reinforcement of the contents industry, including animation. Since its creation, it publishes the ‘Intellectual Property Strategic Program’ annually, which includes analyses of the current situation and the needs that Japanese intellectual proprietries of any kind are facing. In 2005, it announced the implementation of the ‘Japan Brand Strategy Based on Japanese Lifestyle’ in which one of the points was to ‘strategically convey the attractiveness of Japan’. In 2009, the Prime Minister Asō Tarō (September 2008 to September 2009) announced in his speech, ‘Towards a new growth’ (April 4, 2009), that ‘contents like Japanese animation and games or fashion are materials focused on by consumers in the world as “Japan Cool”’ (麻生, 2009). Asō also emphasised the desire of the government to push forward the components of the contents industries business overseas through the establishment of founding organisations. One month before this announcement, the Intellectual Property Strategy Headquarters published ‘Japan Brand Strategy: soft power industry as the driving force of the growth’ (知的財産戦略本部, 2009). In its first lines, this document calls for a reassessment of the value of Japanese animation, manga and fashion, which have been largely ignored in Japan. It also proclaims that ‘The industries related with the formation of the particular Japanese brand value like Japanese animation, manga, movies, dramas, music, games, and other contents, as well as food, fashion, and design, will be considered ‘soft power industries’, and, from now on, it is necessary to generally promote its development overseas’ (知的財産戦略本部, 2009).

In a more recent document published in July 2014, the Intellectual Property Strategy Headquarters presented in its fourth chapter the ‘enforcement of soft power centred in contents’, focused on ‘animation, movies, music, and games’, among others. Here, it presents a programme divided into three points: 1) the impulse of the development of contents overseas and inbound cooperation; 2) measures against counterfeit goods and piracy; 3) the development of human resources (知的財産戦略本部,

⁴知的財産戦略会議

⁵知的財産基本法

⁶知的財産戦略本部

2014).

One example of the first point is the foundation in 2009 of the ‘audio-visual Rights management association (aRma)’⁷ based on the need to coordinate the licensed rights and the distribution of profits between the copyright holders and neighbouring rights holders⁸. Another example is the support granted by the ‘Localization & Promotion of Japanese Visual Media (J-LOP)’, which began in 2012.

The government policies towards the development of Japanese contents overseas are resumed as the following four stages: 1) the production of contents, 2) the formation of fans in the partner country, 3) the sales and distribution of the contents and 4) the spread of other goods as an effect. In order to do this, the principal organisations at play are J-LOP, which provides grants for the localisation of cultural goods and the realisation of promotion overseas, and the Cool Japan Fund Inc.,⁹ established in 2013, which supplies risk money in order to secure sales offices (三原, 2014: 198; 知的財産戦略本部, 2014).

Another main player in the Cool Japan policies is the ‘Cool Japan Strategy Promotion Program’¹⁰ established by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry in 2011. This program looks forward ‘the promotion of the ‘Cool Japan’ through the spread overseas of the ‘charm of Japan’ under the cooperation of the related ministries’ (METI, 2014b). As it explains, the role of METI here is ‘linking ‘Cool Japan Initiative’ to private business and spreading them out to the world’ (METI, 2014a).

This funding programme supports an average of 10 to 15 projects per year, providing microfinance assistance to small and medium companies in order to expand their contents into overseas markets, but it cannot be used to finance the production of the contents. The objectives are to 1) fund risk money by banks and investors, 2) share successful experiences overseas and 3) launch overseas businesses mainly for small or medium enterprises. Also, it looks forward to the overseas expansion of the Japanese contents industry by fostering a Japan boom overseas, supporting the business development overseas and increasing foreign tourism to Japan (METI, 2014a).

As Mihara explains, the different policies related to Cool Japan seek to establish a ‘New Cooperation’ model based on the particular structure of Japanese cultural industries, which is composed of many small and medium-sized companies, as was explained above. This model aims to build a public-private partnership (like Cool Japan

⁷映像コンテンツ権利処理機構

⁸著作隣接権者

⁹株式会社海外需要開拓支援機構

¹⁰クールジャパン戦略推進事業

Fund Inc.) and promote cooperation among the many different players involved in the contents industry. However, Cool Japan policies remain in any case as a backup system or as risk money, and the initiative to generate projects remains in the private sectors. The Japanese government does not lead any particular project or exhort the civil sector to take part in any initiative (三原, 2013, 2014).

However, as the CEO of the Kadokawa Group Holdings (by 2010) Kadokawa Tsudehiko argues, the extension of Japanese contents to overseas markets faces barriers that are difficult to overcome at the private level (角川, 2010). Some of these difficulties are, in particular, related to the disadvantages that Japanese contents encounter concerning intellectual property. Such is the case when Japanese contents are adapted for film production by Hollywood, which requires the resignation of the original author of all rights. Similar demands are faced by Japanese TV animation contents in order to be broadcasted in the United States. This kind of practical difficulty and the limitations of direct financial aid to start new projects are some of the reasons that have prompted some sectors to seek a more direct and close relationship between governmental and industrial actors.

Finally, when focusing on the domestic market, there is what Koito (小糸, 2014) considers to be a ‘paradigm shift’ in the strategies of Cool Japan, specifically in its ‘adaptation to the digital network society.’ Koito takes into account the so-called ‘democratization’ of the media and the increasing importance of digital network environments for the industry. In this respect, within the continuous enforcement of the protection of intellectual property, he focuses on an increasing effective use of internet services to deliver music or visual content to the audiences. As he notes, over the span of ten years, there was an increase of 10% of material distributed by digital networks in correspondence with a decrease in the same proportion of packaged media. However, he stresses that this adaptation to new media environments has not brought any improvement in the conditions of the industry or life conditions of, for example, workers in the animation industry. With the current declining birth rates in Japan, the only possibility for growth for the Japanese contents industry, he explains, is in foreign markets. Consequently, Koito focuses on the game industry, which is the only Japanese contents industry with exportations that exceed the number of importations and which has been the fastest to adapt to the changes brought about by the digital environment.

Another issue faced by the cultural policies in the domestic markets in regard to the ‘digital-network’ society is the legal framework concerning intellectual property. There are opposing positions regarding the ‘secondary creations’ or derivative works and what may be regarded as an ‘over protection’ in actual copyright law, which creates obstacles

for the distribution of contents in a diversified media environment. Actual copyright law in Japan specifies different rights depending the use and terms, which presents limitations when coping with the changing environment (小糸, 2014:479). This last issue is directly connected to the media-mix nature of media strategies and not only the use of multiple media platforms by the industry for several contents but also its use of ‘secondary creations’ or fan-made productions.

It is interesting to note that Cool Japan policies are, however, the focus of a long-standing, harsh criticism from some other sectors that, in contrast, claim there is no need to intervene or fear the introduction of restrictions on freedom of expression. For example, as Odagiri (小田切, 2010) or Hiragi et al. (平木 et al., 2014) explain, much of the criticism is related to practical issues concerning the management and regularisation of the production and distribution of contents.

Sakurai Susumu, an animation and games producer and the CEO of C.P.U.C.O. Ltd., explained the situation from his perspective. For him, the bill concerning child pornography and the restrictions on the expression of violence are a major problem for the industry. He stated the following:

[The power of Japanese contents] relies on the freedom that supports it [...] if we think of that, I think that the restriction of expression and the ‘Cool Japan’ policies push in opposite ways. [...] and the problem is also who will decide, based on what standards, what is good or in what degree can we express [violence or eroticism]? [All these issues have been until now] ambiguous and must remain ambiguous, [but this becomes impossible] when the country and the politicians get involved. The METI and the MOFA [dictate what is] ‘Cool Japan’ and sell the ‘Japanese culture’ overseas, while they impose restrictions on culture in the National Diet. I think that it was because of the cultural freedom that Japanese animation has developed. [...] The ‘Cool Japan’ policies seem to protect Japanese animation, but [in many cases] that is not true. (Sakurai Susumu, Interview with the author. April 2014)

Other criticisms however, focus more on the political issues regarding the meaning and role of the explicit nationalism in the Cool Japan policies (Iwabuchi, 2002b; 大塚 & 大澤, 2005). To understand this criticism, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of the place that has the Japanese popular culture in particular in East Asia, particularly in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea and China, which, as we saw, are its best markets overseas. As we have seen before, the Japanese animation and contents industries, in general, face severe economic problems, and the orientation to overseas

markets seems to be the easiest way to solve them. But, at the same time, the production system, the legal regulations and cultural and political issues make such an approach difficult for those markets. The following section must be read with that context in mind.

2.4 Japanese Animation in East Asia

If we are to summarise the general flow of the discussion of Japanese cultural content in East Asia and its influence, whether economic, political or cultural, there are certain topics that are prominent and converge on the role that the concept of Japan has played in different historical and cultural contexts. Examples of these topics include the focus on the historical process of the flow of Japanese content to Asia; the political context concerning the rejection or acceptance of Japanese cultural goods in Asian markets; the reflection of changes in restrictive policies towards cultural goods in China, South Korea and Taiwan; the reflection of changes in ideologies towards consumption and lifestyle in East Asia along with the role of new technologies in the formation of the tastes and orientations of different generations of audiences of Japanese cultural goods; and the current status of cultural consumption in East Asia and its relationship with the complex dynamics of the configuration of different cultural identities as well as the tensions generated by nationalist approaches to these dynamics, symbolised by the interest and concern surrounding Japanese soft power in East Asia.

The historical process of the flow of Japanese content to Taiwan, South Korea and China has been determined largely by political contexts, as Japanese cultural products were banned after the Second World War, though the later emergence of new open policies ended this direct restriction. In the case of mainland China, the broadcast of Japanese animation began after the open-door policy initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978. The first Japanese animation formally aired on Chinese television was 'Astroboy' (1963-1966; 1980-1981) in December 1980. It was not only the first Japanese animation but also the first foreign animation that aired in China (Nakano, 2002; 祝, 2011). In Taiwan, the martial law ended in 1987 and was followed by a period of fast democratisation. The broadcast of Japanese popular TV shows was formalised after the legalisation of cable television in 1993 and the removal of the restrictions on imported Japanese audio and video products in 1994 (Davison, 2003; Lee, 2004; P.-T. Wang, 2010). In Korea, the normalisation of political relations and cultural exchange with Japan began after the Japan-ROK Basic Relations Treaty in 1965, although the official cultural exchange was sporadic and control over Japanese cultural goods remained

until the official removal of the ban in 1998 (Kim, 2011; 玄, 2014).

The process of formal legalisation of Japanese animation in East Asia was supported by a widespread practice of unlawful distribution and consumption of Japanese cultural goods. During the years of restrictions, this method was the only means of Japanese cultural product distribution. Also, in many cases, the consumption of Japanese popular culture such as manga, anime and music involved a nuance of implicit or explicit criticism towards the government by the consumers of those products, as has been described in the cases of Taiwan, South Korea and China (Kim, 2011; Lee, 2004; P.-T. Wang, 2010; 玄, 2014). The success of the spread of Japanese animation, regardless of the control policies, is also closely connected to the spread of new technology and media environments that ensure the consumption of content without government supervision. As P.-T. Wang (2010) has shown in the case of Taiwanese BBS-based networks, Kim (2011) in relation to South Korea's rapid spread of broadband internet and Zhu (祝, 2011) in relation to new generations of internet users in China, internet communities have played an essential role in the spread of Japanese TV dramas and animation in East Asia.

The distribution of cultural goods outside of legal frameworks is addressed by Iwabuchi as a process of content transnationalisation (Iwabuchi, 2002a). This process forms the basis for the current condition of the consumption of Japanese cultural goods in East Asian markets, developed in a context of growing consumerism and a market-oriented regionalisation of cultural industries in the region (Otmazgin, 2005). As Iwabuchi explains, it is a complex process that transcends legal, institutional and political frameworks and, therefore, is beyond the scope of national policies.

Furthermore, in the case of the distribution of Japanese cultural goods among Mandarin-speaking audiences, it is important to highlight the importance of the geographical, political and cultural situation of Taiwan, Hong Kong and certain cities in mainland China, such as Shanghai (Nakano, 2002; 化, 2012). Hong Kong has played a key role as an entrance point for new influences to mainland China and has been regarded as 'the place where many Chinese turn for the latest trends, especially with regard to Japanese pop culture' (Nakano, 2002: 245). However, the internet, along with new technology and piracy, has made mainland China the principal source of Japanese animation for people in Hong Kong (Ng, 2010). Taiwan, which is one of the most important hubs for the consumption of Japanese popular culture in East Asia, has also historically played a vital role. As a former Japanese colony, Taiwan maintains a complicated position of proximity and distance between mainland China and Japan. It also has been one of the most important entrance points for Japanese cultural products

into the Mandarin-speaking world, particularly in the 1990s when the internet in mainland China had not yet been widely disseminated (祝, 2011). During the colonial period, Japanese cultural goods were commonly consumed by the Taiwanese, and this situation has not changed for many people, notwithstanding the ban on Japanese cultural goods that was imposed under the rule of the Kuomintang, the ruling party. As Lee (2004) has shown, these historical conditions were the basis of a substantial increase in Japanese mass culture products, such as TV dramas, after Taiwanese democratisation and the deregulation of Japanese cultural goods. However, Lee contrasts the new generation of ‘Japanophiles’, who embrace trendy Japanese lifestyles and fashion, with the older generation who seek a nostalgic image of the past. The new generation, who were young Taiwanese at the time of the complete removal of restrictions on Japanese cultural goods in 1994, are sometimes called ‘harizu’. They have been one of the main forces behind the expansion of Japanese cultural goods into Taiwan and, therefore, into the Mandarin-speaking world (Lee, 2004; Nakano, 2002; 祝, 2011). I will focus on some of the details regarding Taiwan while addressing the cosplay culture in Taiwan in Chapter Three.

In South Korea, as in the case of China and Taiwan, the flow of Japanese cultural goods was also initiated by unlawful distribution before the complete removal of restrictions on Japanese animation in 1998 (Kim, 2011; 玄, 2014). As Hyun highlights, after the normalisation of political relations in 1965, the cultural flow was rather sporadic with several requests from the Japanese side to obtain more open access for Japanese culture in South Korea (玄, 2014). By the second half of the 1960s, as part of the cultural exchange policies, there was a technology exchange agreement concerning animation production which initiated a joint Japanese/Korean animation production, followed by an important role played by Korea as subcontractors in the production of Japanese or US animation. By the 1970s, this system had made South Korea the largest subcontractor of animation production in the world. The co-production of animation between Japan and Korea made it easy for some animations to be broadcasted on Korean television at low prices, but it was necessary to erase any ‘Japanese flavour’ in the animation (玄, 2014). By the second half of the 1980s, the Korean production of TV animation had accelerated and the level of broadcasting of Korean animation on television that was based on original Korean comic books increased. However, concurrently, South Korea joined the Universal Copyright Convention and, under a freer political environment, became capable of importing not only Japanese cultural goods but also cultural goods from many other countries to South Korea as commodities protected under this Convention. This background, along with the underground

activities of Japanese animation fans in South Korea, initiated the process that led to the official removal of the ban on Japanese popular culture, such as animation, in 1998 (玄, 2014; Kim, 2011; Otmazgin, 2005).

2.4.1 Cultural flows and identities in East Asia

The differing appropriation of Japanese cultural goods and animation among different generations of audiences reflects the path of the cultural flows under changing political, economic and technological conditions. These generational differences also encompass the formation of niche markets and particular audiences of Japanese content and media. Many authors have focused on the configuration of young people (mainly those born after the 1980s) who are deeply involved in the consumption of Japanese animation and related content, such as drama, comic books or video games. This focus converges with the study on the identity of these people as fans, 'otaku', 'harizu' or 'dong man zu', among other categories, as well as a broader focus on the influence of the Japanese modernity imaginary on East Asia. From this perspective, animation audiences are not only children but also teenagers and university students who engross themselves in Japanese animation consumption and other cultural activities as a lifestyle. Studies on playful activities and appropriation of the cultural content as a dynamic process of mixing, imitation and creativity have also shown how Asian youth incorporate this cultural consumption into their daily reality and aspirations. Examples include cosplay culture in Taiwan (J.-S. Chen, 2007; M. Chen, 2012) and in mainland China (化, 2012); amateur comic culture in Taiwan (川田, 2012); 'otaku' culture (Kim, 2011) and 'anime-song' communities (玄, 2014) in South Korea; trendy Japanese drama fans; 'harizu' (Lee, 2004) and internet fan community activities (Wang, 2010) from the early years of the Japanese pop culture boom in Taiwan; and the 'dong man zu', which, since 2000, has come to represent the latest cultural communities of 'Japanese popular culture lovers' in mainland China (祝, 2011).

This current general scene of cultural consumption in East Asia can be approached in the context of the region's accelerated industrialisation, the growth of the middle class and the expansion of cities and their role as melting pots and sources of cultural innovation for new cultural industries and new trends, without losing sight of the strong influence of Japanese industries. It also shows the transnational character of the institutions behind the cultural appropriation of texts. As Otmazgin explains, besides the poor progress in the political area, a heavily 'market-driven' regionalisation of East Asia has come to shape a cultural confluence, where 'now, more than ever, many East

Asians share popular culture products, as well as consumption habits, leisure activities and lifestyle trends' (Otmazgin, 2005: 511). It is important to emphasise that this does not connote a cultural homogeneity in Asia; 'rather, it decentralises East Asia's cultural structure, highlighting local production and appropriations.' (Otmazgin, 2005: 517).

Production and consumption have diversified given the current impetus of local industries where before there was only the overwhelming domination of the United States or Japanese cultural goods. This 'decentralisation' has become a leading force in a new dynamic where it is becoming difficult to draw a clear distinction between each particular cultural industry and its national identity. As previously noted, the consumption of Japanese animation is closely related to comic books, music, TV dramas and specific fashion trends, and many local industries may also be involved in localising these products. The famous case of the Japanese comic for girls, 'Hana Yori Dango' (Shueisha, 1992-23), is a good example. It was adapted into an animated TV show and film by Toei Animation (1996-1997) in Japan and also adapted many times as a TV drama in different countries: *Meteor Garden* (2001) in Taiwan, *Siapa Takut Jatuh Cinta* (2002) in Indonesia, *Meteor Shower* (2009) in China and *Boys Over Flowers* (2009) in South Korea (Otmazgin, 2005: 510)

The popularity of Hong Kong movies, the 'Korean Wave' (hanliu) and what Otmazgin refers to as 'pan-Asian Chinese pop music' (Otmazgin, 2005: 512) are also good examples of some of the important trends that shape the everyday landscape of media consumption in East Asian markets. Nevertheless, the key role of Japanese cultural industries as pioneers in the reconfiguration of Occidental capitalism and modernism in an East Asian context, which has brought about new lifestyles, fashions and trends that have shaped the basis for today's consumerism, has often been stressed (Iwabuchi, 2002a, 2005; Lee, 2004; Nakano, 2002).

Once again, these multiple Asian modernities raise the question of cultural identity, not only in regard to particular audiences engaged in particular cultural consumption but also now from a broader perspective. This perspective is related to the role of Japanese animation and cultural industries in the complex, dynamic and often contradictory process of reflecting the meaning of Japan in Asia along with the cultural construction of Japan itself in relation to Asia. Iwabuchi addresses this process as a 'return to Asia' (Iwabuchi, 1994, 2002a) and describes how Japanese identity as been defined by tensions between the negation of the cultural similarities with Asia along with an emphasis on these same cultural similarities. Drawing from these central ideas of Iwabuchi and other authors, Lu (2008) has analysed the internalisation of Japanese animation in its textual expression and describes three 'kinds of cultural politics' that

exist in animation. Lu also focuses on how Japanese animation has come to play an important role in the cultural and political identity of East Asia through ‘de-politicized internationalization’, which is a reference to Japanese animation deprived of ‘oriental signifiers’ (ibid:173); ‘Occidentalized internalization’, refers to ‘stereotypical depictions of supposedly Western characters, usually in a negative sense’ (ibid:176), and ‘self-orientalised internalization’ can be understood to signify ‘depicting Japan as akin to the West so as to help promote a certain kind of hegemony over the rest of the East’ (Lu, 2008: 180).

Here is an interesting point with which to discuss the opposition between the processes of trans-nationalisation, which were referred to earlier, and the process of internationalisation (Iwabuchi, 2002a). Unlike trans-nationalisation, where cultural consumption transcends national barriers, the internationalisation of cultural goods is set against the backdrop of the nation. It is directly linked to cultural policies and the construction of a national identity. The legal frameworks of cultural trade and national marketing policies, such as Cool Japan, are examples of internationalisation because they are attempts to take control of the complexity of cultural flows. This driving force based on national frameworks then implements the institutional structures within which Japanese cultural products, such as animation, are produced and exported overseas.

2.5 Media-Mix, Character Business and the Kadokawa-Dwango Ecosystem

Steinberg describes the media-mix in Japan as a way to call what is usually termed ‘transmedia,’ ‘cross-media seriality’ or ‘media synergy’ (Steinberg, 2012). The media-mix, as a commercial practice used in Japan for developing a particular content across several media platforms, is closely related to the animation industry and, in some way, to its ‘horizontally disseminated’ shape, as well to its precarious financial position.

The association of the media-mix with the anime industry is more evident when we focus on the emphasis that this kind of media franchise puts in the figure of the fictional character, in contrast to, for example, other kinds of media franchises focused on a particular ‘story telling’. By focusing on this emphasis, some authors regard the media mix as one strategy within what they call the ‘character business’ model (see, for example, 小田切, 2010; 辻, 梅村, & 水野, 2009).

Following this perspective, as Odagiri indicates, the word ‘media mix’ was popularized in the 1970s after the success of ‘Kadokawa Pictures’, but as a business model centred on the character it was already usual since the 1930s (小田切, 2010). For

Odagiri, the importance of fictional characters as a focal point in the contents industry lies in its concreteness graphically expressed as an image, but, at the same time, in its flexibility and mutability which allow it to be used in many different media forms. In the opinion of Steinberg, the character as ‘dynamically immobile’ is the principal characteristic that has allowed the use of the character across multiple media forms, prompting the development of the ‘media-mix’ in close relation to what he calls the ‘anime system’ (Steinberg, 2012).

In this section, I will briefly focus on the most important features of the ‘media-mix and the character business model as a constitutive element in the contents industry. In next chapters, I will present the role of fictional characters from several other perspectives as the consumers use it in their appropriation of media texts. Within the context of the industrial perspective, I acknowledge the following basic features: 1) the use of the fictional characters and the development of the character business as a model of licensing among several industrial actors; 2) the particular decentralised production system in relation to the legal framework of intellectual property that allows the participation of several industrial actors; 3) the use of the benefices provided for the developing of particular contents across several media platforms with different medium characteristics; 4) the increasingly close relation of the development of the ‘media-mix’ system with the ‘participative’ practices of consumption on the side of the consumers and the enforcement and management of those practices as part of the production system; 5) the particular development of such a system in close relation to the industrial practices of the Kadokawa-Dwango Corporation.

The so-called ‘character business’ is a typical strategy in the contents industries to tackle the high risks of this kind of production, and it can be compared with the ‘star system’, such as that used by the Hollywood filmmaker industries. Nevertheless, a recent emphasis on characters’ charisma can be observed in general since the 1990s, with the famous examples of ‘Hello Kitty’ and ‘Pokemon’, as well as the emphasis on ‘Moe Characters’ (Kyara Moe) that has followed the success of *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (神澤, 2007). In a general context of financial struggles within the anime industries, this trend has been reinforced in the ‘midnight anime’, produced mainly by a new model of production and many small industries that were established in the short period of anime financial success that occurred from 2005 to 2006, known as the ‘anime bubble’.

The character business model is focused on ‘charming’ or ‘appealing’ characters as a marketing strategy. Characters may be used for different purposes and in different ways depending the nature of the company or the product on sale. However, in any case, the efficacy of its use depends in great part on its iconic or visual impact. Customers will

establish an emotional connection with the character, and this link may, in turn, help to fulfil the purpose of the seller. Fashion trends and rhetorical mechanisms such as the 'kawaii' or 'cute style' may be regarded as examples of the standardisation of visual characteristics towards the effective reproduction of this 'charm' by the content maker.

The main purpose of the use of characters in marketing may be to incite consumption regardless of the nature of the merchandise to be consumed or to act as an interface or 'communication tool' between the customer and the seller or brand (小田切, 2010; 辻幸恵 et al., 2009). In any case, the character is an intellectual property capable of generating profit for its creator or for a third party. The license and the merchandising system are the mechanisms that link each specific actor. In the case of the contents industry, as previously mentioned, the real profit of the contents stems from its secondary use as opposed to its primary use. Licenses for merchandising and promotion will link the activities of the original licensor with other actors such as toy and merchandise makers, PR agencies or broadcasting companies and distributors.

Consequently, the decentralised structure of the contents industry, namely the industries related to animation, manga and games, are the main environment wherein media-mix practices have been developed. This decentralisation has been a way to cope with the production risks inherent to the nature of contents or cultural industries (Hesmondhalgh, 2012). It has also been an important factor in Japan and particularly developed by the needs of the TV animation industry (山口, 2004).

It is interesting to note, however, that concerning the technical and financial constraints, the animation industry has been a focal sector in the development of media-mix. Following Steinberg, we can regard not only the iconic nature of characters, such as in the manga medium (伊藤剛, 2005), but also its relation to its 'mobility' in the animation medium. The resulting 'dynamic immobility' (Steinberg, 2012) of the image in the animation medium has played an important role in the appeal and adaptability that the images of characters have in different media platforms. It is important also to stress that the connection between this adaptability and the use of multiple media platforms has also been an essential factor in provoking the particular 'productive' consumption that is fundamental to the establishment and functionality of the media-mix system.

However, as Ōtsuka has repeatedly argued (大塚, 2001, 2004, 2014), the logic that brings together many different media forms in the consumption of one particular content is backed by the presence of a fictional narrative world. From Ōtsuka's perspective, instead of the characters and their appeal, it is the narrative backdrop that is consumed and prompts further consumption. He calls this drive 'narrative

consumption’ (大塚, 2001) and highlights that it was a common notion among advertising companies like Dentsu in the 1980s (大塚, 2004). Likewise, it was also, in particular, a core element in the logic of the contents developed by Kadokawa during the same time period.

Later, I will address in detail some of the Ōtsuka’s theories on characters and narratives, as well as certain criticism towards his point of view. Here, it is crucial to identify how the media-mix system implies not only the creation of a particular content, or the use of particular content in different media, but also the integration of such media in a particular environment or system. This environment will prompt active consumption in a particular way that is, in principle, beneficial for the industry. From this perspective, a focus on ‘narrative’, such as in the case of Ōtsuka, may be also considered part of this ‘integrative’ environment as it links any creative work or activity to a particular fictional universe.

The use of content in different media platforms is not restricted only to appealing characters, visual elements or narratives. For example, as Endo has shown, the constant development and diversification of devices and gadgets have prompted a similar situation in the music contents industry (円堂, 2013). Endo does not openly refer to what is usually addressed as the media-mix and is not in the category of character business. However, the connection between contents and media environments as well as the transformation in the meaning of the use of those contents by consumers is important to understand the diversified and integrative nature of the concept of media-mix that I seek to address.

The merge in October 2014 of Kadokawa with Dwango, the company that developed and manage the internet video sharing site *Nico Nico Dōga* through its subsidiary Niwango, has been regarded as the integration of several platforms for the management of contents into one single system (the Kadokawa-Dwango ecosystem). Here, for authors like Ōtsuka (2014), as well as for some actors related to the activities of both companies, Kadokawa represents the management of professional contents while Dwango had a similar function in the scene of amateur-produced contents. The merge of both platforms has meant, for some, the subsumption of ‘free’ amateur practices into a one-sided system.

However, from a broader perspective, the Kadokawa-Dwango ecosystem is characterised by several transformations in the global economy affecting the practices of production and consumption of media contents. For example, here is the impact of what Lash and Urry (1994) calls ‘the end of the organized capitalism’, as well as general patterns of transformations in the nature of labour in the internet environments. I will

address these broader issues in Chapter Five (Fuchs, 2007; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011; Hesmondhalgh, 2010; Lash & Urry, 1994; Terranova, 2000, 2004). In this context, the recently formed Kadokawa-Dwango system is particularly related to the information logics in networks and culture (Terranova, 2004; van Dijk, 2012). However, because of the direct association between these logics and the Vocaloid scene, I will return to this topic at a later point.

2.6 Conclusions: Markets and Incommensurate Values

In this chapter, I discussed a complex system composed of industrial sectors, public sectors and consumers that are all linked in different ways to the cultural texts, which are, in the cases I observed, Japanese animations. The perspective of this chapter was set on the side of the production and management of those cultural goods, by focusing, in particular, on the animation industry, the public culture policies surrounding Cool Japan and some of the particularities of the integrative system of production and consumption known as the media-mix. Thereafter, I regarded the specific role that the company Kadokawa-Dwango is playing within this media-mix system as particularly central. I also briefly addressed some of the geopolitical and cultural aspects that are associated with the consumption of Japanese cultural texts in East Asian markets. I regarded these elements, in connection with the Cool Japan policies and the needs and struggles of the Japanese contents industry to ensure a market. This scope provided the opportunity to reflect on the meetings and disagreements between public and industrial actors. These elements and their connection to each other shape a wide field of institutions of cultural commodities.

In this chapter, I present these cases as examples of institutions of cultural commodities, as all the industrial and public players involved are oriented towards the production of cultural goods and the shape of markets, notwithstanding the relevance that their activities, which also exists in other cultural dynamics. However, as observed, the cultural and creative industries and policymakers are stepping in different positions. In the examples above, I focused on the conflictive and often contradictory relationship among the activities of these players. At the beginning of this chapter, I characterised these tensions as *values in contradiction*, exemplified by the disproportion between the cultural impact of the Japanese texts or contents, as well as the size of its primary market and the precarious conditions of the Japanese animation industry.

However, as a closer picture of some of the elements that focus on each actors and their places shows, it can be assessed that with a difference of orientation—as may be

the case with the market—there is an overlapping but different understanding of the nature of the text and the meaning of its property in the base of some of these tensions. The values in contradiction that we observed are in all the cases closely related with the double nature of the texts regarded as culture and, at the same time, as intellectual property. Culture, as a resource, may be understood as a ‘public good’, as we saw at the beginning of the chapter, while IP is essentially a private property. These different understandings of the nature of cultural texts may be the basis for a schematisation of a two-sided understanding of the value of the cultural text. This schema understands the IP as a profit-making value, which is in tension with the notion of culture as an ‘open resource’, which only achieves its value when it is used and shared. In other words, we may understand these contradictions following the neoclassical economics distinction between ‘use’ and ‘exchange’ values. Likewise, an emphasis on abstract and commensurate exchange values may represent industrial actors’ orientations while an emphasis on concrete and incommensurate use values may represent cultural dynamics and the consumer’s side of the schema. Nevertheless, the examples above have demonstrated that this scheme is insufficient to understand the dynamics in the field of cultural production and consumption.

The problems faced by the Japanese animation industries showed inner tensions between the systems of production and property, which are fragmentary and diversified. As identified, this horizontal system may be part of the reason for the ‘strength’ of Japanese contents. This is particularly true if approached from the perspective of the contents that are produced and their secondary use. Nevertheless, when we regard the financial struggles of the industry, it also represents its weakness. The reduction of the domestic market and the increasing need to pursue foreign markets, in particular those in East Asia, portrayed again a tense relationship, though now between public actors and the different actors that shape the industrial side. Here, commercial orientations mixed with issues of national identity in a context of cultural dynamism, which is both international and transnational. Finally, the linkage or integrative system shaped by the media-mix, industrial practices, such as the character business and the Kadokawa-Dwango ecosystem, show that consumption, production, legal frameworks and cultural policies prove to be interlinked in a way which is as conflictive as productive.

All these examples show a complex dynamism where the different values that the cultural texts represent rest upon a dynamism of values that cannot be reduced to the schema of ‘use-exchange’. Moreover, such a schema is the basis of a sharp distinction between ‘producers and consumers’. As we shall see in the following chapters, the

dynamics that link cultural texts with different actors, such as producers, consumers and policy makers, overflow the abstract distinction of 'exchange' and 'use'. Therefore, in order to have a better understanding of the dynamics behind the examples given in this chapter and in the following, it will be of central importance to focus on two elements of importance to the issues regarded in this chapter. These elements are 1) the different nature of texts as properties depending on their place in the scene and 2) the fundamental importance of texts' incommensurate values, i.e. their meanings.

Here, I will take the problem of property and meaning of the cultural goods as the starting point to focus on the values and uses of cultural texts in different contexts and across different actors. In the following chapter, I will address the so-called 'dōjin' cultures and their practices, which are concerned with the nature of cultural texts as resources for action, and, at the same time, as meanings to be interpreted. Property and meaning play a central role in enabling the material and the symbolic existence of these activities and the group of peers engaged in them.

Chapter Three. Dōjin Productivity and Cosplay Performativity: Institutions of Activities

3.1 Fan and Dōjin Cultures in the Japanese 'Subcultural Field'

Nowadays, fan cultures are an everyday phenomenon and their activities of consumption are becoming another key component of contemporary culture. As a social phenomenon, fan cultures and activities can be understood as a way to interact and coordinate social action within a context where the expansion of consumer society, the influence of the media and the overwhelming flow of information are undergoing constant change. Unlike as it was commonly believed in the early 1980s, fan cultures are no more an isolated phenomenon concerned only with certain people who are 'extremely' or 'abnormally' devoted to a certain cultural product. Nowadays, being fan is quite 'normal', and as Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington (Gray, Sandvoss, & Harrington, 2007) have pointed out, the particular patterns of interaction and consumption that take place in fan cultures have come to shape everyday life in modern societies, in turn becoming a global phenomenon. The current development of the content industries, not only in the examples provided in the last chapter (Chapter Two) concerning Japan, but in regard to its global trend as well, is built upon the cotidianisation and massification of many of the practices related to media consumption that 20 years ago were considered as minoritarian fan cultures.

More recently, changes in the environment and means of consumption have made researchers such as Henry Jenkins, a well-known figure in the field of 'fan studies', to move his focus from 'fans' to a greater emphasis on 'participatory cultures'. In Japan, this change of trends is closely related to what I addressed in the last chapter concerning the Kadokawa-Dwango ecosystem and the media-mix in general. Here, I will address the 'participative' or 'productive' nature beyond similar industrial practices which in Japan has been referred to as the 'dōjin' activities. In this chapter, I approach these activities in the context of the Japanese 'subculture' framework.

Dōjin activities can be mostly characterised as the amateur production of different kinds of texts. Here, the prototype is usually the comic book format. However, there are several genres associated with these activities, including amateur music and amateur software production. In most cases, there is a particular work or genre borrowed from the massive popular culture that is used as a framework for the new text or as a raw material to produce new texts. As such, most of the fan work produced in correspondence with these activities are considered secondary creations. Cosplay

practices (the other practices I am addressing in this chapter) are performative practices wherein someone dresses up like a character that typically derives from the fictional world of Japanese manga, animation or video games.

Dōjin activities and cosplay activities are both based on what J. Fiske called 'productivity' in the context of the popular appropriation of mass culture. The focal point here is the use of cultural texts as raw materials to engage in some activity. Fiske classified three different kinds of productivity: 'semiotic productivity', i.e. the several possible interpretations of a certain text; 'enunciative productivity', i.e. the use of the text as a resource for interaction (e.g. wearing the shirt of one's favourite football team); and 'textual productivity', i.e. the use of the text for the production of a new text (Fiske, 1989/2010).

Dōjin and cosplay activities can be classified within Fiske's model, giving a special focus on 'textual productivity' of the former and a focus on 'enunciative productivity' in the latter. However, in the field of practice where those activities are conducted, the performative orientation of cosplay draws a sharp distinction within Japanese groups of fans between dōjin activities and cosplay activities. Thus, notwithstanding that, in this chapter, I approach both activities as practices within the institutions of textual appropriation of the Japanese subculture (see below), I also focus on the sharp differentiation that divides both activities in the field. Therefore, I address cosplay's performative nature and its characteristics in the second section of this chapter and include specific research and data.

The evaluative term 'subcultures' is another important word in the field that needs to be clarified to some degree. This evaluative term follows the same differentiation logic of 'high and low' culture that is usually present in a broader context. However, in Japan, it has a particular nuance and use. In general terms, this difference may be characterised from two sides. One side is the strategic use of 'subculture' as an ironic means of criticism towards the mainstream culture. The other side is concerned with the internal differentiation within the subculture of two different and, to a certain degree, opposite orientations. One is an orientation towards a 'horizontal' approach to 'new' things and 'relative values', and the other is a 'vertical' approach to 'go in depth into a particular genre or hobby' that is tied to an orientation towards 'absolute values' (加野瀬 & ぼるぼら, 2005).

Until recently, it seems that these two approaches shaped different fields of media consumption, practices and interaction, where the latter was tied to the 'otaku' stereotype and was sharply differentiated from subculture (ibid). However, regarding the use of the term 'subculture' by the persons I approached in all the field work that

composes the present study, the broad category of ‘subculture’ seemed to have incorporated both different orientations. The Oshawa (大沢, 2008) and Uno (宇野, 2011) approach seems to confirm this trend in what can be regarded as the incorporation within the category of ‘otaku’, a tendency towards interacting with the ‘outside world’ rather than towards enclosing yourself in a personal world. However, for Miyadai (辻泉, 岡部, 伊藤, & 宮台, 2014), this trend means only the inclusion of the logic of social distinction associated with the word of ‘subculture’ in Japan, within the same ‘otaku orientation’. The former, as we will see in Chapter Five, has for Miyadai an orientation towards personal confinement rather than engaging in communication.

Hereafter, as a first approximation to the subcultures in Japan and their complicated semantic field, I will regard in this chapter the ‘sub-cultural’ field as a field of interaction where certain groups commit to the logic of distinction from what they see as ‘mass culture.’ The categories of otaku, dōjin and cosplay were encompassed within this category in the everyday use of the word in the field I researched and among its social actors. As this chapter focuses on what is usually referred to as dōjin and cosplay activities, I will address a broader characterisation of the social category ‘otaku’ only until Chapter Five, focusing on a diachronic perspective and some representative topics regarding the social imaginary instituted in their practices. However, before proceeding further, I shall focus on the aspects of the subculture in Japan, the otaku and dōjin cultures or fan cultures’ that factor into this research.

3.1.1 The otaku and dōjin activities

As Kikuchi (菊池, 金田, & 守, 2007; 菊池, 2000, 2008) points out, the word ‘otaku’ should be understood as a stereotype that is constantly change. It has been shaped mostly around the image of the consumers and fans of Japanese anime, manga, and video games, but its definition and demarcation is ambiguous and a topic of constant discussion. As an example, the ‘otaku’ has been defined by Kitabayashi (2004) as ‘enthusiastic consumers’ and the ‘otaku market’ has been defined by the Yano Research Institute as composed of categories such as anime, manga, online video games, dating simulation games, erotic games, anime character figures, idols and media and services related to cosplay and amateur manga. (YRI, 2010)¹¹. Azuma (東, 2001:8) defines ‘otaku’ as someone deeply involved in manga, anime, videogames, personal computers, science fiction (SF), or other media, and for Yoshimoto (吉本, 2009:8), the ‘otaku genre’ is the one composed of ‘bishojo’ (beautiful young girls), mechas (robots or machines), SF elements,

¹¹ (『「オタク市場」に関する調査結果 2010』 矢野研究所株式会社、2010年10月14日)

magic and fantasy, sexual elements and love.

For some, the history of the birth of the otaku' can be traced back to the rise of post-war manga and the influence of Osamu Tezuka in manga and TV animation (Schodt & Tezuka, 1983; 山口, 2004). The influence of SF enthusiasts, the anti-government students movements in the 1906s and 1970s and the rise of an additional subculture within the subculture of manga, alongside the birth of the amateur manga world and the 'Comic Market' are also regarded as starting points in the otaku culture (Kinsella, 2000; 吉本, 2009).

In this research, I regard 'otaku' as a social category composed of stereotypes in constant change. When the social category 'otaku' is regarded as focusing on the consumption of goods of 'minor genres' like those mentioned above, it can be easily categorised alongside other minor genres within the subculture. However, as previously mentioned, a distinction has been made between otaku and subculture. This distinction is more related to approaches to otaku, not as a genre of consumption but as a *particular way or kind* of consumption (加野瀬 & ぼるぼら, 2005). Here, Yoshimoto's attention in the Japan 1950's SF fandom and its particular 'way of play' as the origin of Otaku (吉本, 2009) is of particular relevance for this chapter. Among the many definitions and views of the meaning of 'otaku', their activities and media consumption, (some of which I will address in Chapter Five, e.g. 宇野, 2011; 宮台, 石原, & 大塚, 2007; 宮台, 2005; 大塚, 2001, 2004; 辻泉, 岡部, 伊藤, & 宮台, 2014; 東, 2001, 2007, among others) Yoshimoto's focus on the historical relation between the United States' SF fan activities and Japan's SF fandom (吉本, 2009) allows us to draw a clear link between the productivity of fan cultures in the United States and in Japan's dōjin culture.

For Yoshimoto, the large variety of activities and hobbies included in the category of otaku culture can be enclosed in what he calls the 'otaku genre' and a 'particular way of enjoying' (吉本, 2009). In other words, this perspective expresses the relation between a set of texts and a set of practices. Following the canonical works in fan cultures such as the research of Jenkins (Jenkins, 1992a, 1992b), Fiske (Fiske, 1992, 1989/2010) and Grossberg (Grossberg, 1992) the 'otaku genre' may be regarded as a particular set of texts of affective relevance for the fandom as a community. Likewise, what Yoshimoto regards as 'a particular way of enjoying' may be understood as the pleasure that fans discover in textual productivity understood as a kind of textual appropriation. However, it is important to emphasise that the categories of 'fan' and 'otaku' maintain several differences regarding their various nuances and uses. In reference to the use of the category of 'fan' in the field I approached in this research, 'fan' had a nuance of orientation to 'mass culture' and 'veneration' of 'idols'. In contrast, 'otaku' was related to

a rejection or criticism of ‘mass culture’ and cast an ironical gaze on the ‘adoration of idols.’ I will further address this topic as part of the analysis presented in Chapter Six.

The category of otaku, as it appeared in the literature I reviewed and in my fieldwork, was mainly related to the consumption of cultural goods focused on particular genres. In addition, it also refers to the particular approach that the otaku is believed to have towards the object of consumption. The genres associated with the stereotype of otaku may be described as having either one or a mix of several (or all) of the following orientations: orientation towards ‘unrealistic’ elements or elements usually perceived as ‘childish’; orientation towards erotic elements; orientation towards SF imaginary; or orientation towards what is often considered ‘unworthy’ or unimportant objects of attention.

In regard to conceivable approaches towards such objects, their description may be regarded as being composed by two basic stances. One can be characterised using Fiske’s model of appropriation, by the activities of textual productivity or by ‘productive pleasures’ (Fiske 1989/2010). In the case of Japan, this element is commonly regarded as a ‘way of play’ (吉本, 2009) centred mainly on the production of secondary creations [*ni-ji sōsaku*]. The other characterisation of the kind of approach to the object commonly regarded in the category of otaku is the strong emotive tie it builds towards its object of consumption. Among the fan culture studies, this particular tie has been characterised in several different ways, as an ‘emotive sensibility’ (Grossberg, 1992), ‘evasive pleasures’ (Fiske 1989/2010), ‘self-absence’ (Hills 2002) or ‘aesthetic lack of distance’ (Sandvoss 2005; 2007). In Japan, this tie may be classified within what has been characterised as an orientation towards ‘words of comfort’ (宮台 et al., 2007), ‘techniques’ for ‘excitement’ or ‘crying’ (東, 2001) or ‘a vertical orientation towards absolute values’ (加野瀬 & ぼるぼら, 2005). Consequently, in this research, I regard the stereotype of the social category of otaku as shaped by three corresponding elements: particular objects or genres of consumption, particular productive activities and particular emotive ties towards the object.

In this section of Chapter Three, I focus my approach on only one element of the three mentioned above: the element of productive activities. I recognise this element as the main constitutive element of the dōjin culture. However, this element should not be regarded as unrelated to the other two elements. As in the criticism that Hills (2002) presents of Jenkins’ early work, an over-rational description of fans’ productivity may lose sight of the motivations beyond fans’ activities and their particular distinctiveness from other productive activities, such as work.

In the second half of this chapter I will focus on the relation between this ‘productive

orientation' and the 'emotive tie' by evaluating the cosplay practices. I will partially approach the topic of the textual nature of the particular objects of orientation in dōjin cultures in Chapter Six, within the context of the Vocaloid scene.

3.1.2 From Japanese SF groups to the commodification of textual productivity

As discussed, dōjin cultures (or the category of otaku) cannot be regarded as equal to fan cultures. However, I would like to point out the similarities of practices and institutions between both categories (fandom and otaku). I will focus on these similarities by focusing not on the otaku but also on the narrower category of dōjin and its textual productivity. As I mentioned above, the relation between SF culture in Japan and the development the 'particular way of enjoy' in connection with the otaku genre in Yoshimoto allows one to draw not only a line of similarity but also a line of historical continuity.

Yoshimoto focuses on the SF fan groups and their initial activities in the mid-1950s, as the departing point for his approach to the 'origins' of the otaku. For example, the Japan Flying Saucer Research Association (JFSA) was founded in 1956, by Arai Kinichi, an enthusiast of UFOs and mysterious elements, space development and science fiction. Mishima Yukio and Mayuzumi Toshiro were among them. In 1957, JFSA published the magazine *Cosmic Dust*, which is considered the first SF fan magazine or 'dōjin-shi' in Japan. JFSA celebrated regular meetings, and, with the help of *Cosmic Dust*, it created many 'circles' of fans. In 1961, the 'Meg-Con' was held in Meguro, Tokyo; it was the first SF convention in Japan. Thereafter, by 1965, there were fan circles from Kyushu to Hokkaido, and the Japan SF Fan Groups Confederation Congress was created to connect the many fan groups (吉本, 2009). Within the broad genre of science fiction, there were many groups interested in different topics, like detective and mystery novels, or fans of manga artists like Tezuka or Ishinomori. In this context, as Yoshimoto remarks, the dōjin events surged as local and national large-scale gatherings for the SF community had replaced small informal meetings. Actual dōjin events, such as the Comic Market, have their origin in these SF gatherings.

Following Yoshimoto, the genres and the particular way of enjoying now associated with the otaku culture have their roots in these first SF fan groups. As Ōtsuka (大塚 & 大澤, 2005; 大塚, 2004, 2014) has emphasised, the modernism in the pre-war manga and the ideology concerning the connection between technology and the body, in addition to the particular cultural and political situation in the 1980s in Japan, are important elements that are closely related to the SF imaginary. In Chapter Five, I will

address these topics concerning the ‘modernist and postmodernist’ debate concerning the otaku culture in Japan. For now, I will only emphasise that the SF fan circles, as well as their activities and magazines in Japan, represent an important moment in the formation of the otaku culture, and in particular, in the institutionalisation of the practices of textual productivity that we regard in dōjin cultures.

In addition to this genesis, it is also important to understand the logic of specialisation and differentiation that works behind the actual plurality of genres and practices that characterises dōjin groups. Yoshimoto regards this logic as the tendency towards ‘specialisation’ and ‘des-centralisation’ of the different genres that compose the dōjin activities. The difference between dōjin textual productivity and the cosplay performativity can be regarded as part of this differentiation in dōjin institutions. For Yoshimoto, the first differentiation is that from a literary-based means of expression that is predominant in SF fan magazines to the graphic orientation of the comic book. A former differentiation from SF to other kinds of fantasy genres and a particular focus on animation and manga media texts was observed by the time of the foundation of the Comic Market (吉本, 2009; 玉川, 2007).

Nowadays, these subcultures, as a broad and encompassing field, are shaped not only by ‘exceptional readings’—as Jenkins has stayed in the early 1990s—but also by ordinary readings. Activities such as the appropriation of cultural production, textual productivity and play, which were once regarded as practices of disruption or resistance (e.g. Fiske, 1989/2010) now exist as the very core of the cultural industries. The participatory cultures addressed by Jenkins (Delwiche & Henderson, 2012; Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013; Jenkins, 2006a) and the popularity of user-generated media (e.g. YouTube, Nico Nico Dōga) are the clearest examples of the integration of appropriative-productive practices.

Furthermore, the nuances and place of these practices of textual appropriation have changed in many important ways since the early fan or dōjin cultures. Abercrombie and Longhurst have regarded this general change in what they see as the transition from ‘focused audiences’ into ‘diffused audiences’ (Abercrombie & Longhurst, 1998). The main characteristic difference to be regarded between these audiences in the context of the transformation of fan and dōjin productivity is the expansion of the ways of and the time devoted to consumption.

As Ritzer has explained, the consumerist culture of the new millennium has developed ‘new means of consumption’ that lure the consumer and aid the consumption process (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010; Ritzer, 2005). In the case of ‘focused audiences’, textual consumption was a focused practice (see the movies at the theatre, read a book)

centred on the text and differentiated from everyday life experiences. However, for current 'diffused audiences', textual consumption is an everyday experience in which consumption has been fragmented (Abercrombie & Longhurst, 1998). As in the case of Ritzer's 'cathedrals of consumption' (e.g. commercial shopping malls, fast food restaurants or vacation resorts), the new means of consumption constitutes an entire environment where the experience is part of the consumption (Ritzer, 2005). Therefore, for today's diffused audiences, consumption is an everyday experience. This characteristic has a deep impact on the meaning of the appropriation of media texts in the sense that it had originally for de Certeau (1980/2000) as well as the way Jenkins, Fiske and other media scholars applied this word. For them, media appropriation was the way in which people built their everyday lives by 'poaching' meanings as resources—stealing those resources from the mainstream culture. This 'textual poaching', as Jenkins characterised it, was regarded as a way to oppose mass culture. For Fiske, the pleasure rooted in the textual productivity was the way popular culture 'resisted' the ideology of mass culture (Fiske, 1992, 1989/2010). In the case of Jenkins, fans' textual appropriation was a way to oppose both mass culture and popular consumerism, as fans used 'poached meanings' to build their fan communities and restore social life in opposition to isolated mass consumerism (Jenkins, 1992a, 1992b, 2010).

In all of these cases, appropriation and textual productivity were regarded as active characteristics that differentiated 'some audiences' from usual audiences. However, in the case of diffused audiences, media text appropriation is ordinary rather than extraordinary, and unintentional rather than active and selective. This transformation in the nature of textual appropriation is present in Sandvoss' (2005a, 2005b, 2007) focus on narcissism in consumption. As he has argued, the meaning of texts in appropriation has become 'meaningless.' For him, it is the very lack of coded meanings that stands behind fans' emotional attachment. As we will see below, the characterisation of consumption as narcissistic in Sandvoss' thesis, renders fans' emotional attachment as the collapse of the distance between 'subject' and 'object' implied in the concept of appropriation. Therefore, from this stance, appropriative activities are regarded as a mechanical condition of media consumption. Furthermore, as we will see later, Terranova (2004) has also commented on, from a broader perspective, the marginal place that meaning has in the 'information culture', and Lash and Urry (Lash & Urry, 1994) have addressed similar trends by referring to an 'aesthetic reflexivity' in contemporary cultural consumption.

In the case of the *dōjin* or fan cultures, all of these approaches converge in the dissolution of the borderlines of these groups as particular collectivities characterised by ‘textual appropriation’. Nowadays, appropriation is the very core of the contemporary consumerist culture, raising the figure of the ‘consumer-user’ as the ‘sovereign’ of what McGuigan, among others, calls the ‘Cool Capitalism’ (McGuigan, 2009). In this context, the limits of what can be part of a particular fan or *dōjin* culture are losing their former distinctiveness through ‘opposition’ or ‘resistance’ as their practices become increasingly tied to the productive structure. These cultures now fall upon a complex mix of elements, including evaluative assumptions, social stereotypes, sets of particular objects and practices of consumption, open and closed networks between groups of close interaction and profit and non-profit organisations, media structures, platforms or ‘architectures’ and industrial practices. Therefore, the ‘everydayness’ and complexity of this field has made it difficult to define.

Here, notwithstanding the differences that exist between fans and *dōjin* cultures, fan studies’ emphasis on the role of emotive consumption of media and its relation to social interaction can help to establish our first approach to this complex phenomenon. Therefore, in this first approach to Japanese ‘subcultures’, I will draw on a theoretical framework from studies on fan cultures, to focus on the consumption of certain cultural goods also regarded as a set of texts, and the shape of institutions through practices of textual appropriation, as the core elements to outline the shape of the field I call ‘*dōjin* cultures’.

3.2 *Dōjin* Cultures: Places for Activities and Secondary Creations

In the context of the otaku culture, ‘*dōjin*’ cultures may be described as the patterns in which particular collectivities engage in certain practices of cultural production on the basis of a set of shared texts which are significant in an emotive way for that collectivity. Following the widely referred to observations of John Fiske and Henry Jenkins in the field of fan studies (Fiske, 1992, 1989/2010; Jenkins, 1992a, 1992b), these activities have to be understood as the main constitutive body of what can be regarded as fan communities. The similarities between the groups of SF fans described by Jenkins (1992), their textual productivity (Fiske 1992, 1989/2010) and the format of play and organising, which the Japanese SF fan groups imported from the United States’ groups, make evident the relation between the fan communities and the groups in Japan focused on textual productivity commonly addressed as ‘*dōjin* activities’.

The word ‘dōjin’ originated in the Meiji period (1868-1912). This was a period of significant transformations in Japan and of great stimulus for its literary world. At its origin, ‘dōjin’ referred to a group of peers with similar literary interests, and ‘dōjin-shi’ (or dōjin magazines) referred to the material published by the group. Nowadays, in the context of the otaku and its genres, dōjin-shi are mainly comic books created and published by fans. As the format is in its essence free for its creator, there are a great diversity of types of dōjin-shi, such as criticism, novels, travel guides and research, although those categories are minor in quantity compared to the comic book format.

Still, the textual productivity of dōjin practices exceeds the formats of the magazine medium. Besides magazines, dōjin encompasses music, games and goods as some of the most popular categories. In a broad sense, I use ‘dōjin culture’ to encompass all these activities and the collectivities associated to them. In the following section, I will address some of the main features of the institutions of the dōjin cultures, restricting my scope to their most representative characteristics. To do so, I will focus on two essential institutions that compose the dōjin cultures. One is the places of their activities, usually called ‘dōjin-shi sokubaikai’ and which I address in general as ‘dōjin events’. These places are frequently referred to as ‘places for play’ [asobi-ba] by their participants. The other institution is the production of secondary creations usually called ‘ni-ji sōsaku.’

Tamagawa (玉川, 2007) focuses on the Comic Market and the staff that make possible the event as part of the fan cultures in Japan. He focuses on his function as a place of meeting or what is known as ‘festival’ for the otaku culture. This particular event, which was initiated in 1972, is held twice a year in Tokyo and is the biggest gathering in Japan, with number of participants increasing to approximately 550,000 in the span of three days (Comic Market 88, summer 2015). For Tamagawa, the Comic Market, or Comiket, is the infrastructure that supports this fan culture in Japan.

The main purpose of this place is to sell and buy dōjin magazines. Most of these magazines are focused on anime, manga or games, but, as the results of the Comic Market 66 30th anniversary questionnaire (杉山あかし, 2008)¹² show, there is a plurality of genres mixing particular works, topics or genre orientation. For example, the report presented by Sugiyama shows a list with 43 different genres. As Sugiyama explains, the genre classification system in the Comic Market is an ad hoc system that

¹² The research was carried out between 27 Decembre 2003 and 10 February 2004, among all the registered participants as ‘circles’ in the Comic Market 66. (37,620 persons form 52,000 (72.3%) recovery percentage) (杉山あかし, 2008).

mixes names of categories, like SF, titles of particular works, like ‘The Prince of Tennis’, and particular classifications like ‘original (JUNE)’, which shows that the category refers to original or non-derivative work related to the category called ‘JUNE’. This system could be somewhat chaotic for those not familiar with it, but the participants easily understand it.

The assistants for dōjin events are usually classified into three basic categories. General participants [ippan] comprise one category, e.g. persons who assist with buying or that do not trade or have a particular role in the venue. Circles comprise the second category, and these can be individual (a one-person circle) or collective. The word circle is the ‘easiest way’ to classify the groups or individual who registers for the event in order to have a space to trade a dōjin work. Cosplayers also usually register for the event as circles. The third category consists of staff, i.e. volunteers who help in the organisation, and they may have experience as circle participants.

Tamagawa’s study of the Comic Market staff emphasises the role of fandom as shaping a community focused on the same genre of a hobby (玉川, 2007). The detectable popularity of derivative works, in contrast to the relatively small number of original works in the Comic Market, is a signal of such. For example, as Tamagawa notes, the genre of original works called ‘creation’ [sōsaku] is not the most popular in the Comic Market, as it represented only 10 % of the total amount of production registered for the Comic Market 71 (December 2006). This is a main characteristic of the event: it serves as a place where people with similar likes can meet and socialise (玉川, 2007).

In this chapter, I approach each of these categories using a variety of sources, data and observations (see appendix for details on the data and observation sources). Tamagawa’s observations are focused on the staff of the Comic Market. As I will detail below, I also carried out interviews among the representative members of other dōjin events. The Comic Market 66 30th anniversary questionnaire (杉山あかし, 2008) primarily focuses on circle respondents. This is also the case of the work of Nafuji (名藤多香子, 2007). However, the main focus of this chapter on dōjin culture are the general participants from my questionnaire research.

3.2.1 Approaching dōjin cultures: Commonality and individuality

In my research, I focus on three different dōjin events: the Comic Market, Comic City and MUSIC COMMUNICATION/ VOCALOID PARADISE. In addition to previous research and my observations of several events, I will use the data I collected during the study: 1) a questionnaire distributed to general participants in the 80th Comic Market

(Tokyo Big Sight, 12, 13, 14, August 2011; 100 samples collected) and in the 17th Super Comic City, (Intex Osaka, 21, August 2011; 47 samples collected); 2) participant observation research conducted during the 4th Kansai VOCALOID PARADISE and MUSIC COMMUNICATION event (Kyoto Messe, 03, 08, 2015).

This research was carried out between 2010 and 2011. Its aim was to focus on groups devoted to the consumption of anime, manga and games and similar interests, using Japanese anime as a representative genre. This research was my first encounter with the Japanese subculture, and I had the general theoretical aim to observe the characteristics of consumption and test their relation to the nature of fan groups as communities.

In particular, this research was performed in response to the famous viewpoint of Azuma Hiroki (東, 2001) who, as I will discuss later, denied the intersubjective nature of commonality in Japanese otaku culture. In a similar spirit to Azuma's work, many of my approaches to dōjin fans supported that vision. This was the case of my initial research on the 80th Comic City in Osaka (June 6, 2010), a dōjin market mainly composed of female participants. Many of the circle participants I spoke with there strongly denied 'shap[ing] a community' and stressed they only participate in such events in a 'self-serving manner' [katte-ni suru] without being concerned about what other participants wished or expected of them. This perspective was in contrast to my observations of Mexican fan groups, as with the fan communities depicted by Jenkins (1992a, 1992c) and some Japanese research, as mentioned above (玉川, 2007).

The research was framed within many empirical observations to representative places like Akihabara in Tokyo and Nippon Bashi in Osaka, as well as several gathering locations for 'otaku, like 'Made Cafes,' manga, anime and dōjin magazine stores, and other similar places. I joined and participated in the activities of the manga circle of Kobe University, where I made some friends, learned some drawing techniques and participated in the production of the dōjin-shi of the university circle. Naturally, I also visited several different dōjin markets, beginning with the most representative, the Comic Market. This was a process of recognition of the common places, practices and categories of the field in Japan.

In what follows, I will introduce some extracts from an interview I conducted during the pre-research phase for the questionnaire research concerning the dōjin events. In addition to the literature review, observations and the mainly first-hand quantitative data I gathered later, this email interview I initiated after my first visit to Comic City is particularly important, as it made clear the different perspective I have as a researcher who is familiar with a seemingly similar but in fact deeply different field.

Interview with informant 'A': First encounter with the Japanese dōjin world

I met Ms 'A', a 25-year-old female dōjin magazine writer at the 80th Comic City, in June 2010, while conducting pre-research fieldwork at the event. During the event, I approached several dōjin circles and explained the research I was planning to do, asking for their collaboration in the case they were interested, and leaving my email and university contact information. From all the members of the circles with whom I spoke, four persons responded via email and helped by answering some questions. Those questions were oriented to prepare a questionnaire aimed to understand some of the characteristics of textual consumption and production among dōjin circles. After some changes to the research aim, the results of the questionnaire research will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

From these collaborators, the emails from Ms A were of particular interest. She was interested in helping with my research and answering my questions, but she was uneasy about many words I used in the explanation of the research aim. While reading Ms A's emails and writing my answers to her, it became evident that we were speaking from two very different points of view. Ms A's observations became a key element in my introduction to the Japanese field. The communication continued until August of 2011, when I carried out the questionnaire research and met in person again with Ms A and thanked for her help. Next, I will focus on some of the first emails she wrote to me. In these emails, she sought to explain the nature of her activities and tried to understand our different points of view.

After the first emails inclusive of mutual introductions and my answer in which I described the research project, she wrote to me and explained she was feeling uncomfortable with the words I used—in particular, with my regarding of dōjin as a 'collective activity' that was at the centre of a 'community'. Thereafter, she apologised to me for being 'subjective' and introduced a 'personal point of view': 'While doing research in Japan, it is better not to use the expression "collective action."'. Then, she explained that there are many details and differences in the activities that make it impossible to consider them as 'collective' or oriented to a 'community'.

She remarked that cosplay and dōjin cannot be regarded as part of the same 'group,' even when sometimes the same persons are involved in both activities. As she regards it, even when they are participating in the same event, 'sometimes they do not have good feelings towards the other part'. This is something that not only divides cosplayers and dōjin circles but also occurs during the same dōjin activities, even when they are focused on the same genre. To offer an example, she explained the importance of differences

within girls' dōjin magazines.

As she shared with me, she used to read 'slash' fanzines of 'Lord of the Rings' in English, but there, she said, the characters' 'male-roles' and 'female-roles' seems to be more or less free. However, in the case of Japan, each character role is strictly defined and 'it can be the motive of war [between fans] if you shift the roles'; she then added, 'This is not an exaggeration'. She then provided some detailed examples of differences of likes and interpretations among fans and stressed the strong feeling of each person involved in that activity to not be 'regarded as equal [to others]'.

In her opinion, the 'content' of the hobby and the characteristics of the activities are so vastly different each other that they don't want to be 'tied up as the same collectivity'. Therefore, in her view, 'collective action' is a very inappropriate expression for this research. She concluded the email by giving a detailed explanation of the differences that divide the participants into these activities. Then, she continued to share her thoughts in a different email:

I think you are using the expression 'anime fandom' but, I would prefer for you to use 'dōjin activities' in the Japanese style, as we do not have the concept of doing activities in 'group' (and personally I do not think cosplay is part of dōjin activities).

She emphasised again that they do not have any group-centred activities and made an analogy to sociological research or academic conferences. As she explained, academic conferences and research groups can be understood as a 'collectivity' in the general sense. In her view, this can also be the case with dōjin activities. Nevertheless, as she commented, 'We only engage in activities that pertain to the things we like and that please us personally.' She then added that 'the conscience of a crowd or the forming a groups is weak [...] rather, there is a tendency to hate to be regarded as "tied to something" or as a group, as current mass media usually do'. But, 'in any case, if there is a consciousness of a community, I think that it would be the awareness of being a minority.'

She went on to comment about how a former generation of dōjin circles was the target of discrimination and criticism. As she explained, any time there was a crime, the responsible person was depicted as an anime or manga fan. This is the reason that, although their field of activities is different, 'we all are encountering a kind of oppression as a minority'. To illustrate this point, she relates an 'old' example of 'solidarity' between this 'minorities'. It was a case of a person with a serious illness who needed a transfusion of a rare type of blood. As she stated, 'Thinking normally usually means assuming that the school or something [like that] will take action', but, in this

case, the asking for help occurred through a 'dōjin internet site'. As she remembers, it was at the early time of internet, and she adds; 'It could be fake or only a rumour, but the important thing is that there, it was the "world of dōjin" that received it.' As she explained, they felt a strong feeling of solidarity: '[A] fellow who has been oppressed as a minority is in trouble.' That was, as she remembered, the reason for the spread of a 'boom' of 'messages of help' towards a complete stranger. As she concluded, 'the truth is that perhaps that is the only thing we have in common.'

After reading that email, I explained the feeling of 'community' we had in Mexico inside the same minority group when focusing on a minor genre and expressed the feeling I believe we shared at the events. I also conveyed that I recognised the same differences between the groups within the domain, namely their focus on similar consumption and the activities they perform with others, demonstrate a characteristic of 'collectivity' to the group that differentiates it from 'others' who do not belong to that 'world'. Her answer was very quick:

I don't have the consciousness of belonging to a big group (collectivity) that includes anime and manga fans, but I think I feel a consciousness of a group towards the people in front of me (if it is an event, towards all its participants).

Thereafter, she added that 'each time I leave the event hall, if anyone asks me, I think there is a sad feeling somewhere inside me'. She then offered the following perspectives:

[Y]ou said that a community is created by the influence of anime or manga, and I agree. If you search on the internet, you may find something like an 'alliance of XX devotee', which is very common in the online world. I am administrating an internet site, and there are many people who have become my friends there. So it is not that we don't have any interest in establishing relationships with other peoples. However, if you ask me if the ties of those communities are strong, [I would say that] they are fragile to the extent that they are completely forgotten when the genre of activity changes.

She explained that there are a lot of people who partake in many different activities in the 'sea of genres on the internet'. She then added the following:

I feel that it is only about people come together only when they want to and focus only on what they like. Basically, I feel that this is a world of horizontal, weak ties. As a result, even in the case that a community was formed, there is a strong feeling that the people included are only acting as

individuals.

Thereafter, she returned to emphasising the common feeling of being a minority as the only common ground. Ultimately, as she pointed out, when their activities are regarded as 'collective', it may be because there are a lot of researchers who focus solely on events. Then, she shared details of certain internet activities that, for her, cannot be regarded as collective or encompassed by a common object of orientation like a particular anime.

Soon after that email, and while I was preparing my answer, she sent another one, in which she wrote, 'I feel there is a difference in how you and I are thinking about [what is] "a relation towards other people" or the distance among other people.' Then she explained that perhaps my stance is from a 'male dōjin magazine', as I explained to her in an earlier mail I was working on a fanzine when I was in high school in my country. She apologised for not being aware of the cultures of other countries; she stated that she would provide some commentary based on her experience with male dōjin culture in Japan.

I myself have not read that much of dōjin-shi for males, so I perhaps might suggest something that is ill-informed, so please forgive me in that respect. [After] performing a general review of the aspects of male and female dōjin, I think there are some differences. Let me focus this time on the following points: [the presence of] 'heterogeneous rape' (things like bestiality and tentacles); the great quantity of multiple rapes (in addition, the persons are unspecific, [they are] a so-called mob); and the character as the main criteria for selecting the comic book.

In regard to the above points, I guess males do not think of the [female] character as [being] in a similar position to their girlfriends. [...] When thinking about [the above mentioned] tendency [of male dōjin magazine content], for me, they [the readers and writers] treat the character from a mentality similar to 'standing up an idol and sharing that female among many males'. [...] Even if there is [in the story depicted in the comic book] consented intercourse with the [female] character of the manga, that male will be just one more of the undetermined males that surrounds that idol. With that awareness, I think [the possession of the same female by several males] does not produce jealousy [between males]. I wonder if the solidarity you are feeling does not originate from that [mentality]. By the way, I can read stuff oriented towards males; it is only the hard stuff that is impossible for me.

She then explained her position to me:

I am a woman, so I cannot avoid feeling empathy for the female [character]. It is simply that, if that [feeling] surpasses a certain point, I think the female [character] completely becomes an object that has lost any human dignity. And, if you put a thing and a human side to side, if you ask me, I feel empathy for the human.

She explained that it is when she understands the character as a ‘thing’ that she becomes able to read male *dōjin* magazines. That is also the reason that causes her to believe that the female character, for a male reader, is not in the same position as his ‘human girlfriend.’ Then, she continued, stating, ‘For me, I interpret the [magazines] for women [rather] as ‘something similar to playing with dolls, with extremely low elements of self-projection.’

She is very careful to explain that her perspective is that of ‘a woman who writes *dōjin-shi* for woman’ and that it is also a very ‘macro’ perspective. She clarifies that she wants to express the different viewpoints we are possibly having, as well as the differences existing between males and females in *dōjin* culture, as with the approach to characters in cosplay culture. For her, the latter ‘is an activity that has surpassed the barrier between reality and the “second dimension” and, therefore, should have a sense of value closer to the “real world”. She also explained that she has seen cosplay events and is interested in participating in cosplay but has not as of yet.

After that email, I explained to her that *dōjin* (fanzine) activities in my country are mostly original and seldom include erotic or pornographic elements. That is because the intention of most of the participants is to present themselves as professionals and to ‘give a good name’ to their activities, as most of the national production of professional comics are pornographic (Hernandez 2009). After that, most of the communication concerned technical aspects of her *dōjin* productivity and her opinions on the draft versions of the questionnaire I sent to several collaborators asking for feedback. I believe the efforts that Ms A put forth in trying to understand our different standpoints at the very beginning of my research summarises some key elements that continuously appeared in the research, in several questionnaires, and in the interviews I had completed.

Commentary on the correspondence with Ms A

The quotes from the interview with Ms A are focused on the issue of community and commonality in the dōjin scene. As we will see throughout this research, the perspective of community, the elements in which she finds a sense of solidarity and the elements in which she rejects the meaning of community are constant distinctions that present themselves in several different ways throughout the research I conducted. From the quotes included above, an impression can be formed of many of the focal points that each aspect of this investigation will pose. In this section, I will address these focal points as an initial way to approach those issues from a condensed but nevertheless particular point of view.

The subject of community and commonality, as presented in the above-quoted material, can be read in the following way. There are three major features in which Ms A recognises a certain type of commonality: 1) communality through concrete interaction, 2) commonality through a feeling of stigmatisation and 3) commonality through the fictional character as a common object of desire. It is interesting that Ms A only speaks of solidarity in the two former cases. Besides these three points, Ms A regards the social ties produced between the participants in dōjin activities as weak, or even as hostile.

In reference to the first aspect, Ms A emphasises the different activities and orientations within the groups and a tendency towards differentiation. However, she accepts a feeling of the group towards the face-to-face interaction at the dōjin events. As in the case of the internet, she regards social interaction and the shape of ties from a focus on a similar hobby, but she emphasises the weakness of such ties and the ephemeral nature of the groups shaped. We can understand this kind of commonality based on interaction as a means for enabling action focused on an individual drive. The expression ‘personal please’ [katte-ni] stresses this individual orientation in activities. However, it is important to note that the strong differentiation she points out within the group is only possible through the mutual understanding of the meaning of such differentiation.

The commonality and solidarity built from a feeling of oppression are interesting elements associated not with the interaction between concrete subjects but within an imagined, abstract group of peers. This characteristic in connection with the former inner differentiation creates a borderline, but not between particular groups but between abstract categories: the dōjin world and the ‘others’. The category of subculture may be understood within this same logic of distinction from what is regarded as the

outside world. These features have been frequently regarded in fan groups' formation and logics of inclusion, exclusion and differentiation.

The concept of commonality concerning the imaginative sexual possession of the same fictional character is a particularly suggestive observation. From here, it is important to stress the anonymity of the members, the distance between the character and them and the negation of the 'humanity' in the character. The sense of 'solidarity' that Ms A assumes arises between male dōjin readers hints at some important elements regarding the place of fictional characters and the shape of social groups from the appropriation of these characters. The relation between the anonymity of the members of the groups and the character as an 'idol', which is an object rather than a 'human', is an important aspect to keep in mind.

3.2.2 Exploring the 80th Comic Market and the 17th Super Comic City participants

Duration of the research: spring of 2010 to summer 2011.

The research aims and scope: To explore the dōjin markets as a way to approach to the structure of activities of dōjin culture and their cultural consumption, and to test the 'community orientation' of its participants. This first approach to the Japanese field was aimed to understand the formation of collectivities in relation to cultural consumption.

In order to focus on the relationship between 1) the consumption of texts, 2) the activities of appropriation and 3) the social interaction, I reduced the scope of the research to some of the most representative genres, activities and places in dōjin cultures: 1) anime, manga and games; 2) participation in dōjin markets and textual and 'performative' productivity from the appropriation of such texts, including dōjin-shi activities and cosplay; 3) gathering places—mainly dōjin markets.

Research phases: The questionnaire research was divided into three stages: 1) the observation of and informal interviews with participants, 2) the preparation of the questionnaire with the aid of some participants I met at Super Comic City and some of the members of the Kobe University manga circle, who responded to two early versions of the questionnaire before its distribution; 3) the distribution of the final version of the questionnaire and analysis. (For more details, refer to the appendix.)

Target and methodology: All of the questionnaires were distributed at the following dōjin events; the 80th Comic Market and the 17th Super Comic City. The participants, in general, were the target group for the questionnaire. The questionnaire also assumed that some of the general participants had experience with dōjin circles or cosplay activities. Therefore, a section was included for those cases.

In the Comic Market, I conducted the questionnaire during the three days of the event and in the same place each day. I distributed the survey outside the venue between 12 am and 2 pm. At that time, many participants are resting, and it is easier to approach them. In the morning, they are busy buying and after the end of the event, most of them want to leave the venue or join to their friends. I asked persons randomly, but I tried to maintain the balance between male and female. The participants filled out the questionnaire during that moment. In some cases, I had the opportunity to conduct some informal interviews and to converse about topics concerning their activities and the event. The first day, I retrieved 40 questionnaires; on the second day, 41; on the third day, 19.

Comic City is a one-day event. I conducted all of the questionnaires inside the venue. Almost all of the event participants were female, so the total of the respondents were women. The distribution of the questionnaires was carried out in the same way as it was in the Comic Market. I distributed 50 questionnaires, but three of them were not useful.

Compared with the total number of participants of each event, 100 questionnaires for the Comic Market and 47 for the Super Comic City are not statistically representative of the total. The total number of participants in the 80th Comic Market was, in the three-day span, 540,000 persons, and the total for the 17th Kansai Super Comic City was of 50,500 for one day. However, the present questionnaire research shows some details about the relation between consumption and the social orientations of the participants that I analyse in this chapter.

Questionnaire research results:

Structure of the questionnaire: The questionnaire was composed of the following eight sections. It had in total 17 questions and 95 variables. A sample of the distributed questionnaire is in the appendix.

In what follows, I will introduce the results per section. Only section 4, 'preferred anime', is excluded because it was irrelevant for the present analysis.

Sections of the questionnaire

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1) Basic attributes | 5) Characteristics of the participation |
| 2) Characteristics of consumption | 6) Participation in cosplay events |
| 3) Genres of interest | 7) Dōjin activities |
| 4) Preferred anime (free answer) | 8) Cosplay activities |
-

1) Basic attributes:

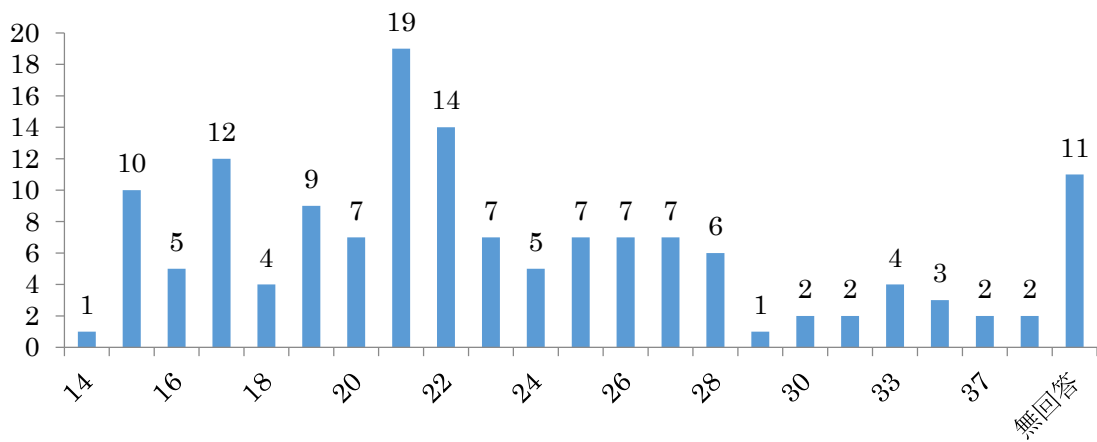
Table 3.1.1: Basic Attributes

	Comic City		Comic Market		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Total	47	100	100	100	147	100
<i>Sex</i>						
Male	0	0	57	58.2	57	39.3
Female	47	100	41	41.8	88	60.7
<i>Occupation</i>						
Student	24	54	42	45.7	66	48.5
Other	20	45	50	54.3	70	51.5
<i>Age</i>						
Average age	23.5		22.6		22.6	

Note. All percentages are valid per cents.

Table 3.1.1 shows the basic attributes of the respondents to the questionnaire divided by the event and the total. The category of ‘occupation’ shows only ‘students’ or ‘other’ because several respondents of former versions of the questionnaire were worried about associating low academic education or poor employment conditions with the dōjin activities and asked explicitly to suppress those variables. The same was the case with the variable of marital status. As the main purpose of the present questionnaire was not to investigate such variables, and most of the respondents revised the questionnaire before agreeing to collaborate, I eliminated variables concerning that information in order to ensure the respondents’ collaboration.

Table 3.1.2: Frequency distribution of age



The distribution of age among the respondents appears in Table 3.1.2. As I show in Table 3.1.3, the distribution of age can be classified into three different ranges. The range from 21 to 28 years old was the largest group.

Table 3.1.3: Proportion by generation

Age range	Freq.	%	Year of birth (period)
29 to 39 years old	16	12	1972-1982
21 to 28 years old	72	53	1983-1990
14 to 20 years old	48	35	1991-1997

The division of respondents into three groups depending on their age helps to understand their characteristics in connection to the transformations of the institutions of dōjin culture and the differences that several authors have regarded in the ‘generations’ of the subculture. For these details, see Chapter Five.

2) Characteristics of consumption:

This section is focused on the texts and the consumption characteristics among the participants in dōjin events. Table 3.1.4 shows the approach to different media among the respondents. The results show a high consumption of particular media related to the stereotype of otaku. The table shows 16 different media or contents and the regularity with which actors engage in their consumption. As the characteristics of each media are different, their consumption cannot be compared only by focusing the differences in the regularity of consumption. However, the results that are shown in this table illustrate certain patterns in consumption.

Table 3.1.4: Media consumption and regularity ^a

		Every day		Every two to three days		Once a week		Once a month		Never	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	Watching Japanese animation	38	26.2	56	38.6	30	20.7	16	11.0	5	3.4
2	Playing video games	32	22.4	35	24.5	19	13.3	33	23.1	24	16.8
3	Reading manga (Japanese comic books)	45	31.0	55	37.9	22	15.2	19	13.1	3	2.1
4	Reading amateur dōjin comic books	11	7.7	32	22.4	26	18.2	57	39.9	17	11.9
5	Reading cosplay magazines or watching cosplay-related internet sites	10	6.9	8	5.6	13	9.0	34	23.6	79	54.9
6	Spending time on Facebook or Mixi	45	31.3	18	12.5	6	4.2	17	11.8	58	40.3
7	Updating personal websites or blogs	14	9.7	9	6.3	8	5.6	39	27.1	74	51.4
8	Participating in or writing on internet discussion boards	11	7.6	8	5.6	16	11.1	28	19.4	81	56.3
9	Watching YouTube or Nico Nico Dōga	65	44.8	30	20.7	21	14.5	24	16.6	4	2.8
10	Uploading content to YouTube or Nico Nico Dōga	1	.7	0	.0	2	1.4	13	9.2	126	88.7
11	Watching non-animation movies	6	4.1	9	6.2	22	15.2	88	60.7	20	13.8
12	Watching TV variety programmes	24	16.6	40	27.6	32	22.1	23	15.9	26	17.9
13	Watching TV dramas (soap operas)	9	6.2	21	14.5	40	27.6	33	22.8	42	29.0
14	Watching sports games on television	9	6.3	15	10.4	20	13.9	49	34.0	51	35.4
15	Reading 'light novels'	13	9.0	17	11.8	21	14.6	41	28.5	52	36.1
16	Reading novels	16	11.0	17	11.7	19	13.1	64	44.1	29	20.0

Note. All percentages are valid per cents.

^a Selection of more than one answer permitted.

First, the 16 items were determined based on the previous research and were divided into three categories:

A) Items closely related to the stereotype of otaku (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10 and 15).

B) Items divided according to the characteristics of the medium. The characteristics are as follows: 1) original texts (1,2,3,11,12,13,14,15 and16); 2) secondary texts (4 and 5),

which are supposed to be produced with a clear 'primary text' as their base and consumed or oriented mainly towards fans of those texts; 3) texts created by amateurs or user-generated content (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10).

C) Examples of mass media, in typical opposition to the stereotype of the subculture or minority media (11, 12, 13, 14 and 16). Although in the general scope of this research I regard animation, manga and games as mass media, I follow here the opposition between the stereotypes.

By analysing the regularity in which each media type is consumed, in addition to the frequency results, the general tendency of consumption becomes identifiable.

Media consumed every day: 1) Watching YouTube or Nico Nico Dōga, reading manga and using social networking sites (SNS) like Facebook or Mixi (45%); 2) Watching animation (26%); 3) Playing video games (22%).

Media consumed every two or three days: 1) Watching animation and reading manga (39-8%); 2) Watching variety programmes (28%); 3) Playing video games and reading dōjin magazines (24-22%).

Media consumed once a week: 1) Watching TV dramas (28%); 2) Watching variety programmes and animation (22-21%); 3) Reading dōjin magazines (18%).

Media consumed once a month: 1) Watching non-animation movies (61%); 2) Reading novels (44%); 3) Reading dōjin magazines (40%); 4) Watching sports games on television (34%); 5) Reading 'light novels'¹³ (28%).

Media never consumed (or activity never done): 1) Uploading content to YouTube or Nico Nico Dōga (88%); 2) Write on internet text boards (56%); 3) Cosplay-related media (54%); 4) Updating personal sites or blogs (51%); 5) Using SNS like Facebook or Mixi (40%). It is interesting to note that the respondents can be divided into two sizable groups: those who use SNS every day (45%) and those who never use them (40%).

¹³ Style of Japanese novel similar to a novella. 'Light novels' or 'ranove' are commonly adapted into manga or anime.

3) Genres of interest:

Table 3.1.5: Genres of interest in order of preference

	No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	No. 4
Japanese animation	27.8	21.5	13.3	12.1
Manga (Japanese comic books)	20.8	27.1	16.1	12.9
Video games	13.2	11.8	12.6	12.1
‘Light Novels’	3.5	6.3	7.0	10.0
Novels	4.2	4.9	7.0	2.9
Amateur dōjin comic books	6.3	11.1	14.7	26.4
Cosplay	3.5	3.5	4.9	2.1
Internet-related activities	17.4	12.5	16.8	16.4
TV dramas (soap operas)	1.4	.7	5.6	2.9

Note. All percentages are valid per cents.

Table 3.1.5 shows the most popular topics of interest at the dōjin events. Japanese animation, manga and internet-related activities are the most preferred genres while dōjin, which is the focus of dōjin events, was always preferred after the original.

4) Characteristics of the activities:

This section aims to investigate the basic characteristics of the nature of social relationships concerning the participation in dōjin events. In the previous section, the consumption of media texts was hypothetically regarded as the basis for shaping a shared ground that supports the ‘community’ and its activities, as the dōjin production of magazines. This section is based on the hypothesis that the participants become close to the event and its social dynamics over time. For that reason, in this section, I focus on the record of participation and the activities in which respondents have participated or are interested, and seek to verify the importance of social connections among the participants.

In a previous version of the questionnaire, I included variables concerning family members, work and school relations in connection to the genres focused on the dōjin events. However, the attitude of the respondents to those variables were strongly negative, as they were concerned with their privacy. For that reason, the categories of the questionnaire are rather broad and focused only on the event.

Table 3.1.6: Experience in dōjin event by number of years

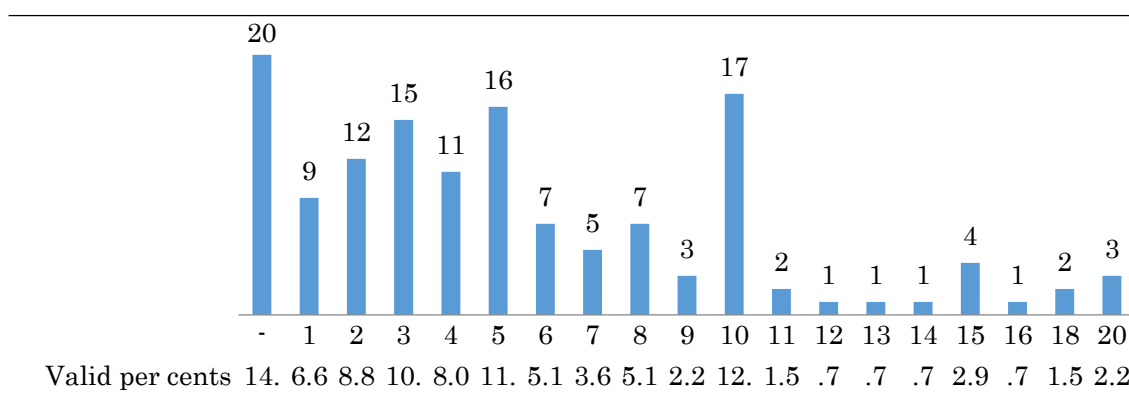


Table 3.1.6 shows the experience of participating in dōjin events according to the number of years. The distribution that the table shows has, in general, three broader groups: 1) participants with less than a year’s experience, with most of them likely to be joining the event for the first time (14%); 2) A group of participants with experience of up to 9 years (62%) within which participants with up to five years (46% of the total) of experience comprise the largest segment; 3) a smaller group of ‘veterans’ with experience of more than ten years (23%).

Table 3.1.7 shows a general pattern where most of the participants engage in the event with friends from outside the event rather than from inside. It also shows a low willingness to become involved in the event organisation. This information may suggest a low tendency towards forming networks inside the event and for the event itself while the social relationship of the participating members relies mainly on groups outside the dōjin event. Likewise, as Table 3.1.8 shows, making new friends is also a low motivation factor for the participants.

Table 3.1.7: Summary of patterns of participation in dōjin events

Variables	Freq.	%
<i>1) Frequency of participation by year</i>		
More than three times a year	45	32.4
Two or three times a year	68	48.9
Fewer than two times a year	16	11.5
This is my first time	10	7.2
<i>2) When you went for first time:</i>		
You were brought by a friend or acquaintance	119	85.6
You went alone	20	14.4
<i>3) Usually, when you go to a dōjin event:</i>		

You go with a friend or acquaintance or expect to meet them at the event	124	89.9
You go alone	14	10.1
<i>4) Do you have friends you have meet at the dōjin events?</i>		
I have a lot of friends from the dōjin events	15	10.8
I have some friends from the dōjin events	47	33.8
I have no much friends from the dōjin events	29	20.9
Not at all	48	34.5
<i>5) Inviting people to participate in a dōjin event</i>		
Have you bring a friend for first time to a dōjin event?	66	47.8
Are you interested in bringing new persons to a <i>dōjin</i> event?	28	20.3
I am not interested	44	31.9
<i>6) Have you participated as staff in a dōjin event?</i>		
Yes	7	5.0
No, but I am interested	30	21.6
No, and I am not interested	102	73.4

Note. All percentages are valid per cents.

Table 3.1.8 shows the principal motivations the participants have to participate in the events. Buying dōjin comic books was the main motivation; however, enjoying the mood shows the ‘festival’ nature of the event.

Table 3.1.8: Motivation to participate in dōjin events in order of preference

	No. 1	No.2	No. 3	No. 4
Sell dōjin comic books	4.3	6.3	1.9	6.2
Buy dōjin comic books	81.3	10.2	2.9	4.9
To go together with a friend or an acquaintance	3.6	19.7	27.2	13.6
To see friends or acquaintances at the event hall	2.9	22.8	24.3	22.2
To make new friends	0.0	2.4	8.7	18.5
To enjoy the mood	6.5	38.6	33.0	28.4

Note. All percentages are valid per cents.

4.1) Participation in other activities:

After this section, the variables are focused on the details of other activities preferred by the participants in the events. The main purpose of the questionnaire was to focus on the consumption and participation in the events, but this part of the questionnaire supposes that some of the participants also engage in more specific activities. Those activities are the production of dōjin magazines and the participation in cosplay events or the performing of cosplay. The questionnaire also asked for the presence of friends related to such activities to find out if there is a network of friends that links all activities together.

Table 3.1.9: Relation with other activities

Variable	Freq.	%
<i>1) Have you ever been to a cosplay event?</i>		
Yes	39	27.1
I have not, but I am interested in going	19	13.2
I haven't been to one	86	59.7
<i>2) Have you ever drawn a dōjin comic?</i>		
Yes	34	24.6
I haven't, but I am interested in doing it	33	23.9
I haven't	71	51.4
<i>3) Do you have friends or acquaintances that draw dōjin comics?</i>		
Yes	100	73.5
No	36	26.5
<i>4) Have you ever done cosplay?</i>		
Yes	36	26.3
I haven't done cosplay, but I am interested in doing it	36	26.3
I haven't done cosplay	65	47.4
<i>5) Do you have friends or acquaintances that do cosplay?</i>		
Yes	93	68.4
No	43	31.6

Note. All percentages are valid per cents.

Table 3.1.9 shows the participation in those activities and the presence of friends related to those activities.

5) Participation in cosplay events:

Table 3.1.10: Experience in participating at cosplay events (years)

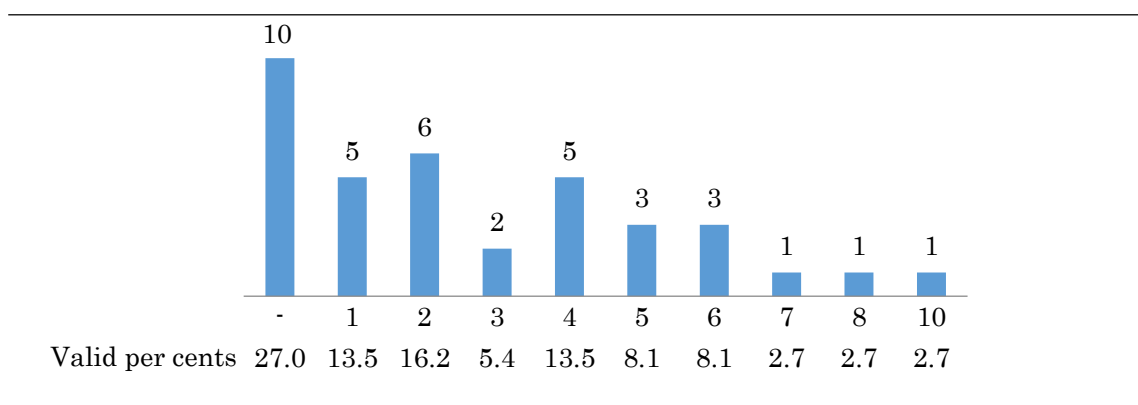


Table 3.1.10 shows the number of years individuals have participated in cosplay events. The distribution of the frequencies by year shows a similar pattern to Table

3.1.6.

Table 3.1.11 shows the patterns of participation in cosplay events. The patterns are similar to those in dōjin events. However, as variable five shows, there is no interest in bringing new participants to the event. This characteristic may indicate a tendency to view those events as external to the respondents' category of participation, for those participants who only go to take cosplay pictures, as is shown in Table 3.1.12.

Table 3.1.11: Summary of patterns of participation in cosplay events

Variable	Freq.	%
<i>1) Frequency of participation by year</i>		
More than three times a year	8	21.1
Two or three times a year	5	13.2
Less than two times a year	16	42.1
Only once	9	23.7
<i>2) When you went for first time:</i>		
You was brought by a friend or acquaintance	35	92.1
You went alone	3	7.9
<i>3) Usually, when you go to a cosplay event:</i>		
You go with a friend or acquaintance or expect to meet them at the event	35	92.1
Go alone	3	7.9
<i>4) Do you have friends you have met at the cosplay events?</i>		
I have a lot of friends from the cosplay events	3	7.9
I have some friends from the cosplay events	15	39.5
I only have a couple of friends from the cosplay events	5	13.2
None at all	15	39.5
<i>5) Inviting people to participate in a cosplay event</i>		
Have you brought a friend for first time to cosplay events?	8	21.1
Are you interested in bringing new persons to cosplay events?	13	34.2
I am not interested	17	44.7
<i>6) Have you participated as staff at a cosplay event?</i>		
Yes	1	2.3
No, but I am interested in participating	10	23.3
No, and I am not interested in participating	32	74.4

Note. All percentages are valid per cents for the total number of respondents for this category (36 persons).

Table 3.1.12 shows the principal motivations for participating in cosplay events. The majority of the respondents participate in cosplay practices while the respondents who do not participate go to take cosplay pictures. 'To enjoying the mood' was also an important element.

Table 3.1.12: Motivation to participate in cosplay events in order of preference

	No. 1	No.2	No.3	No.4
To perform cosplay	32.4	16.1	3.7	0.0
To take cosplay pictures	29.7	35.5	3.7	9.5
To get together with a friend or an acquaintance	2.7	22.6	29.6	9.5
To see friends or acquaintances at the event hall	2.7	6.5	44.4	23.8
To make new friends	0.0	6.5	3.7	23.8
To enjoy the mood	32.4	9.7	14.8	33.3

Note. All percentages are valid per cents for the total number of respondents for this category (See Table 3.1.10).

6) Dōjin activities:

The tables in this sections show the details of dōjin practices for the few respondents who engage in them. As Table 3.1.13 shows, most of them had an experience of one to three years.

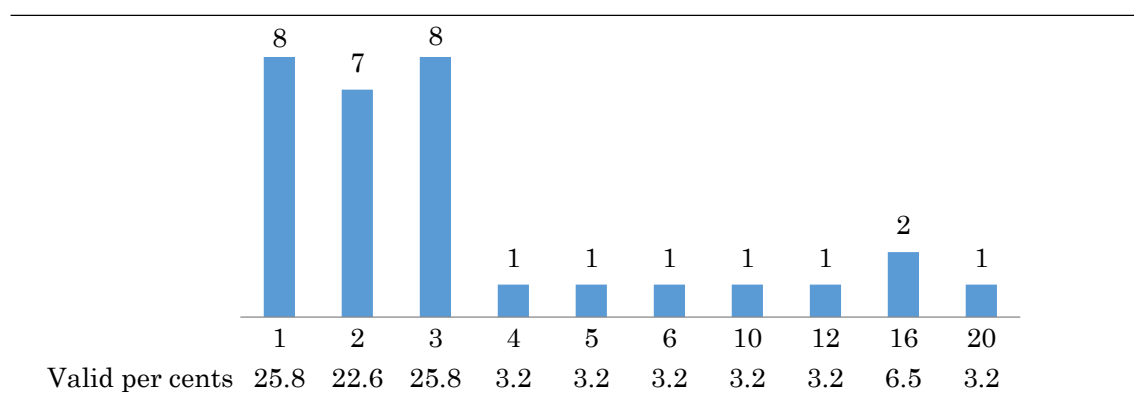
Table 3.1.13: Experience practising dōjin activities (years)

Table 3.1.14 shows a summary of the patterns of producing dōjin magazines in the sample. Circles composed of two members are the most popular (46%). However, one-member circles were the second most popular type (23%). Most of them started their activities because they were invited by someone (67%). The subject of the dōjin book was, in most of the cases, a parody or secondary creation (81%). It is also noteworthy that most of the works were based on video games (60%) rather than on comic books (46%) or animation (53%).

Table 3.1.14: Summary of patterns of producing dōjin comics

Variable	Freq.	%
<i>1) Are you currently performing a dōjin activity?</i>		
Yes	18	54.5
No	15	45.5
<i>2) Number of members of the circle</i>		
1 member	7	23.3
2 members	14	46.7
3 members	4	13.3
4 members	2	6.7
5 members	2	6.7
6 to 10 members	1	3.3
<i>3) When you started your dōjin activities:</i>		
Did you start alone?	10	32.3
Did you start because a friend or acquaintance invited you?	21	67.7
<i>4) What kind of dōjin are you producing?^a</i>		
Parody (secondary creation)	27	81.8
Original (primary creation)	7	21.9
Comic book (manga) style	4	12.5
A novel	3	9.4
Other	3	9.4
<i>5) What is the source of the characters and settings?^a</i>		
I only produce original material	5	16.7
Japanese animation	16	53.3
Japanese comic books (manga)	14	46.7
Video games	18	60.0
Novels or 'light novels'	5	16.7
TV dramas (soap operas)	2	6.7
Movies	1	3.3
Other	4	13.3
<i>6) Where do you show your work?^a</i>		
In a dōjin event	23	88.5
On my own internet site or blog	11	42.3
In an internet community or on a site related to dōjin works	2	7.7
Other	1	3.8

Note. All percentages are valid per cents for the total number of respondents for this category (36 persons).

^a Selection of more than one answer permitted.

7) Cosplay activities

The tables in this last section show the details for cosplay practices among those respondents (23 persons) from the sample who engaged in them.

Table 3.1.15: Experience practising cosplay by year

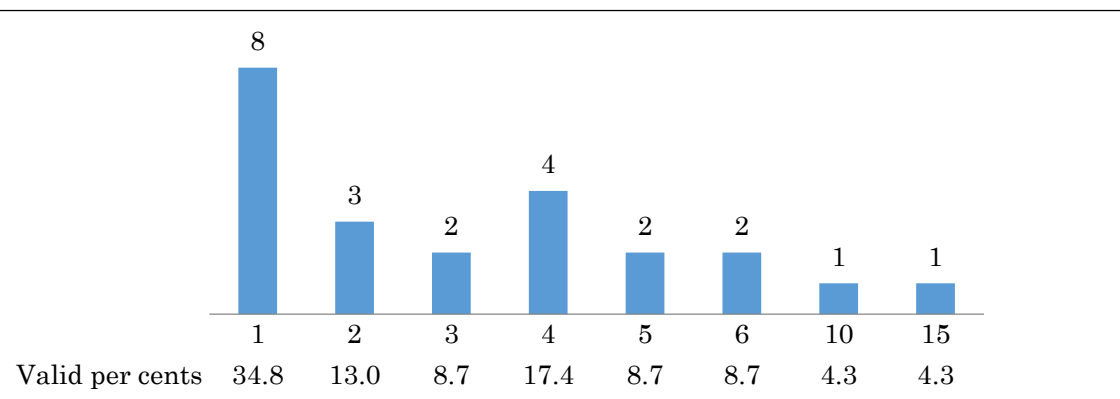


Table 3.1.16 : Summary of patterns of practising cosplay activities

Variable	Freq.	%
<i>1) Are you currently engaged in performing cosplay?</i>		
Yes	11	34.4
No	21	65.6
<i>2) With how many persons do you practise cosplay?</i>		
Alone	4	13.3
With many persons	26	86.7
<i>3) When you started your cosplay activities:</i>		
Did you start alone?	6	18.8
Did you start because a friend or acquaintance invited you?	26	81.3
<i>4) What kind of cosplay are you practising?^a</i>		
Cosplay of anime characters	23	67.6
Cosplay of manga characters	18	54.5
Cosplay of video game characters	15	45.5
Cosplay of uniforms	2	6.1
Original cosplay	4	12.1
Other	3	9.1
<i>5) Do you make your own cosplay pictures public?^a</i>		
No, I don't make them public	20	60.6
I post them on a personal internet site	5	15.2
I post them in cosplay internet communities	8	24.2
I have them published in cosplay-related magazines	0	0
I don't take cosplay pictures	2	6.1
Other	0	0

Note. All percentages are valid per cents for the total number of respondents for this category (36 persons).

^a Selection of more than one answer permitted.

3.2.3 The Kansai Vocaloid Paradise

In this section, I will introduce the first part of the interview to the organiser of some dōjin events in the Kansai region. This part of the research is useful for showing the particular orientation and mood that exist within the organisation of these events and their relation to dōjin culture. As we will see, this perspective, in addition to the details from the questionnaire research, shows the role of events within dōjin culture as networks of small groups of close interaction.

In an interview with Fujimoto and Tanaka, the representatives of the dōjin event Music Communication and Vocaloid Paradise, they explained how events are typically organised. I met them at a 'Vocaloid paradise' event in Kyoto (March 2014); a few months later, I interviewed them while they were organising an event for the 'Kantai Collection' dōjin at the same venue.

F: My name is Fujimoto; I am serving the role as representative of the Vocaloid Paradise in Kansai. Originally, there was the Vocaloid Paradise at Nagoya and other events here in Kansai. Then, the person who was in charge of the Vocaloid event in Kansai became unable to continue, so we began the event at Kyoto as a version of the Nagoya event in the meantime. Then, we borrowed the name 'Vocaloid Paradise' from the event at Nagoya, but as we had all the elements to hold the event here [by ourselves], we decided to continue [using the same name] in collaboration with the fellows from Nagoya. And, well, my home is close to here, and I have the 'know how', so I am [participating] as a representative, and inside is also Tanaka and the person from Nagoya, so the three of us are organising the event.

T: My name is Tanaka, [and I am a] representative of the Music Communication (laugh).

F: So, well, about 'Music Communication', [...]

T: [...] originally there was the event called 'M 3' in Tokyo. Then, there was the idea of doing this event one time in Osaka. I was acting as staff in an event in Kansai at that time. At that time, I was the only one [among that staff] that had the experience of being in the organisation of an event of music and also in a music circle. So, the fellows from the 'M 3' asked me if I can coordinate the event in Osaka. So, I produced in coordination with them the event at Osaka. The Music Communication was the continuation of that.

[...] It has continued for about [...] 6 years, [...] [Speaking about] the reason I got involved with 'Vocaloid Paradise'. In the beginning, there was a

different Vocaloid event, and I was also involved.

F: It was the 'Miku Fest.'

M: So, I was with the event called 'Miku Fest' but the organiser, well, he become unable to continue [...] so we were thinking, *What we should do?* We didn't like the idea of closing a place for Vocaloid so, at that time, we went to talk with Nakajima, the person in Nagoya who had already organised a Vocaloid event, and then it turned out we could continue with [the event] as 'Vocaloid Paradise'. [...]

F: In the beginning, 'Miku Fest' was only held two times, and, the third time, it couldn't continue [because the disposition of the organizer] [...] From the second time, Nakajima from Nagoya did it about two times, I guess, as a Nagoya version. So, at that time, I was not involved in Vocaloid events. I was doing another kind of [dōjin] event, so I was also interested in music and had an interest in Vocaloid, so I decided to collaborate with him. But it is very tiring to go each time to Nagoya [so we decided to do it here]; we wanted to use a different name, but if you use a new name, people stop coming. So we used the name 'Vocaloid Paradise' and said, 'We are also in Kansai!' [...] It is the 'name value.' That name is already recognised in the Vocaloid [scene], so if you change it, people will not come to the event.

T: But, the people inside the events are always the same, mostly.

F: Yes, so in the end, we used the name 'Vo para' [Vocaloid Paradise], and I became the representative [...]

A: So everyone is connected?

F: Yes, it has no particular association with Vocaloid. All the staff are related in the dōjin events. At today's event [the Kantai Collection dōjin only event], the organiser is the group from Tokyo, but, in the end, the members that hold the event are the members that are always helping in Kansai. So, if we need more people, we only have to go ask the guys who are wandering around the event, and say 'Hey! Come and help', and then they become members. We always do it like that.

T: So it is because everyone really likes to do it that we can do all of this [work]. Everyone is friends or...

F: So everyone is [friends], so, for example, if a person says one day, 'I want to do that event,' then 'ok, so now you are the representative.' [...] So it is not really decided who is in the role of the representative. It is only the fellow who says 'I'll go' and then everyone supports him (laugh).

T: Yes. It is only like that.

F: [And] not only in Vocaloid events but in any kind of event. We also do the events of the ‘Tohou Project’ or ‘Pretty Cure’ (laugh) or whatever. We are doing any kind of event. If it is near Osaka and we have time, we are there helping.

As Fujimoto and Tanaka explained, the structure of most of the dōjin events is shaped by a network of friends that is shaped and renewed by those who have the time to collaborate and who are interested in doing so. It is interesting to note that, notwithstanding each collaborator having a particular area of interest, the staff members hold, in general, a different orientation than the circles. The evident distinction is that circles or activities, in general, are oriented towards the production of a work, while the staff are oriented towards the production of the space for interaction. As we will see in Chapter Six, this means that sometimes, event organisers and circles do not match in orientation. From this perspective, it is easier to regard the events as essentially oriented towards interaction and the participation in the place they provide.

Some months after the interview, I had the opportunity to participate as part of the staff of ‘Vocalo Paradise Kansai’ as a photographer. While there, I had the opportunity to observe the organisational process of the event and to talk to various staff members. When drawing from my observations inside the organisation of the event, and the content from the interview with the organiser’s staff quoted above, we can regard the events as relatively closed networks of small groups focused on interaction. As shown in the results of the questionnaire research, events also appear not as communities but rather as networks of pre-established social relationships. That is, participants are not inclined to form ties inside the place; rather, they bring them from the outside.

I regard them as ‘relatively closed’ because, whenever they allow the participation of different persons in the organisational structure, the subjects involved usually pass through several steps, like being attendants to the events, circles and gradually becoming involved in the network. The mood of friendliness as well as the ‘horizontal’ feeling of participation within the organisation team is built upon similar experiences and close interaction. However, while the interaction is between subjects, they represent in any case a role or a genre of activity, as dōjin, music or Vocaloid. Not having any of these backgrounds makes interaction difficult and makes impossible the assigning of a role for the staff. On the contrary, having that background defines almost automatically the place and role of the actor within the structure of the event.

3.2.4 Dōjin productivity: Institutions of community-oriented markets

Drawing from the observations of the dōjin activities, the results of the questionnaire research and the previous research, namely the fan studies theories focused on activities and participation, the general shape of the institutions that encompass the dōjin activities can be summarised as follows.

Fans, communities and small groups of 'text-focused' interaction

Here, I return to using the word 'fan' due to the focus it implies towards an object, as I briefly stated in Chapter One. A fan has a particular object of consumption, is enthusiastic towards that object and the bond that he/she regards between the object and he/she is emotional rather than rational. Therefore, a fan may be described as placing emphasis on the emotional relationship built between the consumer and the text. The theoretical challenge, as the interview with Ms A shows, is that the 'tie up' of fans may assume a similar orientation towards a similar object, while, in fact, each orientation may be different and subjective, and the object will vary. Therefore, the word 'dōjin', which is focused on the activities rather on the action, is more akin to the world in which many actors take part. Keeping this in mind, here I will highlight the use of the word 'fan' as a descriptive way to refer to the text-focused orientation each participant has in the field of interaction of, for example, a dōjin event.

A group of fans is collectively composed of fans. However, many fans together shape an entirely different phenomenon than one fan alone. If a fan can be described as someone emotionally engaged in the consumption of a cultural text or texts, an aggregation of many fans brings into play a multiplicity of people, texts and ways of consumption that, despite their heterogeneity, are imagined as a coherent group. Then, the setting of boundaries and the identification of elements that help us to define the extension and the borders of this group become a central issue. Here, we may regard a 'community of fans' when the collectivity identifies a common object of engagement. That is when the emotive tie is regarded as shared or oriented towards the same object. Therefore, while the study of small groups of interaction may be restricted to the activities in which subjects are engrossed, the study of fan communities poses the question of how consumption, as a matter of meaning, can play a decisive role in the construction of collective subjects. Here, meanings are discursive factors underpinned by the everyday practice of appropriation of texts through the institutions built by fans.

Departing from this perspective, we can define ‘fan groups’ as collectivities that build institutions through their practices of appropriation of several sets of texts, where their practices and institutions are elements subordinated to the emotive consumption of those texts. These institutions are the building blocks for the dōjin culture in Japan. When the texts that are the focus of orienting action are shared and regarded as meaningful, the group can be understood as a ‘community.’

In my research, I regard Japanese dōjin culture as the integration of three empirical elements: consumption, practices and institutions. These three elements are the foundation of the dōjin world, as well as the basis for shaping a fan community. The concrete social groups of fans that we observe in fan gatherings like amateur manga markets, circles’ production of dōjin works or performative activities like cosplay photo sessions, alongside traces of each of the activities carried out in the field, like amateur manga and fanfiction, cosplay photos and the anime forums flooding the internet, can be analysed with these three elements. From the base of these elements, we can also abstract the category of community and attempt an analysis of symbolic elements, including the collective construction of meaning in fan groups. In the following section, I will introduce the main features of these three elements.

Consumption:

Consumption in fandom has an emotive or affective nature. There is a deeply subjective attachment in fans towards certain cultural goods in the market. This means that there a careful selection of particular cultural goods and more of an emphasis on subjective values rather than on a ‘rational choice’ in the market of cultural goods. As the goods consumed by fans are commodities which consumption depends on for the interpretation of meanings, they are also considered cultural texts. Their textual characteristics—i.e. the specific elements that compose the texts, such as the plot of a TV anime feature, the characters’ qualities and the music and/or colours used in it—are essential to their value. Textual characteristics may be regarded as aesthetic-rhetoric or narrative. In general, consumption by fans entails a focus on the use-value that is based on a subjective orientation to the object rather than a focus on the exchange-value. Jenkins and Hills focus on this characteristic when they regard fan consumption as opposed to a rational logic of ‘rational choice’ in the market (Hills, 2002; Jenkins, 1992a, 1992b). As Grossberg explains, ‘Affect plays a crucial role in organizing social life because affect is constantly constructing, not only the possibility of difference, but the ways specific difference comes to matter’ (Grossberg, 1992: 58).

This first distinction is important if we take into account cultural studies' emphasis on the role of culture inherited from a Marxist tradition. As Adorno states, 'If the commodity in general combines [the] exchange value and use value, then the pure use value [in a capitalist society] must be replaced by [a] pure exchange value, which precisely in its capacity [acts] as [an] exchange value, deceptively tak[ing] over the function of [the] use value' (Adorno 1944/2002: 39). Texts are commodities produced by industries in order to achieve economic profit; therefore, for the cultural studies, consumption refers to the subordination of the use value to the exchange value. However, for researchers like Hills or Jenkins, the 'irrational' (childish) consumption by fans (play) can restore the use value of the text. For Jenkins, texts are invested with a particular value. As such, through fans' readings, 'the text becomes something more than what it was before, not something less' (Jenkins 1992a: 52). For Hills, when fans play with a text, it is 'simultaneously a matter of communal and cultural "exchange value" and a matter of private or cultic "use value"' (Hills 2002: 170). Sandvoss also focuses on the subjective approach of fans towards the text, though from a different perspective. As we shall see below, Sandvoss' perspective focuses on narcissism and 'self-reflection'. Therefore, in his view, 'by making their object of fandom into extensions of themselves, fans give their consumption and inherently private and personal nature that remove their object of consumption from the logic of exchange' (Sandvoss, 2005a: 116). For Sandvoss, the subjective attachment towards a text that stems from fans' consumption breaks down the distance between the 'subject' and 'object'.

This characteristic also leads us to focus on two important points. One is the set of boundaries that distinguishes specific texts within the supply of cultural texts in the market. As this distinction is subjective, when we regard fandom as a collective, doing so implies an inter-subjective distinction of cultural goods. The second point is concerned with the nature of texts as commodities, as well as the pleasure and creativity associated with consumption.

The issue about the aesthetic experience regarded as consumption and the commodification of cultural texts like art, leads to an emphasis on the loss of its creative and even revolutionary nature, in, for example, what Eco sees as the 'kitsch' or rhetorical use of the messages in popular and commercial culture (Eco, 1968/2005, 1964/2011). However, an emphasis on the subjective use value in fan consumption, as has been argued, can restore this creative nature that links the textual characteristics of the commodity with the social experience of the consumer (i.e. fan). Nonetheless, we must still regard the experience as consumption since it works with cultural texts produced as goods by cultural industries within a capitalist economy.

For this reason, Fiske regards the pleasure in the consumption of popular culture in two different ways. Both, to some extent, rely on creativity, where consumers are able to create their meanings and interpretations from a text. As previously noted, Fiske focuses on productivity (semiotic, enunciative and textual), thus departing from the semiotic stance of reading as the production of meaning. However, Fiske also distinguishes between 'evasive pleasures' and 'productive pleasures'. Evasion means for Fiske evasion from ideology through the appropriation of the 'surface of the text' that is, the aesthetic side of the text. As he puts it, '[e]vasive pleasure produce the energy and empowerment that underline the production of meaning [...] of self and one's social relations' (Fiske 1989/2010: 44). 'Evasive pleasures' provide the base and energy for 'productive pleasures.' From this premise of the characteristic of consumption in fans, we may approach to the next characteristic, that is; practices as shaped by the appropriation of the text.

Practices:

Practices are the activities that fans participate in, where consumption is the most evident of them. However, when commodities are cultural texts and, in many cases, a set of multiple texts, consumption involves an act of interpretation, where meaning is actively produced. This production of meaning can range from the sole act of interpretation to the creation of new meanings and the expression of them in many ways. These ways can be behavioural (e.g. use the hairstyle of your favourite rock star, speak as your favourite character), verbal (e.g. talk about the story of your favourite movie) or textual (e.g. produce new texts like writing your opinions, write an amateur manga, paint or produce new images of the characters like cosplay pictures).

These are 'appropriative activities' since, through them, fans appropriate the meanings of the texts and make them 'their own meanings'. Through interpretation, fans assimilate the textual elements into their personal social experience. The meanings they create rely on this experience and also become raw materials used in the interpretation of everyday life experiences.

However, in every case, these activities are creative activities subordinated to emotive consumption, which is the reason we can regard them as 'secondary activities', and their textual productions as 'secondary texts'. This is a condition that generates tensions and contradictions within the activities in fandom. For while the creativity deployed by fans and the appropriation of the meanings of a text can be a way of expressing the passion and the attachment towards the object of consumption, it also

establishes a distance from it, criticises it and can even destroy its original meaning. This is a natural condition of creativity and interpretation, which becomes more evident when the social experiences of the consumer do not fit with the textual elements of the object of consumption or constantly challenges it.

But, as Jenkins notes, fans 'criticize precisely because they love' the texts, and they care deeply about them. As many have observed, fan culture is not a revolutionary culture, and that is the reason fan activities must be careful not to create too much distance from their object, so that they do not lose it entirely. It is important to maintain a contradictory balance between creativity and subordination.

Finally, the appropriative activities of fans lead to the creation of new texts and new meanings, which circulates among other fans. Through social interaction, fans build places where new meanings can be exchanged new values can be negotiated and also where the meanings can be experienced in a collective way.

Here, we may distinguish two different meanings of 'appropriation'. As in Fiske's 'evasive pleasures' and 'productive pleasures', appropriation is concerned with meaning as well with actions. The mutual relationship between 'closeness' towards the text and 'distance' from the text may be regarded as appropriation and as 'disappropriation of the self', or a step of 'closeness' towards the text. The other meaning of appropriation may be regarded as 'possession' of the text as a resource, which entails creating 'distance' from the text to allow new texts to be created. The constant practice of these activities shapes the structure of the fan communities. Examples include the festivals-similar-to-markets or markets-similar-to-festivals, like the amateur manga events. These 'bones' that support the body of fan communities are the fan institutions.

Institutions:

Fans' institutions are shaped by the activities in practice, and their function is to regulate these activities and the meanings in circulation. Fan practices are integrated into each other and interrelate many different fans and fan groups. Many kinds of texts and many kinds of secondary texts, interpretations and possible meanings flood the activities of fans. Since many of these activities are carried out in a group, or the resultant texts circulate among fan audiences, some regulation, setting of rules or ways of proceeding become necessary. These rules help to maintain unity and to produce and reproduce these activities in the group, among different persons and over time.

The production of amateur manga, the practice of cosplay and the organisation of fan events are good examples of how these activities rely on social structures that organise

the activities and guarantee their reproduction. Ignoring or transgressing these rules could be offensive or harmful to the collectivity in general.

Fan institutions, however, are easy to change and develop, start and end. In fact, the construction of new institutions and the mutation and transformation of these institutions is one of the characteristics of fan groups. The rapid formation of Japanese animation fandom in many places in the world following the consumption of such cultural texts as well as the fast development of their institutions and the shaping of new activities and means of expression are a signal of this.

Therefore, if the emotive consumption of a set of texts, the realisation of 'secondary activities' in relation to this consumption and the construction of institutions through these activities are the central characteristics of fan communities, the emergence of new means of consumption, new texts and new relations between the texts and the audiences, the developing of new kind of activities and new places of social interaction and the birth of new institutions that regulates these activities are the elements we must focus on in order to analyse different practices within the *dōjin* culture. This is the case of the cosplay practices, which will be further discussed in the next section.

3.3 Cosplay Practices

In this section, I will approach cosplay practices as practices of textual appropriation within the institutions I already described in the previous section. However, cosplay activities have a performative nature that shapes different practices and institutions. As we will see in this section, those practices and institutions are in close connection to the general field in which *dōjin* cultures unfold and are part of its 'asobi-ba': the place of play. The following section extends beyond a focus on Japan. In addition to my research on Japanese cosplay practices, I also address Taiwanese practitioners and their particular features. Therefore, the following explanations include the context of Taiwan and Taiwanese cosplay.

'Cosplay,' which is an abbreviation for 'costume play,' is an English word coined in Japan. As Emoto (2009) explains, in most cases, this word refers to an activity of play wherein someone dresses in the same costume of a character that is typically from manga, animation or a video game. The people that practice this game are called, 'cosplayers' (Kosupureiyā) or the Japanese abbreviation 'Reiyā' (ヒロヤス, 2008; 榎本, 2009).

In most cases, cosplay can be considered as a secondary creation, like *dōjin-shi*, where fictional characters are drawn from an original fictional work, namely manga, games or animation. However, there are also some cases in which the word 'cosplay' is used to refer to the activity of wearing uniforms of some highly stereotyped professions or roles, such maids, nurses, school girls or the military. Moreover, specific fashion trends like 'Gothic Lolita', or impersonations of music idols, celebrities, and rock stars, (e.g. for 'Band-Cos' (Bando-kosu), see Koizumi and Suzuki (小泉 & 鈴木, 2009)), alongside cross-dressing (Josō and dansō) exemplified by the so-called 'crossplay', among others, make cosplay an area defined by different standards based on different standpoints.

In the context of the social root category of *otaku*, I will narrow my focus mainly to the most common form of cosplay: cosplay based on fictional characters from Japanese manga, anime and games culture. As I will address later, the results of the interviews and questionnaire research I conducted, contributed to differentiating cosplay from fashion, the use of clothes in everyday life or custom parties. Therefore, I analyse cosplay culture as a part of the *dōjin* institutions, where cosplay practices are a particular performative expression of fan appropriative activities. As Sharon Kinsella has emphasised, there is a parallelism between amateur manga culture (*dōjin-shi*), and cosplay, which she regards as 'a form of live parody' (Kinsella 1998: 301).

In Japan, the first cosplay, as a part of anime fan culture, was believed to appear in the amateur manga festivals (dōjin-events) among amateur manga sellers. This occurred around the 1970s when the anime visual culture had become popular and was shaping a new trend within this subculture that differed from the literary-based activities of the former science fiction fan groups (榎本, 2009; 吉本, 2009).

The popularity of cosplay primarily derived from the late 1990s, alongside the increased use of personal computers, the video games culture, the internet, and new trends in the manga, animation and games-related cultural industries. Notably, there was an increased use of the characters' charisma within the media-mix system. Cosplay has also become closely related to recent trends associated with the otaku stereotype since the second half of the first decade of the new millennium. Examples of such trends include the increasing visibility of Akihabara as a focal point in the otaku culture, the spread of 'maid-kissa' and the popularity of visual codes like the so-called 'Moe'.

In what follows, before introducing my research, I will briefly describe some principal features of the practice of cosplay. At first glance, cosplay may be characterised as an activity mainly practised by women. For example, in the Comic Market research conducted by Sugiyama (杉山, 2008), 27.6% of the total respondents had experience performing cosplay. From the total of female respondents, 40.1% had experience of practising cosplay, while only 15.1% had the experience from the total of the male respondents (杉山, 2008:30). However, with a wider focus on cosplay that presents it as an appropriative institution, it is easy to distinguish many other actors at play. We can enumerate some of them as follows: 1) the cosplayer (Reiyā or Coser), 2) the photographers, 3) the helpers, 4) the surrounding institutions and businesses and 5) the surrounding fan community in the abstract sense and concrete fan groups.

The cosplayer or 'layer' is the central figure. Cosplay performers are mainly female. The photographers are also usually called 'kameko', which is the short for 'kamera kozō', or the 'guy with the camera' (成松, むのまる, & 和智永, 2009). However, as some cosplayers stated in an interview, this is a pejorative word, and it has to be used carefully depending on the situation. If we consider cosplay as a kind of performance, in the cases of cosplay practised at massive events like the Comic Market or street festivals, the photographers are usually the primary audience of the cosplayers. They are the ones (mainly males) who crowd in front of the cosplayers (mainly females) while they are modelling, with cameras of any kind, most of them visibly expensive. These observers are looking for the best shot. In many cases, they participate in some kind of media like websites where they post the pictures and help to circulate cosplay images. Furthermore, many of them build a kind of 'follower' relationship with some cosplayers

and track their activities, as with the case of amateur idols. They use to have their own business cards, as well as the cosplayers', and usually exchange them, in turn shaping networks focused on cosplay activities.

However, the relationship between photographers and cosplayers can be problematic as some photographers will take obscene pictures or pictures, of which the cosplayer does not approve, and then share them on the internet. There are also cases in which photographers intrude into the privacy and personal life of the cosplayer. That is one of the reasons why there are some basic manners of good behaviour in cosplay culture, such as not taking a picture without the approval of the cosplayer. Ranging from professionals to amateurs or simply casual photographers, 'the guys with the camera' play an important role as an audience and in supplying the cosplay networks with cosplay pictures. These pictures, whether taken by a photographer or by the cosplayer herself, may be regarded as the secondary text that is exchanged in fan networks, as in the case of other kind amateur texts produced in *dōjin* activities.

The 'helpers', as I am calling them here, are some friends or relatives of the cosplayer who assist in carrying out the activity. In many cases, they are also cosplayers who are not performing at that moment. They help the cosplayer to dress in the costume, to take care of the luggage, inform to the *reiyā* if something is wrong with the makeup or the costume and to aid in preventing possible bad behaviour among photographers and other people. In the case closed events focused only on cosplay, the photographers used to play this role. In Taiwan, friends that help in this way are also called 'managers' [Mǎ nèi]. The so-called 'nuiko' in Japan (needle worker), a friend or close acquaintance specialised solely in making the costume, as well as those who help with the props or other technical requirements of cosplay, can also be considered part of this category.

In regard to the 'surrounding institution and business', we can divide this category into three subcategories: 1) venues to practise cosplay in public or in closed cosplayer gatherings, 2) cosplay-related media and 3) other related business like cosplay merchandise and online sales of costumes. Within the first category, we can find any festival or gathering where cosplay is part of the official schedule or any place where cosplay can be practised in public or among closed gatherings of cosplayers. These places and events can be associated with companies or semi-professional fan groups. They schedule and hold fan events and cosplay specialised events, photo sessions and photo studios. They also oversee cosplay cafes or cosplay bars and manga and anime stores.

In Japan, amateur manga events like 'Comic Market' in Tokyo and the 'World Cosplay Summit' in Nagoya, alongside street parades held in Akihabara or Nipponbashi

as well as cosplay-focused events like 'CosJoy' and other smaller events and festivals, are representatives. In Taiwan, the events 'Fancy Frontier' and 'Comic World Taiwan' are among the most important. There are also other many small events organised by fan clubs based in universities.

Cosplay-related media includes magazines, photo albums and social networking services (SNS) where cosplayers' pictures can be observed. Some of these SNS have a specific orientation towards cosplay, like 'Cosplayers Archive', 'Cure', 'Layer Cloud' and 'World Cosplay', among the most popular, alongside those oriented to general users like Facebook, Twitter and Plurk in Taiwan.

Finally, the fan abstract community and the concrete fan groups are also crucial components. They shape the other possibly concerned and indirect but important participants of cosplay culture. They consume the same or similar cultural texts and share most of the institutions, places and media with cosplay activities. As we have seen, some of them are enthusiastic about cosplay and have many friends engaged in cosplay activities. Therefore, they can be considered as part of the same group of interaction. However, not everyone is as enthusiastic about cosplay; in fact, many fans dislike it and do not regard it as a fan activity. Within the otaku stereotype, some refer to cosplay as a 'third dimension' representation of the character, which 'ruins' the 'two-dimensional beauty' of the animation character. This rejection must be regarded in relation not only to the 'three-dimensional' nature of cosplay but also to the fact that a 'real person' is enacting the character. The regarding of animation as three-dimensional resin models or 'figures' as '2.5 dimension' is a signal of this.

Thus, and also because of the different requirements and uses of the spaces of each fan activity, such as *dōjin* magazines and cosplay, the confinement of cosplay to some specific areas of the events, the prohibition of cosplay in some events and the proliferation of only cosplay-focused events, particularly in Japan, have become necessary. These aspects are also causing a divide among the fan groups and the subdivision and specialisation of the cosplay fan community. However, in any case, cosplay is an activity that integrates a variety of actors and elements from the fan culture, and it cannot be understood if we lost sight of that.

3.3.1 Japanese popular culture in Taiwan

Before introducing the theoretical question that drove the research on cosplay I am introducing in this chapter, I shall focus briefly on the context of the reception of Japanese popular culture in Taiwan. As mentioned above, the present research includes

data from Taiwan and Japan. In Chapter Two, I addressed the general context beyond the reception of Japanese animation and cultural goods in East Asia. The following brief contextualisation shall provide a framework to understand the specific features of this culture in Taiwan, and to understand the Taiwanese example as part of the transnational nature of the core institutions of textual appropriation that I am addressing in this chapter.

The popularity of Japanese cultural industries in Taiwan has been regarded as a result of the particular history of Taiwan, not just because of the colony experience but also because of the status of Japan in East Asia as a major modernising force. As Ming-Tsung Lee (2004) highlights, the cultural influence of the Japanese modernity, which extends from the colony period through the years of the martial law under the KMT rule and after the democratisation, has exerted an undeniable influence in the attractiveness of Japanese cultural products in Taiwan. Iwabuchi (2005) and Lee (2004) have argued in the same vein about the transformation of Occidental modernity into a more concrete and close reality by Japanese hands, and, in particular, by Japanese popular culture, such as music and TV dramas. Moreover, when Lee depicts the scene of consumption of Japanese cultural products in Taiwan at the beginning of the new century, he describes Japanese pop culture as a ‘mega-textual system’ in that it resembles many characteristics of the diffused audiences. For Lee, consumption is a dynamic process that encompasses the consumption of many different popular texts like music, dramas, fashion or comics, as well as secondary texts (those created by the consumers themselves). In this scene, every cultural product is related to each other. In addition, consumption appears in Taiwan as a practice of fantasy in a longing for modernity and identity, expressed in the shaping of an ‘own cultural and self-identity’ for Taiwanese youth (See, in particular, Lee 2004: 137-148).

As in the case of China and South Korea, the fear of Japanese cultural imperialism resulted in the regulation of importations of Japanese cultural industries in the decades following the Second World War. In the case of Taiwan, the cultural embargo began after the breaking of formal relations between the Japan and Taiwan (Republic of China) governments in 1972, but an ambiguous situation prevailed. On the one hand, the geopolitical situation of Taiwan made it important for both governments to collaborate, and the economic ties between Japan and Taiwan continued growing. Also, the old generation of people that had experienced the Japanese colonial rule continued yearning to consume Japanese products. This resulted in an underground proliferation of Japanese cultural products where manga and animation were also included. (Davison, 2003; Lee, 2004; 西川 & 蕭, 2010). The clandestine consumption proliferated, and, as

Wang (2010) points out, 'Not only Japanese animation were generally watched since the 1970s, Japanese manga were also found everywhere in bookstores, grocery stores, and rental stores. Japanese manga shared more than 90% of the comic book market in Taiwan, and the others such American, Hong Kong or Taiwan's comic books shared less than 10% of the market' (P.-T. Wang, 2010: 66). Video cassette recorders become popular in the late 1970s, and in the 1980s, the piracy of Japanese audio-visual products was a profitable business. Underground cable television also prospered with its transmission of Japanese content; by 1985, the number of cable TV viewers reached 40% of the population in Taipei (Lee, 2004:82).

The martial law ended in 1987 and was followed by a period of fast democratisation. By the time cable television was legalised in 1993 and the restriction of imported Japanese audio and video products was removed in 1994, consumption of Japanese popular culture was already generalised. But it is noteworthy that, as Lee points out, this consumption and the meanings of Japan behind it were generationally differentiated between old 'Japanophiles' and young 'Harizu' (Lee, 2004).

Fan culture in Taiwan

In 1995, in a more relaxed political environment and only one year after the restriction of Japanese audio and visual products was removed, the first fan event in Taiwan was held. This event took place in Gaoxiong City, south of Taiwan, and was centred on the cosplay of games characters. From this year to the end of the decade, the popularity of cosplay increased alongside other fan activities like amateur manga production. Thus, since the beginning of ACG fan activities in Taiwan, cosplay has been present and for many is the soul of fan events (J.-S. Chen, 2007; M. Chen, 2012; K. Wang, 2010; 化, 2012).

Additionally, the National Taiwan University's Bulletin Board System (BBS) was launched in 1995 and quickly became popular among fans. In the years that followed, many universities launched their own BBS, thus helping the formation of new fan communities of many trendy cultural products in which ACG and cosplay are still have an important role (M. Chen, 2012; P.-T. Wang, 2010).

In 1996, the cartoon writer Cheng Gui-Xi, also known as 'Hari Kyoko', coined the term 'hari' in her book *Good Morning Japan* (1996) 'to describe the sentiment and behaviour of young Japanophiles in Taiwan' (Lee, 2004: 247). According to Lee, Gui-Xi expresses in this neologism, composed from Taiwanese dialect (Mingnanese) and Mandarin, the feelings of many young Taiwanese engrossed in absorbing every detail of

a Japanese way or life through the consumption of popular culture. As she commented, 'If you feel poorly acclimatized in Taiwan, and are always interested in and pay attention to everything about Japan, while feeling like a Japanese expatriate living in Taiwan, then you have undoubtedly got the hari addiction' (Hari Kyoko, 1998, in Lee, 2004: 247).

As Lee states, these young Taiwanese have 'a strong cultural identification with Japan or even an intense desire to 'become Japanese'' (Lee, 2004: 248). For them, consumption is also a pursuit of self-identity. This term was rapidly adopted by the media and as Lee (2004) and Iwabuchi (2005) point out, it turned symbolic within the framework of increasing criticism towards what was perceived for some as a new Japanese colonialism regarding the field of popular culture.

Comic World, first amateur manga convention, was introduced to Taiwan in 1997 by a Japanese company of manga drawing tools and a Taiwanese comic chain store. This event, which in 2002 changed its name to Comic World Taiwan and its venue to the newly constructed NTU Sport Center, alongside Fancy Frontier, which was first held in 2003 and organised by a Taiwanese monthly comic magazine and amateur manga writers, became the places for the largest cosplay gatherings in Taiwan. Following its growing popularity, cosplay magazines also began to be published, like DREAM (2002) and COSmore (2007), formerly known as COSmania (2006) (M. Chen, 2012).

Thanks to the lively activity of ACG fans, the stabilisation of the principal amateur manga events and many smaller ones held at fixed times from the north to the south of Taiwan, as well as to the disseminator effect of mass media and internet BBS networks, cosplay has become a popular activity among Taiwanese youth during the twenty-first century. However, this expansion of cosplay culture has attracted criticism as well as the necessity for self-definition within the cosplay communities.

3.3.2 Self as belonging: Performative consumption, narcissism and aesthetics

The emphasis that cosplay assigns to the body and visual elements is noteworthy. This characteristic is of particular interest in the case of narratives and interpretation, which have played a vital role in the definition of fan communities. As we have seen in this chapter, these communities, mainly approached from activities like amateur comic or magazine production, have been regarded as 'interpretive communities', a concept borrowed from Stanley Fish in the early works of Henry Jenkins (1992a). Likewise, cosplay has been regarded as an activity in which fictional narratives are used as raw materials in the shaping of the self (a search for individual identity) and in the shaping

of the self as a fan (group identity). From this perspective, consumption, interpretation and the negotiation of interpreted meanings of shared texts are the foundation of fan interaction and fan institutions.

However, the playful nature of cosplay contrasts with this highly modern and discursive construction of the self and community. Here, the visual and the emotive nature seems to take over a more ‘distant’ focus on narratives, and the aesthetic experience of the performance seems to blur any systematic search for identity. The excitement at the gathering place, in front of the gaze of peers or strangers or behind the camera, goes beyond interpreting and sharing meanings. The pleasure at this moment is—more than in resistance and productivity, as Fiske could argue—in falling deep into the game, no matter what it might mean and at what cost¹⁴. The deeper we fall, the more intense the experience becomes; thereby, the more subjective and individual it is.

As a means to address to the complex nature of cosplay, I view cosplay as the integration of activities into practices, and practices into institutions, characterised by the appropriation of mainly fictional characters through the body. In cosplay, the evident central role of the body has drawn special attention to the interplay between these activities and the search for identity. For example, in fashion, the external appearance is regarded as the link between the self and society¹⁵. However, it is important to distinguish between fashion and cosplay by emphasising the role of emotive consumption and subordinated creativity, as I have regarded in dōjin cultures. Also, as we will see below, the difference between cosplay and fashion signals the existence of a more fundamental orientation in cosplay through fan institutions, as well as in the case of the meaning of ‘appropriation’ of the characters.

Here I will argue that cosplay can be described as *the appropriation of ‘other’ (the character) through the ‘disappropriation’ of the self*. Based on my research results, a framework incorporating Ricoeur’s ‘narrative self’ (Ricoeur, 1973, 1981, 1991) and Mauss’ focus on the body and its category of persona (Mauss, 1971/1979), I regard the type of self at play in cosplay as ‘a third-person’. With this, I mean a shift from a focus on the ‘identity’ of the self to a focus on the ‘belonging’ of the self when regarding appropriative activities.

In order to support this thesis, I will approach cosplay from three aspects. With these aspects, I address some of the theoretical challenges that cosplay poses for former

¹⁴With these words, I am paraphrasing the work of Chen, Mia Ming-Hisu (2010) and the experiences she narrates in her work ‘Falling into the Devil’s Game’ (Chen 2012).

¹⁵ See for example the introduction to the book *The cosplay society: subculture and body culture* (成美, 2009).

approaches to appropriative activities when we regard them as part of larger institutions: 1) the consumption, which, here, is the object of cosplay; 2) the practice of appropriation and the particularity of appropriation by means of the body; 3) the larger social institutions within cosplay activities are carried out, as fan markets and their relation to values, as well as the audiences of fans as closed groups of interaction, open networks of relations and imagined collectivities. These three elements are based on my former categorisation of dōjin activities as shaping institutions of textual appropriation and are the basis that supported the starting point for the cosplay questionnaire and the interview research.

In reference to consumption and the object of cosplay, there is a noteworthy change in the textual characteristics of the animation, manga and video games consumed, which can be referred to as an increasing emphasis on the charisma of the characters rather than narrative aspects. This transformation was addressed in Chapter Two.

Manga and animation, and, in many cases video games, are narrative forms of expression. This implies there is a story to tell, and there is a way to tell it; there is therefore a narrative structure expressed by means of certain discourse. However, as Yoshimoto has shown, manga and animation represent a shift from a fan culture based on literary texts to a culture based on visual texts (吉本, 2009). The discourse in manga, as in all comic books, integrates visual (iconic) and literary elements (Gubern, 1972), and animation as films relies mainly on a visual narrative (Stam, 1992/2005). These characteristics introduce an important element that it is not present in novels and literary works: the possibility of reading the aesthetic elements of the work separately from the narrative ones. As Barthes points out, narratives in literary forms alternate narrative elements and descriptive elements using the differential function of verbs and adjectives in language (Barthes & Duisit, 1966/1975). However, visual narratives incorporate the descriptive function and the narrative function. In other words, we can say that animation and manga can be read relying only on iconic elements and without paying attention to narrative elements. The famous thesis of Azuma (東, 2001) on the role of moe elements in otaku culture echoes this characteristic. However, it is noteworthy that the opposite can also be said. That is, visual elements incorporate narrative elements, although in a different way.

Azuma and other authors like Kinsella (1998, 2000) have pointed out the 'post-modern' nature of fan cultures seems to work without 'big narratives' or 'meta-narratives' (see Chapter Five for a brief introduction of Azuma's thesis). The focus that cosplay directs towards characters seems to reflect this feature. However, when cosplay is approached, there is a tendency to attempt to explain how narratives

(fictional narratives) come to shape the body and identity. Theories of appropriation of media messages as in Thompson (1995) and fans' appropriation in Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) and Hills (2002) are underpinned by the hermeneutic idea of narratives as raw materials in the shaping of the self. However, in the case of cosplay, narratives seems to play a secondary role in cosplay in contemporary fan culture, as characters are often built on the basis of rhetorical elements and are enjoyed because of their visual elements. The birth and popularity of characters without a clear narrative background like the popular character Hatsune Miku (see Chapter Fourth) seems to support this thesis.

This characteristic of the character Hatsune Miku and similar characters depict very clearly what Itō Go (伊藤剛, 2005) called 'kyara' as a concept opposed to that of character. 'Kyara', in Japanese, is the abbreviated form of the word 'character' and the word was used with no particular meaning before Itō's analysis on the characteristics of manga expression, its aesthetics and use of the story. In his book *Tezuka is death: Postmodernist and Modernist Approaches to Japanese Manga* (2005), Itō focuses on 'the reality of the character' and explains that the feeling of the reality of the character is a modernist development of this fictional character as a human entity, equal to 'us'. As he explains, a character can be a robot, a ghost, an alien or any fictional entity but is depicted to us as having a particular existence, motivations, feelings and fears, along with other multidimensional elements that make us feel as if it has its own life, just like us. Therefore, the character is regarded as a kind of human, and it is real to us so that we can sympathise with it. This kind of 'reality' needs a narrative background in which the reality of the character is narratively built and has been a particular trend in modern manga, as it is also in the case of modern literature. From this perspective, it can be determined that what has been called a 'character driven' development of a fictional world in narratives stems from this kind of reality.

However, following Itō's argument, before and after this trend in manga history, there is also an emphasis on the kyara, with which reality does not depend on the narrative development of a multidimensional character. In fact, as Itō explains, this kyara is, in most cases, 'an icon drawn on the base of relatively simple lines that gives us a feeling of existence through a "personality" or a "personality-alike" which can be designed by a particular name' (伊藤剛, 2005: 95).

In a similar way, Saitō Tamaki has approached the character theory and its use in concrete context from the perspective of psychoanalysis (斎藤, 2011). Saitō focuses on the way the word kyara is used in certain contexts, such as the interaction among classmates at school. He describes the function of the word kyara as a labelling of the

personality that is 'beyond'. As he notes, when the subjects themselves are asked about their own kyara, they usually answer that 'they are not quite sure' (2011: 32). In concordance, these labels are usually imposed by the environment of communication among peers and are something that the subject 'performs' or 'acts' without being 'the real me' but are still connected in some way. In this sense, the kyara can be described for Saitō as a 'false' or 'pseudo' personality in relation to the condensation of a certain 'communication mode' (2011:33).

Saitō, as with Itō's theory, regards a 'lack of peculiarity' [koyū-sei] in the kyara. Therefore, for him, 'its force' is supported by the continuous communication. Moreover, in a similar way to Giddens' (1991/2013) approach to self-identity, he regards the kyara as a source of stability and continuity of the self in a context where the individual has lost 'faith' for the consciousness of an 'irreplaceable self in an irreplaceable world' (2011: 40). For Saitō, the kyara can be described as a 'mutual confirmation that is enabled by a self-reflexive communication'. However, for Saitō, the reflexive identity supported by the kyara is only maintained by communication. Communication is, for him, 'almost the only way' to maintain the identity and continuity achieved by the kyara, which is highly contingent and anonymous. Therefore, in his words, the kyara is as fragile as a 'refuge' or a 'passing place'.

Moreover, when Saitō approaches the theories regarding fictional characters in media like manga, he focuses on the difference between character and kyara in a similar way to Itō. In Saitō's opinion, the character has content, is not transparent or contingent, and has, although fictional, a 'life'. This makes it possible for us 'feel sympathy' for the character as we regard it as similar to us. In other words, we can 'understand it'. In contrast, the lack of all these elements in the kyara makes it possible to introduce our feelings and own emotions in the kyara (斎藤, 2011). Therefore, according to these stances on fictional characters as kyara, and in concordance with Azuma's thesis, we can regard an important missing component of narratives in the fictional construction of characters and their readings in Japanese contemporary popular culture.

From a different background, we can also regard the different and perhaps secondary role that narratives play in cosplay by focusing on the emphasis on the body. If we regard cosplay as practices of appropriation through the body, there are in particular two different postures from the theories of fan cultures that can be approached. One is Hills' focus on personification in fan cultures as 'performative consumption' (Hills, 2002), and the other is Sandvoss' theory of 'narcissism' in fans' readings (Sandvoss, 2005a, 2005b).

Hills (2002) has described fans 'impersonation' and costuming as 'performative consumption' (2002: 166), and views such as including two stages: 'self-absence' and 'self-reflexivity'. The self-absence occurs when fans cannot explain their interests and their activities as fans. This stage represents the irrational affectivity in fans' consumption that we have already identified. The self-reflexivity represents the rationality and intentionality of fans, expressed by the conscious discourse of 'me as a fan' and, therefore, a narrative construction of identity. In general, Hills, based on Ricoeur, suggests that fans have to 'erase' themselves in order to 'let the text be.' This experience is the foundation for the re-appropriation of the self (as well as the text) and the construction of fan identity. Hills' view is similar to that of Ricoeur's, and he poses that 'it is only by passing through moments of self-absence that our sense of self can be re-narrated an expanded' (2002: 167). This idea of the 'loss of the self' in the process of appropriation is relatively common. For example, Fiske presented the idea of 'evasive pleasures' (1989/2010), and a similar idea about fans erasing their 'self' images and re-finding them in cosplay can be found in Narumi (2009).

In contrast, Sandvoss (2005a) proposes a different picture of fans. When appropriation implicates the existing differences between an object to be appropriated and a subject that appropriates it, Sandvoss suggests that those difference can be blurred when the object gets too close to fans' experiences, expectations and desires. He calls this an 'aesthetic distance' (or lack of distance), but it can also be perceived as an emotive closeness. Here, as the moe jargon in otaku culture illustrates, aesthetics elements and affectivity are closely related to each other. The following further conveys Sandvoss' point:

While aesthetic distance enables the reader to engage with the textual Other, its eradication in fan texts signals the collapse of the reading situation as a potential dialogue between the self and the world. Here the circle between the aesthetic condition of fan texts and the conceptualization of fandom as narcissism closes: as all experiences fund by the fan in the fan texts coincide with his or her horizon of expectations, the fan text takes on the role of a mirror, and thus becomes the banal object of a narcissistic perspective. (Sandvoss, 2005a: 145)

The emphasis on the kyara as a sort of hollow space where readers can 'introduce' their emotions describes the situation that Sandvoss points out. Therefore, Sandvoss' analysis of fan texts seems to reflect some of the characteristics that Japanese authors found in the kyara or in the lack of narratives, as well as the emphasis that the 'midnight anime' (see Chapter Two) industry places on the charisma of the characters

rather than on developing complex narratives. Thus, it is important to thoroughly consider his description of fandom as 'narcissistic', where, as he proposes, the 'self-reflexive' fan identity becomes 'self-reflective' (ibid 161) and where appropriation does not mean to make the text 'mine' but to instead make it 'me' (ibid 163).

In other words, we can say that the appropriation of characters through the body without regarding narrative elements in cosplay may not be a 'modern' reflexive construction of the self, or a narrative 'search for identity'. Rather, it appears as a more 'post-modern alike' reflective performance, here, using the word 'reflective' as Sandvoss has, denoting unintended mechanic reflection like in mirrors as opposed to a reflexive intended construction of the self. In this case, narratives seem to play a secondary role, and there seems to not be any identity to find through the mask. Following this hypothesis, for cosplayers, all those masks are not 'mine' (an Other identity to approach); instead, they are already 'me' (an empty symbol that reflects the narcissistic ego).

However, here remains the problem of cosplay as an institution of appropriation and its place within other institutions, like the fan events. As previously noted, fan institutions regulate the meanings of circulation and cosplay as a practice. They also integrate many actors in addition to the cosplayers, generating and circulating new texts and meanings like cosplay pictures. If the activity of cosplay can be regarded as narcissistic, then what can be said about those who observe and those who are the audience of the cosplay, and how can we understand the relationship that exists between cosplayers and these audiences? Or, it can be determined that audiences are not necessities in cosplay, that pictures are unimportant and that fan institutions are merely context?

These are some of the questions and theoretical backgrounds behind the questionnaire and interview research directed towards cosplayers. The two different theoretical stances, one from Hills (2002) and the other from Abercrombie and Longhurst (2008) and Sandvoss (2005a, 2005b), serve as resources for the analysis of these problems. From Hills, I will briefly focus on his 'dialectic of value' in fan cultures; from Abercrombie and Longhurst and Sandvoss, I call attention to the 'diffused audiences' and their link to narcissism in fan culture.

When I previously addressed consumption in fandom, I remarked that its emotive nature is an important factor in making the object of consumption subjective. For researchers such as Jenkins and Hills, it is due to that subjectivity that the use-value in commodities can be recovered in fan cultures. This subjective value conferred to commodities supports the creativity of fan activities, and there does not seem to be any

reason to regard cosplay as an exception of this. Moreover, cosplay comes across as the best example for illustrating fans' subjective attachment towards the characters depicted by the texts.

However, as Hills reminds us, this is not the end of the story. Fans also shape markets where they circulate their secondary texts. When Hills discusses the role of fans in performative consumption, he stresses the fact that the character, in order to be performed, represents not just an individual or personal object of love but also a communal one. Then, when fans dress up in front of other fans as the fictional characters borrowed from the animation and manga context, they convey their interpretation of these meanings in exchange as well as their own bodies in the system of consumption.

That is precisely the reason Hills refers to this activity as 'performative consumption.' By doing so, cosplayers re-shape a new exchange-value among fan communities, going back and forth from making the object subjective (getting close to it to the extent of transforming themselves into it) to making it objective (and external) again. The photographs of cosplay that circulate among fans (where the subject becomes an object or a secondary text) are a good example of this. In this circumstance, fans distance themselves from their image in the pictures, while pretending to be the 'Other'. Following Hills, we can regard this dynamic between the subject and the object as a 'dialectic of value' within fan institutions. My perspective on fan institutions is related to this approach, as it takes into account the importance of the fan community as an audience where fans (cosplayers, in this case) are performers.

The second approach contrasts with this perspective to some extent and is focused on 'diffused audiences' and narcissism. Here, despite the 'performative consumption' summarised above, as Sandvoss remarks, 'by making their object of fandom into extensions of themselves fans [...] removes their object of consumption from the logic of capitalist exchange' (205a: 116). What happens when fans make their objects, then, is not only an extension of the self (mine) but also a making of themselves (me), as he suggests occurs when fan consumption becomes narcissistic. In this hypothesis, there is no distance between the object and the subject because they become the same body. Without an object, any exchange is impossible; therefore, rather than the image of fan events as markets, its description as a spectacle and cosplay as performance seem to be more appropriate.

As Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) propose, diffused audiences are continuously engaged in consumption. Texts exist everywhere and the consumption of texts, even if we do not want it, becomes a part of everyday life. Moreover, these audiences have come

to feel that their lives are a spectacle in which they are performers or the ‘protagonists of their own movie’, as it is commonly said. As we have pointed out before, from this perspective, appropriation does not appear as an active and intentional act for these audiences; rather, it is an inevitable and unintentional condition of life in a consumerist capitalist society, as Sandvoss explains. The popularity of SNS and their importance in the dispersion of cosplay’s popularity can be a signal of the narcissistic nature of cosplayers as performers for their imagined audiences.

If we focus on cosplay as the vertical integration of activities, practices and institutions, it is possible to address the different aspects of cosplay—that is, from a narcissistic experience to a system of exchange of meanings and the base of the construction of a collective body in fan communities. The research I will introduce below includes this theoretical background and was oriented to clarify some of the questions posed above, as well as to present a more accurate picture of cosplay from the institutional perspective, i.e. a more comprehensive understanding of the activity and its place within a larger system of social interactions.

3.3.3 Approaching cosplay practices through questionnaires and interviews

Time period of the research: Mainly from spring of 2012 to summer of 2013. The Taiwan research was carried out from October 2012 to March 2013.

Research aims: The cosplay research was focused on two main points following the former research in dōjin activities: 1) textual appropriation; 2) community and network.

1) In the case of textual appropriation, the aim was to investigate its characteristics in cosplay. Here, as mentioned above, cosplay is understood as a performative appropriation of fictional characters by means of the body. In regard to the elements in the text to be appropriated in the fictional character, the research supposed two different orientations: an orientation towards the narrative construction of the character, i.e., the character as Other, and appropriation of the character as ‘mine.’ In contrast, there is an orientation towards the aesthetic elements of the character, i.e. an aesthetic lack of distance and appropriation of the character as ‘me’.

2) Regarding community and network, the aim was to investigate the characteristics of the social interactions in cosplay activities. In the research, the ‘community orientation’ was a typification of patterns of activities on the basis of Jenkins and Hills’ perspective, as well as Ōtsuka’s perspective on the ‘consumption of narratives’ (see Chapter Five). Here, it was supposed to focus on narrative elements as shared building

blocks for a particular community understood as consisting of groups of peers that share a common framework. In this case, cosplay activities are meaningful as long as the common frame (a particular narrative world) is shared among the concomitants. In the framework of this research, we contrasted this ‘community orientation’ to a ‘network orientation’. Thus, the ‘network orientation’ supposes in this research, a stress, not in symbolic elements or a mutual understanding but rather in interaction and experience. Following the premises of diffused audiences and narcissistic consumption, the network orientation in the research was associated with a strong orientation towards a focus on the actor rather than on the group of peers.

Research target and methodology: The following data I present derive from the two questionnaires—from the one carried out in Japan and from the other conducted in Taiwan. All the respondents are cosplayers, and most of them were performing in the place of the event where the research occurred.

Japan	Taiwan
「Comic Market82」	「32th Comic World Taiwan」
Tokyo Big Sight	National Taiwan University
202 samples collected	199 samples collected

The questionnaire design and the survey in Japan were carried out as part of a joint project with Dr Hayami Nanako and were initiated in spring 2012. After attempting early versions of the questionnaire with some cosplayers at small cosplay gatherings or events (for more detail, see Appendix), Dr Hayami and I distributed the questionnaire in the outside spaces of the Comic Market. The input of the data for the Japan questionnaire was also in collaboration with Dr Hayami. However, I oversaw the analysis and framework that I present here. The Taiwan research occurred under the supervision of Dr Lee Ming-Tsung, a sociology professor at National Taiwan University. I also received the guidance from Dr Wang Peiti, who is also a sociology professor at the same university. I carried out the adaptation of the original questionnaire research in Japan for the Taiwanese context under the supervision of both professors. I was in charge of the distribution of the questionnaire at the Comic World Taiwan, as well as the the observation research and informal interviews.

Therefore, I present here the data from both questionnaires. All the questionnaires was distributed after asking the persons who responded whether they were cosplayers. They responded to the questionnaire in the location of the event where it was collected.

The Japanese questionnaire was distributed at Comic Market 82, which had an attendance of 560,000 persons¹⁶. Following the report from the Comic Market Preparatory Committee for 2009, around 2.7% of the participants were cosplayers (市川, 2009)¹⁷. In consideration of that number, the participant as cosplayers in the Comic Market of August 2012 may be estimated to be around 16,000 participants. If we add to this number the participants of the Kosupure-sen in TFT event, a cosplay only event organised on the same days as the Comic Market at a nearby venue (see Appendix), the number of cosplayers attending the event must be higher. Therefore, the samples collected are not statistically representative of the population. However, this kind of research is rare, and the information it provides is valuable for the understanding of cosplay activities.

Structure of the questionnaire:

The content of the Japanese and the Taiwanese versions of the questionnaire somewhat differ. Nevertheless, the following sections show all the data from both questionnaires as a single sample. For this aim, it was necessary to separate the material so that a comparison was possible. The variables that were specific for each region were excluded from this analysis. An example of each questionnaire and the table of equivalences of the variables analysed can be found in the Appendix.

Analysed questionnaire sections	
1) Basic attributes	6) Motivation
2) Age and cosplay experience	7) What is important in cosplay practices
3) Place of cosplay practice	8) Experience in dōjin activities
4) Object of cosplay	9) Use of SNS
5) People who participate together	

¹⁶ http://www.sinkan.jp/news/index_2907.html

¹⁷ Following 市川 2009, the attendance at the 75th Comic Market held in December 2008 was 510,000 persons, from which about 13,000 were cosplayers. In the case of the 76th Comic Market held in August 2009, the total attendance was estimated to be 560,000 persons from which about 16,000 were cosplayers. Based on that data, the events had a 2.5% and 2.8% representation of cosplayer attendance, respectively, from which an average of 2.7% participants may be estimated.

1) Basic attributes:

Table 3.2.1 shows a sample that is composed mainly of female cosplayers (83%) in both regions. However, the Taiwan sample (average of 18 years of age) was younger than that of Japan (average of 23 years of age). Likewise, the Taiwanese samples were mainly composed of students (84%), while in Japan the ‘other’ respondents were the majority (65%). When focusing on the frequency distribution by age as shown in Table 3.2.2, we can see that the sample in Taiwan has an orientation towards teenagers, while the Japanese sample is more stable from around 18 to 28 years of age.

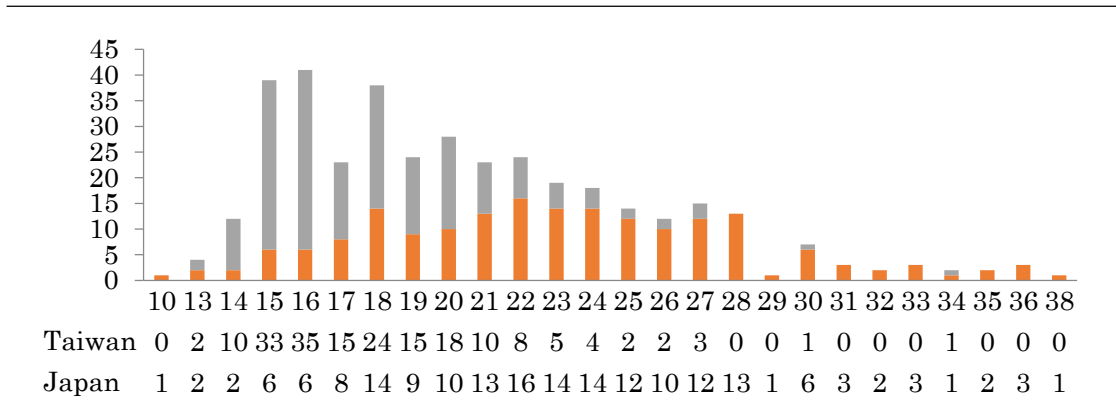
Table 3.2.1 : Basic attributes

		Japan	%	Taiwan	%	Total	%
<i>Sex</i>	Male	33	16.6	31	16.4	64	16.5
	Female	164	82.4	158	83.6	322	83.0
<i>Occupation</i>	Student	65	32.7	156	84.3	221	57.6
	Other	130	65.3	29	15.7	159	41.4
<i>Educational background</i>	Elementary School	1	.5	0	0	1	.3
	Middle School	8	4.0	19	10.2	27	7.0
	High School	42	21.1	47	25.1	89	23.1
	Vocational School	58	29.1	47	25.1	105	27.2
	University						
	Undergraduate or graduate	62	31.2	70	37.4	132	34.2
	Other educational institution	10	5.0	4	2.1	14	3.6
<i>Age</i>	Average age		23.13		18.07		20.57

Note. All percentages are valid per cents.

Table 3.2.2:

Frequency distribution by age and region (Taiwan and Japan)



The following Tables 3.2.3 and 3.2.4 show a calculation of the years of birth and the year in which the subjects of the sample began to practise cosplay. The comparison was based on the different development of cosplay as an institution of practice in Japan and Taiwan. As we see in this chapter, cosplay institutions, and fan institutions in general, have a later development in Taiwan, and most of the participants joined the scene after the institutionalisation of cosplay gatherings. The case of Japan may be regarded as similar, though the development of cosplay alongside dōjin institutions is substantially earlier.

Table 3.2.3: Calculation of year of birth (Taiwan and Japan)

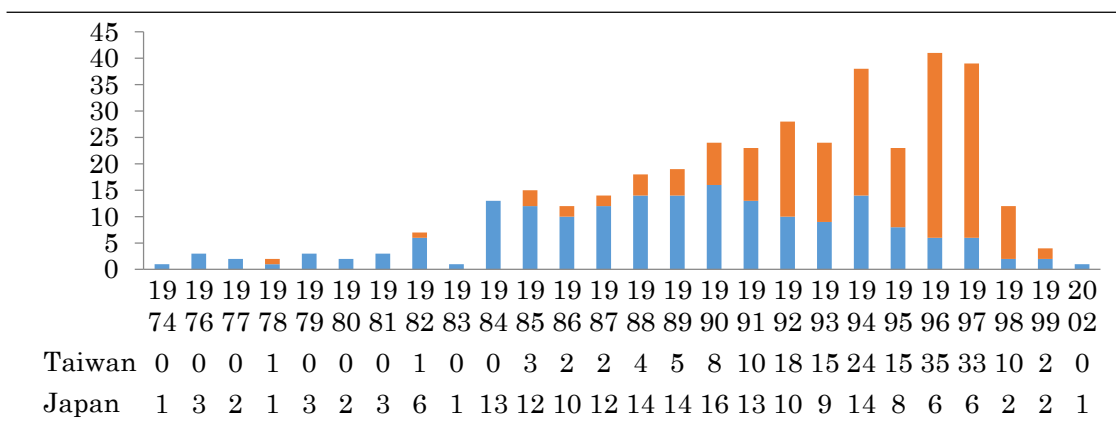
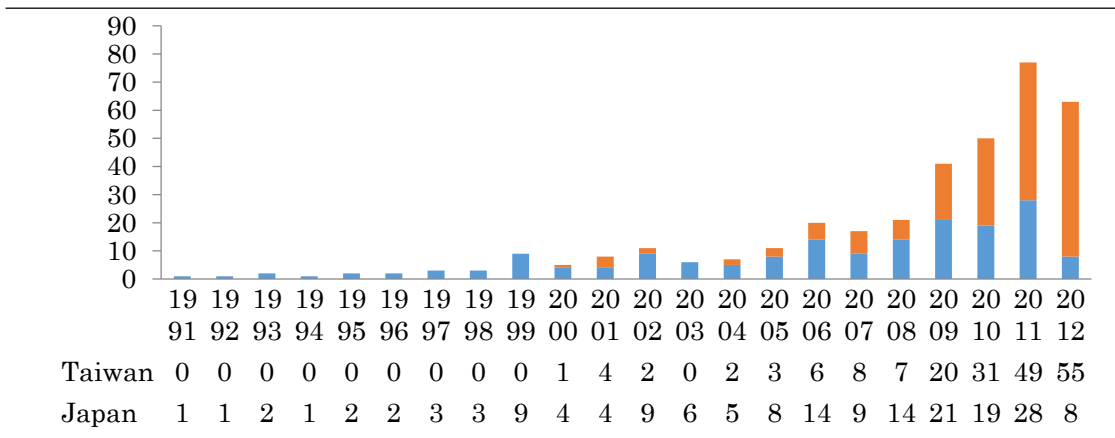


Table 3.2.4: Calculation of year of beginning cosplay activities (Taiwan and Japan)



2) Age and cosplay experience:

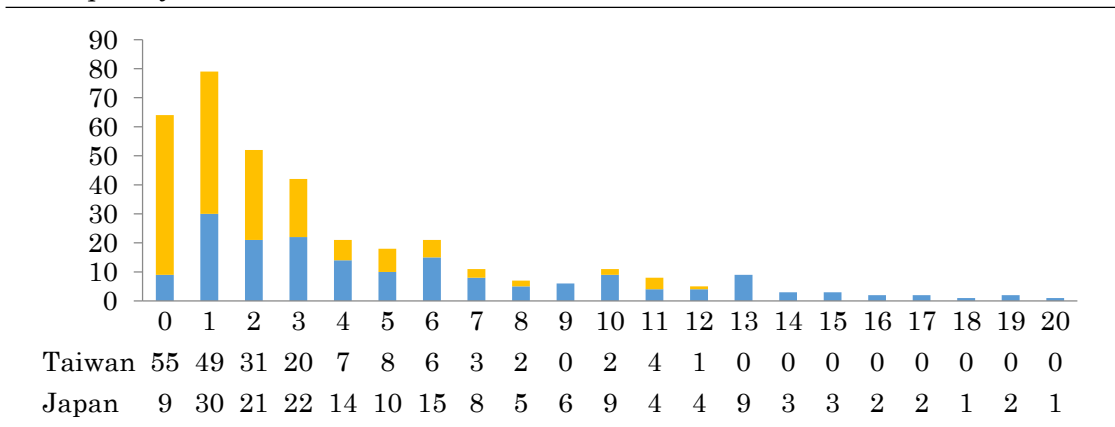
Table 3.2.5 shows the sample averages associated with the experience of practising cosplay. The age that participants first started their involvement in cosplay is, in both cases, of 16-17, while the number of years is higher in Japan.

Table 3.2.5: Experience Practising Cosplay (Average)

	Japan average	Taiwan average	General average
Age of performing cosplay for the first time	17 years	16 years	17 years
Number of years of practice (calculation)	6 years	2 years	4 years

Note. All percentages are valid per cents.

Table 3.2.6: Years of practicing Cosplay (Taiwan and Japan)
Frequency distribution



3) Place of Cosplay practice:

Table 3.2.7 show some of the most popular places to practise cosplay that have been selected from a variety of places. The massive public events like dōjin events are the most common places. Private reunions among cosplayers are the cosplay only events that tend to be preferred by more experienced cosplayers. Public open spaces were not popular in general.

Table 3.2.7: Places in which cosplay is practised ^a

	Japan		Taiwan		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1- In a dōjin event	164	81.6	192	96.5	356	89.0
2- In a private reunion among cosplayers	93	46.3	92	46.2	185	46.3
3- In a central area or busy commercial place in the city	8	4.0	25	12.6	33	8.3
4- In a photography studio	93	46.3	44	22.1	137	34.3
5- In a cosplay café	9	4.5	54	27.1	63	15.8

Note. All percentages are valid per cents.

^a Selection of more than one answer permitted.

4) Object of Cosplay:

Table 3.2.8 : Typical object or type of cosplay ^a

	Japan		Taiwan		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1- A character from Japanese manga, anime or video games	190	94.5	188	94.5	378	94.5
2- An idol or a TV personality	8	4.0	5	2.5	13	3.3
3- Visual-key style	12	6.0	12	6.0	24	6.0
4- Lolita style	21	10.4	16	8.0	37	9.3
5- A character from movies or TV dramas (soap operas)	15	7.5	11	5.5	26	6.5
6- Uniforms	45	22.4	46	23.1	91	22.8
7- Singers or members of a music band	12	6.0	17	8.5	29	7.3
8- Cross-dressing	50	24.9	63	31.7	113	28.3
9- Virtual idols (Vocaloid or similar)	80	39.8	94	47.2	174	43.5

Note. All percentages are valid per cents.

^a Selection of more than one answer permitted.

Table 3.2.8 shows the most common object of cosplay. As was expected, characters from anime, manga and video games were the most preferred. It is interesting to note that, in contrast to personifications common in fan culture, cosplay practices are usually

not focused on real persons. The table also includes particular genres, some of which are regarded as fashion. One of the aims of this focus was to discover if there was a tendency to mix fashion (variables 3 and 4) with cosplay activities. It is also noteworthy that the ‘virtual idols’ like Vocaloid characters was comparatively a particularly popular object of cosplay.

5) People who participate together:

Table 3.2.9 shows the social relationships. It is interesting to note that, in each case, the cosplay activities are carried out mostly among friends from school rather than friends made through cosplay networks (whether during face-to-face events or on the internet). This characteristic was also observed in the questionnaire research among the general assistants at dōjin events.

Table 3.2.9: Friends or acquaintances you practise cosplay with ^a

	Japan		Taiwan		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1- Friends from school or classmates (Friends or classmates from school days)	143	71.5	171	86.4	314	78.9
2- Friends or colleagues from work (A friend or college met at work)	32	16.0	17	8.6	49	12.3
3- A family member	18	9.0	28	14.1	46	11.6
4- Friends or acquaintances you met by participating at a cosplay event	122	61.0	152	76.8	274	68.8
5- Friends or acquaintances you met through the internet	96	48.0	154	77.8	250	62.8

Note. All percentages are valid per cents.

^a Selection of more than one answer permitted.

6) Motivation:

Table 3.2.10 shows the general motivation at the beginning of cosplay activities. The most important category was ‘because of the character’. However, being invited to perform by a friend or family member who already performs cosplay (likely to be a friend rather than a family member, as Table 3.2.9 shows) is also a major reason.

Table 3.2.10 : Motivation or reason for practising cosplay ^a

	Japan		Taiwan		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1- Because you were invited by a friend or family member who was already a cosplayer	94	47.5	114	64.0	208	55.3
2- Because you were invited by a friend or family member who did not have experience with cosplay	12	6.0	15	8.4	27	7.2
3- Because you were interested in disguises or costumes	98	49.2	56	31.5	154	40.8
4- Because you were interested in fashion	43	21.6	19	10.7	62	16.4
5- Because there was a character you wanted to cosplay	129	64.8	119	66.9	248	65.8
6- Because you were interested in finding a 'new me'	38	19.2	77	43.3	115	30.6
7- As a way to express your own personality	7	3.5	34	19.1	41	10.9

Note. All percentages are valid per cents.

^a Selection of more than one answer permitted.

This table also mixes variables related to 'cosplay as fashion' or 'cosplay as a way to express the self' (variables 4, 6 and 7). The average low frequency of those variables shows a low tendency to see cosplay as fashion, or as a way to express the self.

7) What it is important in cosplay practices:

Table 3.2.11 shows what cosplayers evaluate as important when performing their activities. The 'love for the character' (87%) was a standout element. Variables that focused on the character, such as 1, 2 and 3, were also highly evaluated. It is interesting to see that all those characteristics were more frequent in Taiwan than in Japan, although they share the same tendency. Variable 4, 'to be beautiful', has an important low frequency, and in the case of Japan, it is almost as low as variable 6.

Table 3.2.11: What do you think is important when performing cosplay? ^a

	Japan		Taiwan		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1- To pay particular attention to manufacturing your disguise	77	38.5	113	63.5	190	50.3
2- To know the background of the character and the work to which it belongs	109	54.5	141	79.2	250	66.1
3- To 'become the character'	104	52.0	132	74.2	236	62.4
4- To be beautiful	58	29.0	45	25.3	103	27.2
5- To love the character	165	82.5	165	92.7	330	87.3
6- To take good care of the network among the cosplayer, the needle girl and the camera guys	61	30.5	97	54.5	158	41.8

Note. All percentages are valid per cents.

^a Selection of more than one answer permitted.

8) Experience in dōjin activities:

Table 3.2.12 shows the relation between cosplay and dōjin activities. In general, there was a slight tendency to be involved or interested in practising dōjin activities among cosplayers, although this tendency was higher in Taiwan.

Table 3.2.12: Have you ever created a dōjin comic?

	Japan		Taiwan		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Yes	61	30.7	86	45.3	147	37.8
I have not, but I am interested	56	28.1	60	31.6	116	29.8
No	80	40.2	44	23.2	124	31.9

Note. All percentages are valid per cents.

9) Use of SNS:

Tables 3.2.13 and 3.2.14 are focused on the use of cosplay SNS among cosplayers. The questionnaire asked for each one of the popular cosplay SNS and distinguished from these the related to cosplay SNS and the unrelated to cosplay SNS. The tables below are focused only on the results concerning cosplay-related SNS.

Table 3.2.13: In how many cosplay SNS are you registered?

	Japan		Taiwan		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
I am not registered in any	51	25.4	38	19.1	89	22.3
1	58	28.9	106	53.3	164	41.0
2	68	33.8	34	17.1	102	25.5
3	18	9.0	16	8.0	34	8.5
4	1	.5	0	0.0	1	.3
5 or more	0	0.0	1	.5	1	.3

Note. All percentages are valid per cents.

Table 3.2.14: How often do you use that SNS?

	Japan		Taiwan		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Everyday	28	14.1	86	45.7	114	29.5
Once every 2 or 3 days	21	10.6	28	14.9	49	12.7
Once a week	30	15.1	15	8.0	45	11.6
A few times per month	50	25.1	12	6.4	62	16.0
Not at all	15	7.5	8	4.3	23	5.9
N/A	51	25.6	38	20.2	89	23.0

Note. All percentages are valid per cents.

All tendencies were similar in Taiwan and Japan. However, the Taiwanese sample showed a higher frequency of the variables regarded as a heavier use of SNS.

3.3.4 Cosplay in Taiwan through questionnaire and interviews

Cosplay, as it has been identified, is an activity driven by a deep love towards a fictional character. And as Chen Mia (2012: 244) notes, in many cases, these characters can be symbols that threaten society in some way, and this also gives an implied subversive spirit to cosplay. However, rather than subversion, the atmosphere that surrounds cosplay gatherings includes passion, joviality and sensuality.

Outside of the sports centre of National Taiwan University, where amateur manga circles and its fans crowd, many young girls and some boys began to arrive with small suitcases, and most of them were accompanied by friends or relatives. They began to prepare their costumes, cosmetics and the wigs, helping each other and talking happily and loudly. 'Oh, how cute you are', they would comment to one another. Some of them brought small tents that were installed in the back corridors of the building, and they changed their clothes there. Once dressed in their costumes, they became completely transformed into the characters and began to wander around near the building, where

other visitors and many males with expensive cameras had started to gather. The cameras start to shoot, and, from morning to sundown, when there is not enough light to take more pictures, the cosplayers pose for the cameras of friends and strangers.

Preparing the costumes and the props can take several months and can cost quite a lot of money, and some participants also travel a long distance from other parts of Taiwan to Taipei. At the end of the day, they are exhausted, but as Zhang, a 19 year old girl said to me, 'Doing cosplay make me feel happy, and I have a lot of friends here; why should I stop it?'

Zhang started to perform cosplay at the age of 16. In junior high school, she loved Gackt, a Japanese singer, and he prompted her interest in cosplay. This singer provided his voice for the software 'Vocaloid 2' in the character of 'Kamui Gakupo'. This was her first costume when her best friend, who was already a cosplayer, asked to join her. However, the first cosplay of Yu and Wan, both females of 22 years of age, was an anime character. As they tell me, at the age of 15 when they began, their world was surrounded by Japanese manga and anime. Yu and Wan learned about cosplay on the internet, where they also met other friends interested in cosplay and amateur manga. It was in the company of those friends when they went to their first amateur manga events and started to perform cosplay.

As these examples and the questionnaire survey results show, cosplay in Taiwan is mainly performed by a young female community. In CWT 2012, among 199 respondents, 83.6% were female and 80% were younger than 20 years of age. A total 36% were between the age of 15 and 16. Moreover, this young community is likely to stay young, since many of them are probably ephemeral participants. After all, for 30% of the respondents, it was their first time or first year performing cosplay, and the experience in cosplay of 80% of the total does not exceed four years. If we consider that 96% of the respondents began to perform after 2003 (and 82% between 2009 and 2012), when the spread and popularisation of cosplay stabilised, it is possible to say that there is a tendency of ceasing cosplay after approximately 20 years of age.

Additionally, for the most of these young girls and women, cosplay is a pre-established fan institution that they can easily take part in and quit. As we have seen, the period of formation of fan communities and their activities in Taiwan took place between 1995 and 2000. A total of 64% of the respondents were born after this period and do not have direct experience with the transformations in the political and social life that allowed the birth of fan cultures in Taiwan. Only less than 5% of the respondents were born between 1978 and 1987, having some experience with the martial law. Thus, for the majority of them, the consumption of Japanese popular

culture and fan appropriative activities have been a part, to some extent, of their everyday lives since childhood.

This community has developed principally around Japanese ACG (anime, comics and games) culture, but as Lee (2004) argues, this culture has created a 'mega-textual system,' including the consumption of many media and many other practices. A different questionnaire survey about consumption designed for Japanese pop culture fans, which I carried out among 44 university students, showed, alongside a high consumption of Japanese ACG and anime songs, similar patterns of consumption in secondary texts such as Japanese or Taiwanese amateur comics, music, games, novels, illustrations and cosplay magazines and websites (only 34.9% do not consume these magazines or visit cosplay websites at all). It also showed a slightly lower but also present consumption of commodities not directly related to ACG but rather with Japan pop culture in general, like movies, TV dramas, pop music and fashion magazines.

As Chen J (2007) observed in 2001, the most important sources of characters for cosplayers have been Japanese ACG characters, Japanese visual rock bands and Taiwanese traditional puppetry (ibid 15). Chen M (2010) also noted the popularity of characters of traditional puppetry, which could have been a sign of a new trend of cosplay in Taiwan as an effect of localising this culture. However, as some cosplayers explained in an interview, the popularity of Taiwanese glove puppetry characters has declined over the years, in part because of the difficulty of making the costumes and their cost and also because a decrease in the popularity of the puppetry TV shows. In the survey, only 3% of the respondents had ever performed that kind of character. However, on the third February 2012, at the Taipei International Book Exhibition, a cosplay concourse occurred and several cosplayers of puppetry attended.

However, in general, the results of the survey showed an expected and overwhelming majority (94.5) centred on Japanese ACG characters. Vocaloid characters (47.2 %), crossplay (31.7%) and uniforms (23.1 %) were also popular categories, although in most cases these categories can be considered part of Japanese ACG characters. Out of that category, 16.1% of the respondents had never performed as Japanese ACG characters, and only 6% for visual rock bands and 8.5% for other bands or singers.

If cosplay is regarded in this research as an active part of a larger system of practices within fan communities, it is because of the essential presence of the character: the deeply subjective affective consumption in which the character is appropriated through the body. But, the love for the character, which depending on the perspective can be considered the most narcissistic element in cosplay, is not a lonely pleasure in cosplay. As many fan studies have pointed, those characters are not only an individual object of

love but also a communal one. The words of Chia, a 29-year-old fan of visual rock, clearly articulate this feeling. When she performs the cosplay of her favourite band member, she feels happy because she feels very close to him, but she also wants other fans to recognise the singer when they look at her. The singer she 'cos' (cosplays) had passed away several years ago, and when she dresses like he did at the band's concerts, as she tells me, 'I don't want to transform myself into him; what I want is to show him to other fans, to the new ones who don't know him and to the old ones who still remember'. Hence, it is important for her to achieve realism and exactitude in her cosplay.

A shared subjectivity also arises from many similar experiences among cosplayers about fictional characters, and from here we shift the focus from activities to practices. As Chen M (2012) highlights, no matter how individually a cosplayer is absorbed in her (or his) hobby, a cosplayer should never forget there are other fans who like the same character. Forget this simple rule and one risks being harshly criticised by the fan community. A 27-year-old amateur manga drawer explained to me that during her first time at a manga event, encouraged by her friends, she used to go dressed in improvised costumes of characters she did not know. It was fun, but, as she said, 'that is not the attitude you should have in cosplay', so she quit.

Thus, this commitment towards the character can range in depth and type, but almost everyone (92% of the respondents) agreed that love for the character is essential in cosplay, and a high percentage also stressed the importance of knowing the background and the worldview that correspond with the character (74%) rather than being pretty or good looking (25%), (but conditioned not to damage the image of the character).

Thus, if we look at cosplay as a practice, the emphasis goes from the character to the shape of social ties, and here the role of the body as a secondary text is essential.

First, as many cosplayers have described, it was the love for the character that caused them to perform that character, but it was a friend who took them to the events or introduced them to the world of cosplay. A total of 64% of the respondents were invited by a cosplayer friend when they performed for the first time, and making new friends through the same hobby is one primary attraction in cosplay. Without the networks and institutions of fan communities, performing cosplay would be difficult because of having to do all by oneself. As these activities show, cosplay relies on the social production of meaning.

From this perspective, it is also the body of the fan and not only the consumed texts in terms of what becomes the raw material in which the secondary text will be produced. The subjective experience of cosplay is retained by the camera and becomes an object,

which circulates within the networks of cosplayers and fan communities where the exchange of symbols close the circle that Hills (2002) called ‘performative consumption’, and reinforce the identity of the cosplayer as a fan.

Cosplay as ‘performative consumption’ requires interactions and exchanges, and this implies the participation of many other actors. The importance of these networks is also perceived by the cosplayers, where a high per cent (55%) recognised the importance of maintaining these networks. Also, following the same aim, there are many unspoken and spoken rules as well as many complaints if other cosplayers do not respect those rules. It is here where those few more experienced play a major role. They give sense to the rules, the social structures they support and to the whole social experience of cosplay by strictly defining what it is and what should cosplay be. Those definitions are discourses of identity within the fan communities and are the starting point of the meaningful integration of fan practices into institutions.

In her paper entitled ‘The Play of the Devil: Cosplay in Taiwan’¹⁸, Cheng Mia, following the words of Mierocco, a well reputed Taiwanese cosplayer, defined cosplay as ‘the game of the devil’ since for her the fascination directed towards cosplay relies on an indispensable ‘aesthetic sense of the depravity’ (Cheng M 2012: 217). As Cheng points out, rather than pose as a threat or a direct resistance to the mainstream society and its values, cosplay recognises these values but mocks them and takes sides with the devil, recognising itself as heretic but not without a sense of sin and guilt. Escapism, avarice, vanity and self-neglect are some of the adjectives that for Cheng can characterise this ‘devil’s game’ (Ibid).

The words of Mierocco articulated by Cheng does with the cosplay experience what the camera does with the images, but words and images work at different levels. Mierocco’s words organise her experience into a meaningful discourse of what means to be a cosplayer, and these narratives provide an explanation of the self for those who share similar experiences. Images, however, do not explain everything, but getting closer to the emotiveness of the experience helps to reproduce a shared sympathy based on aesthetic elements.

Aesthetic and cultural proximity, consumption and identity in Taiwan

Cosplay in Taiwan is a culture mainly influenced by the Japanese anime, manga and games industry, alongside the activities of Japanese fans. However, the unique cultural context in which the Japanese pop culture is consumed in Taiwan presents a unique

¹⁸ 悪魔の遊びー台湾のコスプレ

dynamic concerning the relationship among consumption, appropriation, and creativity, given that appropriation may mean contradictions between the original context and the context of reception. Thus, the cultural context makes necessary the integration of the question of the shape of identity in fan groups. This question, concerned with fan narratives about belonging and self-definition, is also clearly concerned with other kinds of narratives of belonging like cultural and national identities. Cosplay as an appropriative activity decontextualises and re-contextualises the contents consumed, and the creativity entailed in this process may conflict with the emotive consumption in fandom. Creativity in fan activities may mean a risk of losing the object of worshiping, particularly when the contexts seem to be far apart. With this perspective, we can find the influence of Fiske's idea about popular culture as a culture of resistance, and its pleasure in adapting the meanings to daily struggles of everyday life. Thus, one of the questions of this research concerned the presence of a kind of cultural conflict in fan activities in Taiwan and understanding the meaning of cosplay in the everyday lives of Taiwanese youth.

Given that these questions exceed the scope of the present study, I will not discuss this issue here. However, what it is important to take from these questions in the context of the present study is a need to review the idea of resistance in appropriation and its relation to different cultural contexts. The idea of narcissism in consumption that I am exploring in this section provides a clue as to how to approach this issue. The case of cosplay where the body, the experience at the moment and the aesthetic identification have a central role is particularly important regarding the transnationalisation of popular culture.

In the case of Taiwan, an assumed closeness with Japan as well as references to the colonial past are commonly seen as important factors in explaining the success of Japanese cultural products in Taiwan. There is no doubt of the relevance of these factors. However, it may be necessary to establish a further distinction between a cultural closeness, driven by historical experience, and aesthetic closeness, driven by the experience of consumption. In my opinion, the distinction that Lee (2004) draws between young Harizu and old Japanophiles illustrates this point.

Narcissism in fandom poses a strong criticism of the idea of cultural resistance, since although narcissistic consumption recognises the creative power of the construction of meaning, it neutralises the notion of 'resistance' as it neutralises meaning itself. A 'lack of aesthetic distance' (Sandvoss, 2005a: 155) in narcissism (or a great affective proximity) means that every meaning can be appropriated in any possible way. Therefore, if any meaning can be possible, there is no importance in meanings at all.

The metaphor of cultural texts as mirrors, as referenced in Sandvoss, emphasises that for these audiences, there are no meanings in the cultural texts. As he states, 'The profound social and cultural significance of popular texts, thus, derives not from encoded meanings but from their very absence' (2005b: 836). From this perspective, there are no meanings to resist or subversive lectures, and no cultural conflict can arise.

In the Taiwan research, I observed a strong commitment towards aesthetic elements and no apparent relevant conflict between consumption and appropriation. In other words, this cosplay culture belongs to these young people on an emotive level, and they build their social experience with its symbols which more than borrowed are of their own. But unlike Sandvoss' mirror, cosplay pictures are not only the narcissistic reflection of the self but also an important tool through which fans build their own (sub) culture within the institutions of fan communities.

3.3.5 General observations of cosplay questionnaires and some details obtained through interviews and observations in Japan

In this section, I will reflect on the general results of the questionnaire research while introducing some details about cosplay activities that I learned from my interview research in Japan. These details are important for correctly understanding the meaning of some of the results of the questionnaire research. These details come from the research in Japan. However, I introduce them alongside the general analysis encompassing the Taiwan and Japanese scenes because of its relevance in general.

The cosplayers of the sample analysed are a young female collectivity. Their average age was 21 (23 in Japan and 18 in Taiwan). As in the case of Taiwan, as analysed above, the sample also shows in the case of Japan a high number of persons that initiated cosplay activities at an average age of 17. Most of them had three or fewer years of experience in cosplay (see Table 3.2.6). By examining Tables 3.2.2 and 3.2.4, we can distinguish three major broad age categories: 1) participants age 15 to 20 who are young cosplayers with limited experience, and they compose the highest part of the sample; 2) participants age 20 to 29 who commonly have over three years of experience in cosplay and fewer in general, though they shape the body of instituted cosplay practice; 3) A group of those over 30 years of age, probably composed of more sporadic cosplayers.

Regarding gender, female cosplayers comprised 82% of the sample. When asked about the role of males in cosplay, many cosplayers recognised in the interview that it is easier to practise among women only, for reasons such as the availability of dressing rooms and the bad behaviour of males whose main purpose is to flirt with the female

cosplayers. The role of males as photographers is also an activity is also an activity during which females need to be careful of their involvement. As two experienced cosplayers (11 years of experience and five years of experience) explained me, ‘The male photographers, as you may imagine, they only want to take pictures of the good-looking girls’. They explain that sometimes this is a problem, but, on the other hand, they need the help of someone who takes the pictures while the cosplayers are posing.

1: If cosplayers want to ask a [male] photographer to take her pictures, it is better to ask someone with whom you already have a kind of agreement [yakusoku]. In that case, the risk is less, I guess. So now, in Osaka I think there is almost nobody who goes at the spot and says, “Let me take your picture”.

A [Author]: So if I go with my camera without knowing anyone to some of those events...

1 and 2: It is not a good idea...

1: Is better have a more formal approach, [and then go to take the pictures]

2: Yes, so in the ‘fuyu komi’ [winter Comic Market] or those kinds of big events, there are a lot of those persons [...] who only take their camera and come to take pictures. But in events only for cosplay, there is almost none of that kind of person.

Regarding the place to practise cosplay, the most popular was the open dōjin events (89%). However, private reunions among cosplayers or cosplay only events are places of practice that are popular among more experienced cosplayers. Likewise, the kind of interaction is very different among the players depending on the kind of event. While the ‘big’ events are places of new interactions, as in the case I described regarding Taiwan, for some cosplayers, most of the cosplay is performed within a network of cosplayers’ friends. Here, the big events are helpful for providing a way inside these networks that otherwise are almost entirely closed off to strangers of the groups or the activity.

Regarding the object of cosplay, characters for manga, animation and video games were the most popular (94.5%). Personifications of real persons were on average far less popular (see Table 3.2.8). Lolita and Visual-Key, which are usually classified as fashion, were also strongly unpopular categories. Cosplay usually focuses not on the person but on a representation of something external (the character). Some cosplayers explained it as follows:

A: What can be called cosplay and what cannot? For example, Lolita...

3: Ah! Original [cosplay] [...]

1: But when it is 'original', the range is very wide...

2: But it is possible, so you have to think clearly about the setting and the story...

3: [yes], there is [something like that].

2: There is [something like that]. Something like, making their own character and wearing only what they have in the house, and saying that is original. I was working in a Lolita [fashion] shop, so Lolita is not cosplay but plainclothes. So I don't like it when people wear that as cosplay.

1: Cosplay is cosplay and Lolita is fashion... [...], so if you see a [girl dressed as] Lolita and say 'cosplay!' to her, it is very impolite.

The so-called 'original cosplay' must have a 'clear setting' in order to be regarded as cosplay. This suggests the need for 'character-construction' from the side of the cosplayer. In the same way, Lolita would lack the detachment between the person who wears the clothes and the 'character'.

Regarding the persons with whom players practise, there was not a strong tendency towards only one variable from the questionnaire. The principal tendencies were as follows: 1) with friends from school (79%)—i.e. those likely to be the persons that young cosplayers with limited experience practise with; 2) with friends or acquaintances met by participating in cosplay events (69%) and met through the internet (cosplay networks) (63%). These are likely to be the peers whom cosplayers meet when becoming involved in cosplay activities. Within these 'cosplay ties', it is important to stress the particular 'closeness and anonymity' that cosplay practices allow as the following example shows. In the conversation, after listening to some details about the events in which they participate, I asked if they do cosplay in the residences of some of the cosplayers' friends.

1: I think there is almost no such a thing in cosplay, right? [says the most experienced one while she confirms with her friend]. It is because we do not disclose our names. Everyone is the same. So we interact using our cosplay names, so going to some cosplayer's house...

2: There is almost nothing like that...

1: Unless you are a very close friend of that person...

2: So, those friends from cosplay only meet while doing cosplay. I think [most of the cases] are something like that.

It is interesting to note the importance of the 'cosplay name' and the relation between cosplayers only through the cosplay name and the activity itself. For example, in my field research as a photographer for a small group of cosplayers in an only cosplayer

gathering (see Appendix), I could be part of the relationship among cosplayers, which I would describe as very close but, at the same time, very distant. The distance and relative anonymity that the 'cosplay name' provides are important to portray the meaning of having friends from cosplay activities as was reflected in the questionnaire results. These friends must be understood in a different sense of the everyday life friends.

In my field work, I was invited to help as a photographer for a small group of four cosplayers; two of them I met for the first time. From my perspective, the clear defined roles of each of the participants (take pictures, pose for the pictures), and the distance that allows the character were important in enabling a smooth and relatively close interaction among strangers. In a few words, I felt that nobody was a real 'himself' or 'herself' at the session, and the play of 'not-being-you' was a key element in order to allow a detectably physical closeness among strangers. Names were nicknames or cosplay names, and the pictures were not of them but of the characters. Every gesture and action was a game. The characters and the roles enabled freedom in interactions to be at any time 'external' to any one of us (me as a photographer, them as cosplayers or as any character in play).

In terms of the reasons for practising cosplay, the most important was because of the character (66%). However, being invited to participate by someone who is in the activity is a key element (54%). Here, the stress on the character may be regarded as a key to access the rather closed nature of cosplay networks. As I will show in Chapter Six, 'character ties' are regarded as a fast and strong way to 'connect people horizontally'. As in the close and distant relation as I described above, character plays a role as a third instance between actors in an interaction. Here, the motivation remained in the interaction through the text. The cosplayers shared the following:

- 1: The motivation in doing cosplay? Increasing my number of friends through the work [animation, manga, etc.] I like.
- 2: To have the chance to share the things I like. And also to have good pictures with the friends I like; it is a feeling of accomplishment [tassei-kan] for me.

In regard to the elements that were deemed to be important by the cosplayers, the love for the character (87%), to understand characters' backgrounds and their fictional worlds (66%) and to 'become the character' (62%) were the most popular characteristics. The emphasis on the character and to 'become the character' have guided many hypotheses regarding cosplay by focusing identity, as we saw in previous sections. Here,

however, I will regard this stress not in identity but in the ‘disappropriation’ of the self-identity. I briefly address this characteristic as a ‘first step’ in textual appropriation within the framework of fan cultures. Following Ricoeur and Thompson’s hermeneutic approach (for more detail, see Chapter Five), I focus not on ‘self as identity’ but on self as ‘belonging’. The following conversations provide some insight on this topic.

A: Regarding the number of characters, how many different characters have you performed?

3: You mean the dresses?

2: You mean until now?

1: Until now? I have lost count!

5: How many you think? About 30? Is that too many? How about more than 20?

3: Perhaps more than 20...

4: No way! I have not performed that much! 4 or 5, I guess...

6: Me too, I guess around 4, 4 or 5 times, I think...

A: What are the criteria for choosing the character?

All the students [3, 4, 5 and 6]: To perform a character we like!

1: When you practise with others, if you are doing ‘group cosplaying’ [awase], then your picture will be with your friends, so...

2: Yes, so in that case, the character is chosen by everyone. So, it is like doing it because your friends are also doing that. I am short of stature so even if I like to perform male characters, I can't. So, I do not perform those too often because I cannot become closer to the character, even if I want to. So, within those characters you like, you have to choose from those characters that will not become awkward if you perform [them].

A: So even if there is a character you like too much, but your body doesn't fit, you will not perform it.

2: Right.

A: What is ‘to become the character?’ [narikiru]

1: Well, it is not that hard. You have only to pose as the character when they take the picture.

2: And do things that the character might do.

1: But, to become the character [narikitte] is not to transform yourself; usually it is not like that.

2: Right, so, how to say... If it's a cool character, then you do a cool pose, and if it is a cute character, you will do a cute pose. Only like that, I guess. So

you have to think of the pose that will fit better with the character. It is very funny!

The number of characters that the cosplayers tend to perform, and to regard these characters as a dress to wear are important elements close to Itō's distinction between character and kyara. An interview with 'Ms M', a 24-year-old cosplayer, provides many clues for understanding the relationship among characters, activities, identity and what I see as the character as a category with which to belong rather than identify. Here, the kyara is used as a 'third person', not to identify with or to 'become' in the self-identity sense, but as a category of belonging.

The low per cent that the variable 'to be beautiful' (27%) had, (the lowest of all the elements analysed in that question) is also noteworthy. The stress on 'beauty' was usually focused on in interviews and through observation. However, this characteristic is closely related to 'become the character' rather than 'to be beautiful,' as the above-quoted interview hints. This relation is clear in the interview with Ms M (see Appendix). As Nurupon, an amateur dancer (see Chapter Six and Appendix) stressed, 'beauty' is a way to express the 'love for the character':

You will not perform a character no matter how much you like it if your body doesn't fit with that character. You have to be aware you are not the only one who loves the character, so it will be very rude to the character and its fans if you perform and your body does not fit. (Nurupon)

The emphasis on 'becoming the character' and the characters as an 'empty' kyara, leave room for a narcissistic self-reflection in Sandvoss' sense. However, the questionnaire and interview research, in addition to the observations made, shows that there is a particular relation with textual characters in cosplay to the formation of a particular kind of social ties, in a way that encompasses the distinction that has been regarded theoretically between appropriation as a narcissistic 'me', or as an interaction oriented 'mine,' as we shall see now.

3.3.6 Me – Mine, individual and collective bodies, action and participation.

Cosplay can be understood as the individual and collective appropriation of textual characters by means of the body. As we have seen, this activity develops inside of a complex network of fan groups, fan institutions (e.g. fan gatherings or photo sessions), internet communities and a larger group of fans, all linked by their love for the character. That is, there are several different social environments in which cosplay is performed, and the activity itself may have different orientations depending on that

environment. However, the 'love for the character' is a constant in each of these social contexts.

In accordance with the results of the present research, I will regard cosplay as the integration of three different orientations into the textual character, as well as encompassing the two different meanings of appropriation. Finally, I will argue that, in a similar way to dōjin culture, we must regard a collective and impersonal unit in action rather than only an individual one. From this perspective, we can say that neither the performative consumption model nor the narcissistic consumption model can explain the dynamics of cosplay activities; rather, a model between both perspectives can do so.

Three different orientations: Activities, interaction, and participation

Cosplay can be regarded as an activity from three different basic orientations; orientation towards activities, orientation towards interaction and orientation towards participation. Each orientation is built on the basis of the other and is closely related to the social environment in which cosplay is carried out.

As in the case of dōjin culture, the focus on activities is based on the orientation of emotive consumption of the text. This is the basic premise that supports the whole building of cosplay as a particular institution of textual appropriation. This orientation is the foundation of most of the typical patterns in cosplay activities—that is, the love for the character as the principal motivation in cosplay. The meaning and value of the character are stressed in an individual and deeply subjective way. The emphasis on activity is without regard to others. Therefore, some narcissistic elements such as the individual reading or interpretation of the character and the lack of aesthetic distance are a part of this orientation. Here, the focus of attention is on appropriating the character by means of the body.

Cosplay, when regarded from its orientation towards interaction, is based not on the individual but on the small group involved in face-to-face interaction. Here, there is a focus on shaping social ties through cosplay activities. Elements for the model of performative consumption can be classified within this orientation, as the interaction entails the exchange of meanings and interpretations. Therefore, characters serve more as a resource that enables interaction; therefore, a clear distinction between 'me' and 'the character' is needed. As we have seen, interaction here is not among 'individuals' by themselves but rather by 'anonymous' persons behind a collective category identified by its role and the fictional character. Therefore, the focus is on the body as the experience of a 'collective' category among closed groups of face-to-face interaction.

The focus on participation opens the activity of cosplay to abstract networks of 'imagined' collectivities. The notable shift is from face-to-face interaction to orientation towards an imagined abstract totality of 'fans' who share a collective object of love: the character. In this case, it is important to focus, rather than on the 'body' of the fan and the performance and lived experience, on the pictures and the body as a secondary text, disclosed from experience and interaction. The focus on informational networks where cosplay pictures are exchanged resembles the dōjin networks. Here, cosplayers have in mind the abstract totality of 'all the fans of the character'. These elements link together the small groups of interaction into a more substantial collectivity in which cosplayers participate. This collectivity is bigger than cosplay activities and institutions. Therefore, the focus is on the body as raw material for creating a secondary text, and the cosplay picture as the distancing from its own image which is at the same time 'me', 'mine' and 'Other' within an abstract totality composed of the character lovers.

As I will argue, the model that allows us to understand the nature of appropriation in cosplay, as well as in dōjin culture at large, cannot only be a 'mixture' of performative consumption and narcissistic consumption or an appropriation as 'mine' and as 'me'. This is because the first one subordinates the meaning of the text as a resource for collective participation. That is, the meaning of the text is understood in terms of the social structure of participation in the fan collectivities. The second model, on the contrary, understands the meaning of the text as subordinated to fans' subjectivity. Here, the meaning is embedded in fans' individual readings. The model that we need to understand 'both characters as 'me', and the character as 'mine' needs to first understand characters as 'Other.' This is a model for understanding meaning as autonomous from fans' social structures of participation and fans' subjective construction of meaning. The model I present in Section Two is a metatheoretical reconstruction of these elements.

3.4 Conclusions: First and Third Person in Lived and Imagined Communities

In this chapter, I addressed one fragment of the dōjin activities and mainly focused on gatherings or dōjin-events and the activities of cosplay. The primary focus of the research was to understand the connection between the consumption of cultural texts and the formation of collectivities. I departed from the basic premise that actors are emotively committed towards the text—a commitment usually expressed as a relation of liking or loving the text. The assumption of collectivities encompasses any configuration of several actors where nature cannot be fully understood by regarding each actor separately. From this perspective, I referred to the plurality of actors engaged in dōjin or cosplay activities, either as small groups of concrete face-to-face interaction or as abstract collectivities. The structures that regulate and make possible the activities of these actors and groups oriented towards textual appropriation are institutions of activities. In any case, they are institutions which have in their core an orientation towards a particular activity associated with the textual appropriation. They acknowledge subordination to those activities to the emotive consumption of a particular text by regarding all those activities as secondary.

Before proceeding any further and as a way to conclude this chapter, I shall address the main objective of this chapter, which is to shape collectivities by means of textual consumption, as the continual problem of commonality and individuality in dōjin cultures. In fan studies, the idea of ‘imagined communities’, borrowed from Anderson (1983), has been widely used as a reference to describe the collective nature of fans as a community. Researchers such as Jenkins place emphasis on ‘interpretative communities’ (Jenkins), or references to ‘communities of interest’, as in Obst, Zinkiewicz and Smith (2002). We can summarise the common feature of the emphases on community in the context of fan studies into the following two elements: 1) an emphasis on the existence of a social tie among the members of fan communities, which is regarded as authentic and is a focus closely related to the element of emotive consumption, shaping an internal, horizontal imagined bond among the members of the fan community; 2) an emphasis on the existence of actual interaction, which is structured and hierarchical to some degree. This is a focus based on the real lived experience of action and social interaction and is also concerned with the management and use of material and symbolic resources to enable the activities carried out by the members of the group. Likewise, in opposition to the ‘irrational emotive’ nature of fans’ subjectivity, the focus on interaction stresses the rationality and instrumentality of fan groups. Both emphasise the text and interaction, shape borderlines for the collectivity

and, to some extent, determine the closed nature of the group, as is regarded as different and other than the masses of popular culture.

With the examples of the present chapter, and with the aim to understand the places of the institutions of textual appropriation that characterise the *dōjin* and cosplay activities in relation to the other institutions I am focusing in this section, it is important to make certain distinctions. We may understand the collectivities that shape the *dōjin* cultures and cosplay as composed of both lived and imagined communities. Likewise, we may understand the subjects that engage in those communities, rather than as a 'we', as actors acting and interacting either as an 'I', or by means of a collective category that may be understood as an 'Other'. The particularity of this 'Other' as being an instance in which none of the actors are involved in interaction, and neither the abstract imagined totality of the group. In this case, the cultural text plays the role of 'Other', which enables collective action and interaction in two different ways. One is by proportioning the resources for such action and interaction, and the other is by proportioning a sense of meaning and truthfulness to such interaction. The sense of collective action does not derive from the social tie itself; rather, it is borrowed from the emotive consumption.

The relation between actors and collectivities through the consumption of cultural texts has been observed in many ways by several authors, and it entails similar elements, although understood in slightly different ways. For example, there is the paradox observed by Hills when he regarded fans as self-absent and self-reflexive. A duality of orientations which is also a foundation of what he understands as a dialectic of value (Hills, 2002). Likewise, Fiske has drawn a distinction between evasive and productive pleasures (Fiske, 1989/2010), and Sandvoss has focused on an aesthetic narcissistic closeness or self-reflectivity in opposition to an aesthetic distance or self-reflexivity (Sandvoss, 2005a, 2005b, 2007). Although all these perspectives have different approaches and hold details that make some of their elements incompatible, all of them converge in recognising the existence of two logics that shape the relation between actors and texts.

In consideration of Hills, we have characterised one of these two logics as an orientation towards exchange and interaction that recognises the distance between the subject that appropriates the object and the object to be appropriated. This logic underlines the understanding of the appropriated object as 'mine'. In opposition, in line with Sandvoss, we have characterised the second of these two logics as an orientation that collapses the distance between the subject and object in appropriation, rendering communication meaningless and exchange impossible—i.e. the understanding of the

appropriated object as 'me'.

In addition, we also observed that the studies concerning the otaku and the subculture in Japan also draw a similar duality of orientations. This duality may be summarised as the opposition between a vertical orientation of actors towards withdrawing into themselves and going deeper into an absolute value. This inner orientation was opposed to a horizontal orientation towards communication, heterogeneity and relative values. A more in-depth analysis of these stances in Japan will be presented in Chapter Five.

Therefore, when focusing on the problem of commonality and the formation of collectivities through textual consumption, I suggest approaching these sets of oppositions by focusing on the two different meanings of community and on the two different understandings of the social actors engaged in them that I outlined above as first and third person. Hence, we may observe in *dōjin* cultures and cosplay 1) the overlapping understanding of community as a lived reality and as an imagined abstract entity and 2) actors engaging in action and interaction either as individuals or a first person, or from a collective category which we can regard as a third person.

This perspective has in its base the connection between action and meaning linked by appropriation—that is, the understanding of the concept of appropriation as the appropriation of resources for action, as well as the disappropriation of the self in order to produce meanings. This disappropriation is essential as it is the condition under which the text can take on the role of 'Other'. The double nature of cultural texts as material resources for action and interaction and as immaterial sources for creating meanings allows us to make this distinction in theory as well as observing it in daily practices.

In the social science discipline, the word 'community' has various denotations and connotations. I will present a brief overview of some of those meanings in Chapter Five by following the needs that the context of the use of this word has posed in this research. The same is true about the concepts of self and identity, which need a further theoretical explanation. I will regard these issues in some detail in Chapter Five. Here, my interest is in organising the empirical material of the research in a way that enables such theoretical analysis. The basis of these considerations is the observation of the institutions of textual appropriation I have approached in this chapter, which I am regarding as institutions of activities.

As I mentioned, the focus on activities in the case of the present Chapter Three is in contrast to the focus on participation which I will introduce in Chapter Four. It is also opposed to the focus on markets that we saw in Chapter Two. Keeping in mind the

emphasis on activities expressed as a self-serving love for the text, in this chapter I addressed different orientations of actors which I divided into orientations towards the activity focused on the text, orientations towards interaction towards the text and orientation towards participating in a broader community connected by the text. Although dōjin and cosplay activities encompass all of these orientations, activities are mostly regarded as oriented towards the emotive link to the text and textual productivity (dōjin productivity).

As we saw above, these institutions of textual appropriation unfold in Japan within the category of subculture. That is, the actors engaged share a commitment towards a logic of distinction of what they see as ‘mass culture’, and use it to cast a cynical gaze on the massification logic, or idolatry in consumerist culture, exalting in contrast a commitment towards their own beliefs or feelings. Consequently, this category of subculture poses a central issue: a mainly sceptic attitude towards mass culture regarded as deception. This is, however, rather than a stance of critical engagement towards the social tie, an attitude of frustration or disappointment expressed in a cynical way. The subculture casts a gaze of mistrust towards the social tie, understanding society as the ‘mass’ or the ‘normal people’, and a focus on personal values and hobbies as the only ground for authenticity. The emphasis on love for personal commitments and the lack of interest in others’ opinions [katte ni suru] positions this relation between thrust and mistrust, authenticity and deception.

Consequently, here I approach dōjin culture and cosplay within the subculture as shaped by their association with 1) emotive consumption of certain objects and genres, 2) textual productivity subordinated to such emotive consumption and 3) several institutions that enable those practices and consumption. I defined dōjin culture as shaped by specific collectivities engaged in patterns of cultural production, having for its base a shared body of cultural texts which are significant in an emotive way for a particular group or collectivity.

In regard to the practices as the elements that constitutes the body of the collectivity, they allow us to hold a peculiar perspective that does not need to assume communication regarded as the sharing of meanings or a mutual understanding. The core of commonality lies in an emotive tie towards something external to the subject and which is not the collectivity itself, neither in concrete or abstract form. Therefore, in these dōjin cultures, to *hold* and to *share* this tie is the premise of commonality, and enables action (by holding) and interaction (by sharing). We can describe such a core as the relation between ‘having something of value’ and ‘sharing something of value’. The mutual recognition of *value* in *that something* is the condition that creates a connection

between having and sharing. Here, it is important to note that the accent is in the mutual recognition of value and not necessarily in the recognition or commitment towards a specific value.

This perspective brings our focus to the notions of possession and property as fundamental elements in dōjin cultures. In fact, as has been observable in all the examples included in this study, the topic of possession and property is constantly central. In Chapter Four, we will have a better outlook on this issue when regarding the relation among several dōjin secondary activities, which have an orientation towards community as well as towards original activities oriented towards the markets. That is the peculiarity of the Vocaloid scene.

Chapter Four. The Vocaloid Scene: Institution of Participation

The Vocaloid scene and Hatsune Miku are two expressions that represent a complex social phenomenon in which several components merge in an organic and dynamic way. They include media consumption, technology, media industries and marketing strategies, social dynamics of appropriation and resignification, cultural practices, social networks, creativity and textual productivity alongside a mix of multiple social imaginaries. This phenomenon developed in Japan as one of the newest expressions of its popular culture. Today, the Vocaloid culture and many of its outputs, mainly media texts like videos of many kinds on YouTube, and the iconic presence of the fictional characters related with this culture, like Hatsune Miku, travel around the world through official and fan networks.

The relative popularity of Vocaloid texts and symbols in East Asian countries and among Japanese popular culture fans in Europe and countries of North and South America reveals that this culture is a particular expression of wider phenomena. Therefore, in the Vocaloid scene, we can observe new trends in the production and consumption of media texts, as well as cultural dynamics in a constantly changing technological and social background. User-Generated content (UGC), the consumer generated media (CGM), social media and the social practices throughout the internet are some of the main forces that serve as the backdrop of this complex phenomenon. Therefore, in addition to the characteristics of the media-mix system we addressed in Chapter Two, it is also important to focus on the general logics of information in contemporary society to approach it. Those logics have a particular relation to the nature of the media and to the contents or creative industries. The nature of creative labour and property and the meaning of appropriation or participation in the networks have been significantly transformed by the informational logics of the networks in which they unfold. The Vocaloid scene, including its rise and decline, should be regarded against the backdrop of such informational logics, and the conflicts arising among the contents industries, the media platforms and the institutions that shape the *dōjin* cultures.

4.1 Cultural Crossroads behind the Vocaloid Scene

Vocaloid is a voice synthesiser software developed by Yamaha. As a voice synthesiser, the software allows its user to use a vocal database recorded from a real person to perform as a singer. There are several voice databases or libraries developed by

different companies. Among them, the most popular is the library called ‘Hatsune Miku,’ which features a 16-year-old girl as a Japanese animation-like character. It was developed by Crypton Future Media using the technology of Yamaha’s Vocaloid 2 and Vocaloid 3 software.

Users of the software can ‘make her sing’ any lyrics they want. Therefore, the final product is usually a song performed by the fictional character of the library (i.e. Hatsune Miku) and commonly composed by the user. In many cases, this song is presented along with a video, which is also produced by the user or in collaboration with another user. The complexity of the video may range from a static image of the character to very complex 3D animation where the character dances and sings. These musical videos are released on the internet by the creators under a pen name or nickname. Creators take on the role of producers, and, in many cases, their names are followed by the letter ‘p’ as an abbreviation for ‘producer,’ as in the case of some famous creators such as ‘Kurosua-P’ or ‘Akuno-P.’ Since Hatsune Miku was launched on the market in August 2007, the Japanese video sharing website Nico Nico Dōga, which was launched at the beginning of the same year, has been the main ‘showcase’ where Vocaloid ‘producers’ (called ‘vocalo p’) show and share their productions with other users. Vocaloid technology, fictional characters like Hatsune Miku and media platforms like Nico Nico Dōga, along with their users, are the main components of the core structure of the Vocaloid scene.

The environment in which this Vocaloid scene was born can be described as a cultural crossroad, where many different elements have merged. Among them, technology and DeskTop Music (DTM) enthusiasts, the internet and dōjin subcultures, anime and character fans, among others, are some of the main components. In the previous section, I addressed ‘dōjin’ subcultures and character and anime fans; I will more specifically address cultural practices related to the Vocaloid scene in following sections. Such is the case of the DTM culture and the dōjin music.

DeskTop Music or DTM is the name of amateur electronic music in Japan, which is mainly produced using personal computers. This culture in Japan was established in the late 1970s and during the first half of the 1980s, following a decrease in the cost of digital synthesisers. The spread of personal computers and the MIDI standard, the commercialisation of cassette tape recorders and other technical improvements in music production and reproduction allowed the formation of an active group of electronic music enthusiasts (柴, 2014). The word ‘DTM’ was used for first time for a cheap Roland synthesiser in 1988 (井手口, 2012). However, Shiba (2014) has traced the roots of this culture back to the United States’ hippie and counter-culture movements in the 1960s

and to the prominent club music and rave culture in the 1980s in United Kingdom (柴, 2014).

The link between the Japanese DTM and the former Vocaloid scene and these cultural movements in the United States and England has multiple roots. One of these roots leads to the connections between the counter-culture and technology enthusiast, which have been focused by Castells in the development of the internet and personal computers during the birth of the 'information society' (Castells, 2008). Those movements have a 'natural' link with the SF enthusiast that, as we have seen, have had an active presence in Japan since the 1950s (吉本, 2009). However, this connection should be regarded more as the cultural substratum which supported the rise of the Vocaloid scene after 2007. As Shiba shows, there is a more direct link to be found in some key persons in record companies, software developers or musicians like Tomita Isao (柴, 2014; 美術手帖, 2014). In Shiba's opinion, the same 'spirit' that drove the 1967's 'first summer of love' in San Francisco, and the late 1980s 'second summer of love' in Britain, was also the backbone of the Vocaloid movement (柴, 2014).

Following Ideguchi (2012), 'DTM culture' can be classified as a kind of amateur dōjin music culture, but focused only on computer-generated music. Ideguchi's approach closely follows the development of dōjin music, which is part of the institutions and practices we addressed above as the dōjin productivity, although these activities are not necessarily related to the stereotype of otaku. As Ideguchi points out, DTM culture has its points of divergence from dōjin music (井手口, 2012). In contrast to dōjin music, DTM music is not as closely related to activities like parodies or second creations. Following Barubora (2005), when in the 1980s club music became popular in Japan, and with the influence of house music, the practice of mixing and editing music also became popular. This kind of creativity is, however, different from dōjin productivity in its clear relation to the original work. In contrast, in the DTM as in hip-hop culture, the original is not necessarily the 'most valued' (加野瀬 & ぼるぼら, 2005). In any case, DTM music as a particular technique or way to create music using computers can be regarded as a one more of the practices absorbed by the logics of the dōjin productivity. The rise of the so-called 'MIDI movement', at the beginning of 2000 is an example of this.

As Masaki, the representative of the Vocaloid fan organisation 'Mirai no neiro', and the Vocaloid producer and media writer Kobayashi Onikis have pointed out in interview with the author, the MIDI movement should be regarded as a key antecedent in the Vocaloid scene and as a major factor in the movement's first stage of explosive popularity after 2007. The MIDI movement was essentially the activities of MIDI music enthusiasts who reproduced their favourite songs and music in MIDI format. They

posted links to their creations in massive internet billboards like the famous ‘2Channel’ where they also used to share technical information and converse. The relations on the internet around this practices shaped a particular community of peers with a special feeling of belonging. This movement, however, ended abruptly by what the members of this culture have called ‘the incident of the MIDI eradication’. This eradication was undertaken by the Japanese Society for Rights of Authors, Composers, and Publishers (JASRAC) because of intellectual property infringements.

Another practice related to the origins of the Vocaloid scene is the subgenre of *dōjin* music based on computer ‘cute-girls [bishojo] games’. These video games are a kind of ‘date simulator’ centred on pretty anime-like girls. As Ideguchi argues, at the end of the 1990s, an important layer of enthusiasts’ supporters of *dōjin* music comprised young males who liked to play these popular games. At the same time, many game companies approved the production of derivative works or ‘secondary productions’ of their games’ music (井手口, 2012:40-1).

We can find one example of this in the *dōjin* music based on the popular game makers and visual novel studios ‘Leaf’ (Aquaplus) and ‘Key’ (VisualArt’s). The popularity of the games and their derivative works have been referred to as ‘Leaf-Key’ by its fans, and it is regarded as a particular genre. Another example of a popular genre in *dōjin* music is the work based on the ‘Touhou Project’, a popular amateur bullet shutter game developed by the game programmer ZUN (Ota Junya). The quantity of secondary productions in *dōjin* music related to these two genres makes clear the strong relation between this practice and the ‘beautiful girls’ computer games (井手口, 2012; 富田, 2008). It is also important to note the significant role played by the open orientation of the mentioned game software companies towards the intellectual property. The case of the Touhou Project is also exemplary. The Touhou Project is perhaps the most long-standing and popular genre in the Japanese *dōjin* world. Zun, its creator, has maintained the status of his software as *dōjin* and has therefore avoided copyright issues. As he has stated, he has no intention to change this status. In addition to the open orientation towards the intellectual property, the popularity of this side of the *dōjin* music marks another similarity to the anime-like ‘character’ culture. As Ideguchi notes, the great number of CD jackets depicting beautiful anime-like female characters in *dōjin* music events like ‘M3’ leaves no room to doubt this connection (井手口, 2012).

The sources summarised above are the main cultural trends that merged in the Vocaloid scene before it achieved popularity after 2007. It is important to note the organic relation among these cultural genres, practices, texts and their technical media. The nature of the media-mix as a practice focused on the link of content across media

platforms and the contents industries we addressed in Chapter Two, and the *dōjin* productivity, their institutions and their 'asobi-ba', as well as the hobby genres related to the otaku stereotype addressed in Chapter Three are the foundation of the Vocaloid scene. As we will see in Chapter Six, the so-called 'sabukaru' (subculture) in the early 2000s also held much of the spirit observed in the Vocaloid scene (ユリイカ, 2008). Moreover, it is the informational nature of the networks behind such structures and practices that gives the scene its peculiar characteristics and interest as the subject of this research. I will primarily approach these characteristics by regarding the nature of 'Web 2.0'. This development in the architecture of the web allowed the formation of the Nico Nico Dōga video sharing website. The role of Crypton Future Media, not as content but as a software developer, and the informational nature of Hatsune Miku are also closely connected to the nature of content and intellectual property in Web 2.0. These last three elements have shaped the particular environment in which the Vocaloid scene unfolded.

4.1.1 The Logics of the Network and the Rise of the Vocaloid Scene

As we have seen in Chapter Two, the production and consumption of cultural goods or texts are one of the major forces for organising leisure, creativity and experiences as well as labour, resources, flows of capital and public policies. The nature and place of the 'cultural industry' and its products have changed in many radical ways since the time of paradigmatic approaches like those of Adorno, Barthes, Baudrillard and Bourdieu, among others. Yet, there are also elements of continuity that cause those approaches to continue to be informative, although in a new milieu. The informational nature of culture and society, the network logics that pervade communication and interaction and the media environment of the internet as the paradigmatic example of the former two, shape some of the main characteristics to understand it. The Vocaloid scene and the popularity of Hatsune Miku show a clear picture of this new milieu.

The explosive popularity of Hatsune Miku and the accelerated growth of the Vocaloid scene are closely related to the development of the internet and Web 2.0, which brought about the proliferation of several websites, services and communities that benefited from its interactive nature. The so-called 'do it yourself' (DIY) culture, the 'participatory culture' or the 'fan culture', developed in step with the emergence of these new informational technologies (see Jenkins 1992a; 1992b; 2006a; 2006b). In the case of Japan, this new participatory culture was born from the appropriative institutions of the *dōjin* cultures and their 'asobi-ba' which have become informational. For example,

along with the website Nico Nico Dōga, there was also the important role of the amateur illustration site PIXIV. This website is used to post and share illustrations and was launched only one month after the release of Hatsune Miku. The development and growing popularity of the website is strongly related to the growing popularity of Hatsune Miku beyond the dōjin music sphere. Nico Nico Dōga and PIXIV follow the same logic we observed in activities like the amateur comic production dōjin-shi and gatherings like the dōjin events we addressed before. Therefore, it is easy to regard spaces like Nico Nico Dōga and PIXIV as the migration of dōjin spaces of interaction to the internet. However, as we will see, this is an inaccurate perception.

As some of the literature I reviewed on the topic and my interviews also sustains, former asobi-ba, like the Comic Market or M3, have a different place and function in contemporary dōjin activities, parallel to internet platforms. As many interviewees in my research have pointed out, rather than the migration from ‘real’ places to ‘informational’ ones, there is a growing participation in real places fuelled by the popularity and activity of informational spaces. The internet and real places of interaction are related in organic ways. The mixture of the particular informational nature of the Vocaloid scene in relation to former practices of face-to-face interaction and bodily experiences in performance and play is one of the scene’s most interesting features. In what follows, I will address these informational characteristics in the Vocaloid scene.

Since its birth, the arrival of Hatsune Miku in many different media platforms has been one of her essential characteristics. Going from amateur productions to the professional and licenced use of her concept, Hatsune Miku has been featured in music CDs (Sony Music, Victor Entertainment, etc.), video games (SEGA Project Diva), comics (JIVE Ltd.), novels (Ichijinsha Inc. ASCII MEDIA WORKS Inc., etc.) figures and toys (Good Smile Company), corporative commercials (FamilyMart, Toyota, Google Chrome, Domino’s Pizza, etc.), and even live concerts where Hatsune Miku and other Crypton Vocaloid characters perform as singers in front of an audience, using the computer graphic technology of SEGA and interpreting famous original songs created by the users. Her image has also gone beyond Japanese media, reaching a worldwide presence through YouTube, Facebook and ‘Piapro’, a website launched by Crypton to aid in the spread of the user-created content and encourage the free use of such content under a special licensing system (the Piapro Character License ‘PCL’ system).

This pervasive presence in multiple media resembles the media-mix system we already addressed. However, a closer look reveals features that cannot be described only by focusing on the character business model and the licences system. These new

elements are some of the new characteristics in the Kadokawa-Dwango ecology. We formerly focused on user-generated content and the user-generated media. We should now return to this issue from the perspective of the informational nature of the networks and how it affects the logics of production, distribution and the use of the content.

Many authors have highlighted the informational nature of contemporary society and culture (Castells, 2008, 1996/2011; Terranova, 2004; van Dijk, 2012). For instance, Terranova has focused on networks, information as the shape for environments and the notable connection networks have with capitalism, particularly in regard to the transformation of labour and commodities. Terranova focuses on the 'informational cultures' in contemporary society. She regards the information as the content of the communication act and remarks on the fact that it is not limited to its physical carrier (Terranova, 2004). As researchers like Castells (1996/2011) and van Dijk (2012) have emphasised, the impact of information technologies that presents society with a different nature does not equate to a change in the amount of information transmitted or to the efficiency of new networks. Instead, it provides a change in the characteristics of the transmission. For Terranova, such qualitative transformations can be located in the cultural process and are increasingly taking the attributes of information. Information includes not only the content of the message transmitted in the channels but also the 'massless flows' of information which are becoming the 'dynamic' and 'shifting' environment where contemporary cultural processes unfold. Some of the characteristics of the informational cultures regarded by Terranova are therefore those related to the place of 'meaning' and its important political dimension.

The extensive literature focused on the problem of ideology and 'dominant meanings' has stressed the importance of struggles over significations and interpretations. This focus is particularly important on the cultural studies field and has been inherited by the studies focused on fan cultures. However, for Terranova, in the informational milieu, the problem of meaning is no longer in the centre of the cultural struggle. Instead, the problem is now posed by a multidimensional informational environment in constant flux. This problem has important repercussions, including one that concerns the role that communication plays in this environment.

If, for Terranova meaning is no longer the central point of communication, the contents of messages are not defined by their meaning. Rather, they are defined by a logic of 'noise' and 'information' and the code that makes it possible to distinguish between them. One signal of this transformation is in the increasing symbols without a clear and fixed referent. Consequently, the 'meaning' of the symbols is no longer in its

'content; instead, it is in its 'number' and accumulation. In such conditions, the problem of communication does not concern a mutual understanding but in establishing contact (Terranova, 2004). Here, the task faced by communication platforms on the internet, as in the case of Nico Nico Dōga, PIXIV or YouTube, is reduced to ensure a clear channel free of noise for senders and receivers. This informational nature of culture is working in the logics of networks, which, as van Dijk highlights, have been always an essential part in the nature of social life, but their nature has undertaken important changes in the informational milieu (van Dijk, 2012).

For van Dijk, 'the individual linked by networks' is the basic unit in the 'Network Society', in contrast to 'mass society' where the basic units are collectivities (van Dijk, 2012: 24). For him, a network is 'a collection of links between elements of a unit' (ibid: 28). This represents different levels of an organisation among which individuals are linked. These characteristics of networks in contemporary society are important when we regard digital media networks such as the internet. As J. B. Thompson explains, a medium is a carrier of 'symbolic forms' (Thompson, 1995), which are addressed here as 'contents' (Terranova, 2004; van Dijk, 2012). Some of the characteristics that are typically noted about new media are their 'integrative' nature of different telecommunication functions and the interactivity they allow. This interactivity, as van Dijk observes, has four dimensions: a 'space dimension,' a time dimension,' a 'behavioural dimension' and a 'mental dimension.' It also may be built upon two-sided or multilateral communication (van Dijk, 2012: 7). Here, it is important to note that the characteristics of the media will create a particular space with particular restrictions and possibilities for interaction, and with a particular temporality and particular context of signification (mental). Moreover, the interaction may be not restricted to human agents. These are important characteristics that should be taken into account when addressing the spaces and practices built in internet platforms like Nico Nico Dōga or PIXIV, as we will see below.

4.1.2 Web 2.0 and the Rise of Nico Nico Architectures

'Web 2.0' is the direct backdrop in the technological sphere that supported the spread and popularity of the Vocaloid scene. The places of the audiences in relation to the internet environment holds many similitudes with the 'diffused audiences' described by Abercrombie & Longhurst (1998), as identified in Chapters Three. In contrast to the masse audiences of cinema or soccer games, for 'diffused audiences', the experience of everyday life cannot be differentiated from media consumption (Abercrombie &

Longhurst, 1998). Consumer-generated media like YouTube and Nico Nico Dōga, and SNS like Twitter and Facebook are accurate examples of this marriage between everyday experience and media consumption that unfolds in the informational space of the internet. Some of the changes that the new media technologies and cybernetics have brought to society have been addressed as early as 1981 by Alvin Toffler, who focused on the space of the ‘info-sphere’ and the ‘prosumer’, and more recently the ‘collective intelligence’ described by Pierre Levy (2001) in 1994. However, the space described by Toffler and the practices of production and consumption, as well as the possibilities that the ‘collective intelligence’ may entail were not concretely realised until the birth of Web 2.0.

‘Web 2.0’ was a term introduced by Tim O’Reilly in a conference held in 2004, and it was systematised in a short article called ‘What is Web 2.0?’ (Jenkins et al., 2013; O’Reilly, 2005). In the article O’Reilly, describes Web 2.0 as being based on Levi’s ‘collective intelligence’— i.e. a web built by the participation and the contents of numerous users. The important point to stress here is, following the informational logics described by Terranova (2004), the fact that the current focal point in the media is not in the content but its structure or architecture, as well as the activities or interactions among the users. As Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010) explain, this new ‘user produced web’ contrasts with the nature of ‘Web 1.0’ produced by the internet providers. For Jenkins, Ford and Green (2003), Web 2.0 transfigures the relation between media content, the producers and the users who are now viewed as ‘co-producers’ (Jenkins et al., 2013: 49).

The impact of the internet and Web 2.0 in the Japanese media system has been important and quick. This particular influence should be understood in relation to the nature of the media-mix system and the practices of the enthusiasts in the dōjin culture in which productivity has important similitudes with Toffler’s ‘prosumer’ and its DIY spirit. Hamano (濱野, 2008, 2012) and Hamasaki (濱崎雅弘, 後藤真孝, & 中野倫靖, 2014; 濱崎 & 武田, 2008) are some of the researchers who have analysed social interaction from the perspective of the architectures and networks of what I am calling ‘dōjin productivity’.

Hamano coined the term ‘N creations’ [N-ji sōsaku] from the former secondary creations [2-ji sōsaku] to refer the ‘chains of creativity’ which grow explosively when the video-sharing site Nico Nico Dōga and Hatsune Miku became popular (濱野, 2008, 2012). Hamasaki, whose outlook stems from the development side of network technologies, holds a slightly different perspective on the nature of that productivity (西村拓一, 2010; 濱崎雅弘 et al., 2014; 濱崎 & 武田, 2008). However, he coincides broadly with the

architectural perspective and relies on Levy's concept of collective intelligence (Delwiche & Henderson, 2012) to analyse the different architectures that enable productivity.

In *The Ecosystem of the Architectures*, Hamano (2008) follows the general perspective Lessig details in *Code* (2006) and focuses on the environment that links the user and the software by referring to the keyword 'architectures'. He analyses Google, blogs, '2Chanel', 'Mixi' and Nico Nico Dōga, among other platforms. As he remarks, the first prototype of Nico Nico Dōga was launched in December 2006 by Niwango, Inc., a company devoted to internet community sites and which is now under Kadokawa-Dwango. The beta service was initiated on the 15 of January 2007 (スタジオハードデラックス株式会社, 2011), and, with the launch of the gamma version in March, the upload service become available (柴, 2014).

After its launch, the site quickly became not only a video sharing site but a 'place for play' among internet enthusiasts and people associated with the dōjin culture. As Kawakami Nobuo, former president of Dwango and current Kadokawa Dwango CEO, stated, 'At the beginning, there were only MAD videos and things with problems about copyright' (美術手帖, 2014:62). 'MAD videos' are videos made by mixing formerly existing contents like music or images (柴, 2014). However, in the opinion of Sugimoto Seiji, CEO of Niwango, Inc., there were also many MAD movies which became original content (柴, 2014: 119). As Tomita (2008) commented, after the spread of Windows 95, the production of DTM became easier. At the same time, the internet for first time, had widespread availability in the Windows 95 platform. Therefore, communication between DTM creators also became easier, especially after broadband became available in Japan after 2000. Computers and the internet were the instruments in which the activities of DTM production and communication with peers merged (富田, 2008). When Nico Nico Dwango was launched, it became for the DTM culture the natural environment for meet, play and share.

The popular video-sharing sites like Nico Nico Dōga and the worldwide popular site YouTube are the typical examples of Web 2.0 and the possibilities that its architecture enabled for the 'collective intelligence'. The best example is the proliferation of consumer-generated media like the MAD videos. However, as Hamano also notes, the nature and spirit of both sites are different. We can say that on the basis of a former existent and productive DTM culture, in addition to the dōjin productivity and its community orientation, Nico Nico Dōga was the natural playground and the hub in which a new community took shape.

4.2 The Birth of Hatsune Miku: A Singing Instrument and a Character of Voice

Vocaloid is the trademark of the software developed by Yamaha. This software allows to its user to input lyrics in a piano roll style interface. The software engine will synthesise the voice recorded from a real person in a database, and the output will be a singing voice of surprisingly good quality. Kenmochi Hideki, the developer of the software and former leader of the Vocaloid division in Yamaha, explains its characteristics in the following way:

The software development began in 2000. At that time, the signal processing techniques that are now the base for Vocaloid were actually from a former project, so it was in reality like succeeding that [former] standpoint. So I began the development and, well, if you ask me what my goals were, I didn't imagine anything like now, with Hatsune Miku or people listening Vocaloid songs. It was [designed] simply for the music industry or for the field of music production, I guess. In the case of a real professional, they can just call a singer, and it is the same in the case of the chorus. So it was for the previous stage of preproduction, or demo songs. So it was for provisional songs in those two cases, before having to call a real singer. So you present the song provisionally, and then ask the singer to 'please sing like this'. It was only for that kind of provisional song or back chorus. I began the development hoping people can use it in that way. A very specialised music production tool, just like that. (Kenmochi Hideki 2014. Interview with the author)

As Kenmochi explains, while many of the musical instruments began to be synthesised using computers, only the 'tone of the singing voice' was left behind. The voice synthesising was initiated in the early 1960s at AT&T Bell Laboratories. In the 1990s, there were many examples of software in Japan that could synthesise a singing voice. However, their quality was poor and they were not used in the field of music production; instead they were used in games (スタジオハードデラックス株式会社, 2011; 剣持, 2012: 472; 柴, 2014: 6; 藤本 2011: 132).

The focal points in the development of the software were as follows: 1) intelligibility, so that the lyrics were comprehensible, 2) naturalness, to reproduce the peculiarity of human singing and 3) operability, to establish user friendliness in the song production. The Vocaloid synthesising system has the following components: 1) a user interface to input the lyrics and the notes, 2) a voice library composed of phonemes recorded from a real singing voice and 3) a synthesiser engine that selects and connects the phonemes

from the library (剣持, 2012: 473-4). Based on this technology, Vocaloid was introduced in February 2003. In January 2004, the British company ZERO-G Ltd introduced the first Vocaloid libraries 'LEON' and 'LOLA' in English in the United States. Those libraries were commercialised in Japan by Crypton Future Media in April of the same year. The first Japanese Vocaloid library was 'Meiko', introduced by Crypton in November 2004 after another English library 'MIRIAM' was realised. In its first year, the software recorded a sale of 3,000 copies, which for the DTM software market at the time, was an exceptional hit (スタジオハードデラックス株式会社, 2011).

The voice synthesiser software developed by Yamaha became another product out of the many musical instruments already developed by the company. However, as a musical instrument, it was a peculiar one. By incorporating a real human voice in the system, the result was a true hybrid between human and machine. This particular nature would play an interesting role in the imagination of the software users, as we will see later. Almost all the libraries had human names, but as Kenmochi emphasises, the intention was never to create a 'virtual singer'. Vocaloid was meant to be a tool, and the product names were only a merchandising aid.

Considering it now from this current perspective, we thought of it as a substitute for a human singing voice, but, in reality, it not was that. It also has that feature. [It was] a substitute for a singer. If you don't have at hand a pretty girl voice, a girl who can sing with a pretty voice, you can use the software instead to make it sing. But I think it is not the only thing about it, I guess. If I think about it now, I think there are kinds of expressions you cannot have if not is using Vocaloid, right? If you put it superficially, such things are like singing very fast or with a very high-pitched voice. There are such things like that. But, in the end, it was the lyrics, right? They are quite unconventional lyrics you don't have in the present J-pop or surrounding fields. (Kenmochi Hideki 2014. Interview with the author.)

As Tomita remarks about the world of *dōjin* music, before Vocaloid was launched in 2003, there was no way to produce songs other than by asking a singer to sing (富田, 2008), or by being the person to sing. The technological innovations (synthesisers, personal computers, the internet) had lower the hurdles in the DTM production. Consequently, the number of enthusiasts engaged in such a hobby was increasing when the Vocaloid software was to appear. However, in contrast, the number of singers available was not increasing. There were, therefore, a significant number of amateur creators willing to create and wait for the chance to ask somebody to sing for them (富田,

2008). They were the ones behind the modest success of 'Meiko'.

However, the 'phenomenon' or 'movement' that contributed to the popularity of the Vocaloid scene was not yet possible by 2004. The environment that influenced the explosive popularity of Vocaloid on the internet was not available until 2007, a few months earlier than the commercialising of the Hatsune Miku library.

As Kenmochi remembers, after the Hatsune Miku software was released, the reaction was substantial. Just after it was put on sale, at the end of August 2007, it appeared in the Nico Nico Dōga video-sharing site, and a great quantity of people uploaded songs using Hatsune Miku or even 'weird things you cannot call songs' (Kenmochi).

...it was around August and the beginning of September. As you may expect, there were a lot of copy songs. Songs that already exist in J-pop or in some cases even 'enka'. But only one or two weeks after, it began to appear one after another people uploaded original songs. Now, I think that more than the half of the people are uploading original songs. [At that time], I just looked surprised and thought, 'This is great!' I just realised there were over there lots of people wanting to make their songs, wanting a place to share them. And with lyrics! I now realise those people were in a situation of wanting to make songs with lyrics, but they were not able to [do so].

(Kenmochi Hideki 2014. Interview with the author.)

Crypton introduced the Hatsune Miku software for Vocaloid 2 on the 17th of August, 2007, and released it on the 31st of the same month. It was the first of the 'Character Vocal Series'. Only three months later, it was labelled as a 'revolution in the DTM scene' and Hatsune Miku was referred to as a 'miraculous diva' (Maeda & Hireaiwa, 2007). The software achieved sales of over 40,000 copies in the first year, becoming a megahit in its sector (スタジオハードデラックス株式会社, 2011).

The 'Hatsune Miku miracle' was also an unexpected miracle for its developers. As Kenmochi explained, the Vocaloid software was not selling well, and the development team was reduced by 2007 to two people, including him. It was while discussing these difficulties with Crypton that they decided to 'make something interesting before the end'. The idea was to 'make the synthesised voice sing like a virtual girl' (剣持, 2013). Sasaki Wataru, the developer of Hatsune Miku, also remembers 2007 as a difficult year as there was a continuous depression in the music industry in general. The idea of abandoning the Vocaloid project was in the air (柴, 2014).

4.2.1 The voice and the illustration: Software with personality

The establishment of a new trial was pushed by the feeling of crisis that both companies shared regarding the project of Vocaloid and its further development. Itō Hiroyuki, the representative director of Crypton, did not have any particular connection with or understanding of the ‘otaku’ or ‘character culture’, as he has stated in several interviews and columns. However, he has made public that since the beginning of the project, they had planned to use, in the case of Hatsune Miku’s voice, a voice actor like those utilised in the animation industry, rather than a singer.

The new challenge of Hatsune Miku was in producing a character, and it was commercialised as the first of the ‘CV series’. Therefore, the selection of a voice that expressed the personality of that character was one of the first stages in the development. In the words of Sasaki Wataru, the developer of Hatsune Miku, ‘We were looking for a so-called “lolita voice” [...] [a sensation] of conveying with the voice, “I am cute” (Sasaki Wataru quoted in 柴, 2014: 104-5). And, in Itō’s words, ‘As Vocaloid 2 Hatsune Miku was developed using the recorded voice of Fujita Saki, who is a voice actress dedicated to animation or the like, the biggest characteristic is to be able to synthesise a cute girl’s voice. In order to strength this characteristic visually, in the package of this software, we showed a character illustration of the kind that appears in animation’ (伊藤 2012: 477).

The person in charge of drawing the Hatsune Miku character was the illustrator KEI. When he was called to join the project, the concept was still unclear, but, as he relates, the design began to focus on two elements: the introduction in the character design of the Yamaha synthesiser ‘DX7’, and to produce a ‘near futuristic’ atmosphere (前田・平岩 2007). As Sasaki has commented, they chose to work with KEI, as his illustrations evoke a feeling of ‘inorganic matter’ (佐々木 2008: 12). KEI illustrations have the qualities of the ‘cute’ animation characters but lack what Sasaki regards as ‘moe’: a sensuality that evokes the flesh of the body. For Sasaki, ‘the body of flesh [nikutai-sei] and Vocaloid are two entirely different things’ (ibid); therefore, they were searching for something more inorganic and machine-like.

In addition to this concept, there was also a market strategy. Itō expresses it in a direct way: ‘We wanted to sell a lot; so, to start with, we decided to create a character. But I thought if we create a ‘moe-kyara’ to straightforwardly, it perhaps will not be accepted by the music fans. So, we created the illustration taking into consideration not losing its identity as a software’ (伊藤 2013: 99). The design of Hatsune Miku was oriented to two different targets, the *dōjin* culture and its orientation towards

animation characters and the DTM fans, adepts of electronic music and computers. This was the way in which Hatsune Miku was produced—as the combination of a *character* and a *software*.

As Masuda points out, the voice and the personality are closely related to each other (増田 2008: 37). In other words, only when a personality is assumed does the sound that comes out from the software become a voice. Therefore, we may emphasise here the difference between the sound produced by the software and the character imagined by the user. As we will see below, Itō Hiroyuki also draws a clear distinction between the software of Hatsune Miku, which is a product to sell, and the character of Hatsune Miku, which they have set open for non-commercial use.

The design of the character and the particular voice used in Hatsune Miku gives her a personality that stands out from former voice libraries like ‘Meiko’ or ‘Kaito’, also developed by Crypton. However, as the representative of Crypton from the advertising department stated in an interview with the author, the primary aim of the company was not to create a character or a virtual idol:

The concept was not to create a character. Rather, we produced a clear concept of the product [by focusing on elements like] the voice quality or the character in order to be able to reach more users. Hatsune Miku was the first [product] in which our company planned a strong concept to this degree. [...] [But], after all, Hatsune Miku is a software for producing music, so we do not use a definition as an ‘idol’. (Crypton’s representative. 2014. Email interview with the author)

However, Hatsune Miku has a significant weakness as a character. Fictional characters are usually imagined as the protagonists of a narrative. Their personality comes to be in the narration and through the narration. However, in the case of Hatsune Miku, the expression of a personality is being left mainly to the tone quality of the voice and to the visual features of the illustration. The traces of a narrative are in her strange name, ‘Hatsune’, which in Japanese is written with the kanji for ‘first’ and ‘sound’, and ‘Miku’, which has the katakana for one possible reading of the kanji ‘future’. Therefore, the name ‘Hatsune Miku’ evokes the meaning of ‘the first sound from the future’. There are also some details of her profile on the official Crypton’s website, like her age, height, weight and favourite music genres. A representative from Crypton stated the following:

The ‘virtual singer’s characters’ of our company do not have any clear background like personality or birthplace. By omitting a detailed setting, we are leaving to the creators [freedom] to give birth to unlimited narratives through free inspiration. I think that it is precisely because of

that diversity that the fans can also easily find a work, within a great amount of songs and narratives, they can ‘sympathise’ with. [...] Hatsune Miku was not created to circulate content in the media, but [is a] package character of a software intended for the creators to produce songs. For that reason, we have purposely not included any detailed character setting, and it has being developed to make it easy for the creators to expand their image and create. (Crypton’s representative. 2014. Email interview with the author)

Crypton’s aim to leave the development of the character in the hands of the software users and its fans, created content to be used similar to a video game. At the beginning of the Vocaloid movement, when Hatsune Miku appeared on sale, one important layer of the software users were young high school or middle high school boys. As ‘Nijihara-Peperon p’, one of the creators who collaborated in this research commented, Hatsune Miku was cheap in comparison to the other voice libraries on the market in 2007, and, therefore, affordable for a high school student like him. Many of those young boys were fans of ‘cute girls’ video games or animation. Among them, the video game ‘THE iDOLM@STER’ (by Bandai Namco Games) was particularly popular in 2007, as the animation adaptation, *Idolmaster: Xenoglossia* (by Sunrise) aired between April and October, just before the release of Hatsune Miku. Within that background and with the increasing popularity of the Nico Nico Dōga website, the creativity in the network undertook the shape of an ‘idol rising game’. Sakurai Susumu, CEO of the anime and manga company C.P.U.C.O Ltd., regards it in the following way:

I have talked with Mr Ito from Crypton, and he was saying to me that they as Crypton don’t want people to take Miku as a character but as a musical instrument. [...] So, in that sense, they don’t ask for the rights of something that was created using that instrument. [...] But yes, I think it is a new way [of doing business] [...] I think it is similar to a game—a game of competition of who can make it sing better (laughs). In fact, Hatsune Miku does not sing well if you only follow the notes. If you don’t add some low tones in the gaps and do many small modifications, it does not sing well. [...] so it is for me like a competition of who can do that better. [...] ‘I can make Miku sing better than you guys!’ (laughs) something like that. And everyone puts that in Nico Nico or in YouTube and competes. I feel the sensation of the game is strong, even when it is a creative activity. (Sakurai Susumu, Interview with the author. April 2014)

4.2.2 Hatsune Miku: The character, the tool and the kyara

When standing, dancing and singing on the stage, in front of hundreds of clamorous fans, Hatsune Miku is a real idol. She thanks the audience at the end of the songs, and they cheer and scream; they love her and sing with her, but she still is not human. Her fans know this very clearly, and this is perhaps for them one of her most fascinating characteristics. She is not human, but she is real.

For its creators and the related industries, Miku is referred as a ‘character’. As the ‘Character Vocal Series’ and her name make clear, she was projected as a fictional character—as an android coming from the future (ユリイカ, 2008). Moreover, the commercial interest in her is usually seen by the industry as part of the character business, in the context of the media-mix in Japan. However, as we have seen, for its creators as well as for the companies dedicated to produce and commercialize voice libraries for the Vocaloid engine, it has been essential to remark on the difference between the imaginary character of Hatsune Miku and the software.

As we saw in Chapter Three, researchers such as Y. Tsuji, O. Umemura, K. Mizuno (2009), Odagiri (2010), Steinberg (2012), Itō (2006), Ishisaka (2005), Kanzawa (2006) and Taniguchi (2010) have shown how the Japanese subcultures markets have focused on the major media types like anime, manga and games industry markets as ‘primary markets’, and on other uses of the content supported by these media forms as ‘secondary markets’, like toys, DVDs, CD sales, and other goods based on the merchandising and licensing of the related media content. The secondary markets are, in fact, the most lucrative and have been focused on the character.

Thus, although manga and anime are the principal sources of content to be commercialised, the structure of production develops, as Odagiri explains, around the characters. We can say then that manga, anime, games and other media provide the platforms where visual or audio-visual discourses shape, narratively or not, the imaginary space where characters perform. As such, it is not the anime or manga that travels through different media forms; rather, it is the characters that inhabit that media and the narrative worlds.

The so-called character business is also a usual strategy in the contents industries to tackle the high risks of this kind of production, and it can be compared to the ‘star system’ used by the Hollywood filmmaking industries. Nevertheless, as we saw in Chapter Two, a growing emphasis on the characters’ charisma can be observed in general since the 1990s, with the famous examples of Hello Kitty and Pokemon and the emphasis on moe characters (Moe Kyara) that has followed the success of the TV

animation *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (神澤, 2007). In a general context of financial struggles within the anime industries, this trend has been reinforced in the ‘midnight anime’, produced mainly by a new model of production and many small industries that were established in the short period of anime financial success that occurred from 2005 to 2006, called the ‘anime bubble’ (神澤, 2007; 青木, 2006; 石坂, 2005; 谷口 & 麻生, 2010).

As Odagiri (2010) has shown, the business centred on the character and its branding is a common practice since the origin of the TV anime industry like in the case of ‘Tetsuwan Atomu’, and the migration of characters from narrative media like anime or manga to goods without narratives like toys and candies flows not always in the same direction. That means that the launching of a character in the market can also precede the narrative settings, and these settings can be figured out after the commercial success of the character, such as with the famous case of Hello Kitty (小田切, 2010). In any case, the strong ‘personality’ or ‘charisma’ of the character is the main driving force behind the purchasing of the product. It is this strong presence that makes possible the appearance of the character in many different media and products, prompting the so-called media mix or cross-media.

The ‘personality’ or ‘charisma’ that we recognise in a character is one aspect of the ‘reality’ of the characters (伊藤剛, 2005), and without this reality the business model will fail. It can be said that this reality depends on some narrative development of the character and a ‘world view’ that supports its fictional existence. Therefore, it is because of a strong development of this narrative that a character, along with its storytelling, can jump through different media. However, as is clear in the case of Vocaloid voice libraries, this is not the case of Hatsune Miku or, for instance, characters like Hello Kitty. Furthermore, as Sasaki Wataru (developer of Hatsune Miku) has suggested in many interviews, the success of Hatsune Miku is because of this lack of a narrative. As Sasaki repeatedly states, this lack was emphasised in the design of the Hatsune Miku concept. Miku is not human, she does not have a body, she ‘is a symbol’ and ‘her existence is beautiful precisely because you can feel this lack’ (Sasaki 2008: 13).

As we saw, Hatsune Miku has no background narrative; Crypton only gave the user some drawings of the character’s appearance, age, height and weight, favourite music genre and voice database. There is no story associated with her, but Hatsune Miku’s charisma has made her a very real virtual idol that inhabits several different media.

In Chapter Three, we briefly addressed the ‘kyara’ theory of Itō Go (2005). Itō’s theory is based on the manga media; therefore, the graphic and ‘iconic’ nature of the kyara is emphasised. However, Ideguchi (井手口, 2012), based on Itō and addressing the

case of Hatsune Miku, poses what he calls the 'Voice kyara' (井手口, 2012:170-196). As we saw, one of the characteristics of the kyara is that, due to its simplicity, it has some independence from a particular narrative, as well as from a particular medium (伊藤剛, 2005:54). This independence emphasises the intertextuality of the kyara. Ideguchi also focuses on this element, and, for him, the voice is another 'dimension' in the 'independence' of the kyara (伊藤剛, 2005: 76). While Hatsune Miku is independent of any particular narrative, her voice is an important element in the building of her reality. Nevertheless, in any case, the voice and the graphic design of Hatsune Miku are a set that travels together through multiple media.

Here, by defining Hatsune Miku as a kyara, I would like to also address another element: the emphasis on her reality despite, or even because of, her lack of *humanity*. As Ideguchi has noted, when the users of Vocaloid create a new song, they do not say, 'I played XXX on Vocaloid' or 'I used Vocaloid to perform XXX', like in the case of other software or musical instruments. They, in contrast, say, 'I asked Miku to sing XXX' or 'Miku sung XXX for me' (Ideguchi 2012: 170).

In the context of the Vocaloid technology designed by Yamaha, the 'Character Vocal Series' introduced by Crypton brings a new concept not foreseen by Yamaha. Yamaha is an industry devoted to the fabrication of musical instruments, and its objective for the development of Vocaloid was, as Kenmochi Hideki has stated several times, the development of a new tool for the music industry. That means that the goal was the production of a tool to be used to play songs. The concept of the Character Vocal Series introduced by Crypton was new for Yamaha. But, as Ideguchi argues, the novelty of Hatsune Miku is not to be a character, but to be a kyara. Notwithstanding that Miku is the first of the CV Series, she is preceded by 'Vocaloid Meiko' and 'Vocaloid Kaito', which were also created by Crypton. 'Meiko' is based on the name of the real singer whose voice was used for the software, but Kaito is a fictional name for a fictional character.

However, as Ideguchi notes, the idea of a character that sings and performs is relatively usual in the anime and video game world. Ideguchi gives the example of the heroine of the video game 'Tokimeki Memorial' (Konami 1994), Shiori Fujisaki (a fictional character), who debuted as a singer with the album, 'My Sweet Valentine' (Konami 1997). He also gives the example of 'K-On!', a franchise present in manga, anime, video games and movies that depicts the story of a school rock band. The songs composed in the fictional world of K-On! by the rock band members were released on several albums by the Tokyo Broadcasting System. We can add several similar examples of fictional characters that feature singers who release albums, such as the 'Macross' anime series and the popular manga and anime 'Nana'.

These all are examples of characters since they are supported by a narrative and depicted as 'humans' in their own fictional world. However, Ideguchi argues for the idea of 'Voice kyara' and emphasises its characteristic independence from narratives relying on the reality of the voice. As Itō Go highlights, part of the reality of the kyara (and also its charm) relies on the fact that it is not human. This is what Itō calls a 'sub-human' or 'quasi-human' nature (伊藤剛, 2005: 264). Itō also points to our capacity to exhibit empathy and show feelings towards this 'device' (the kyara,). In his analysis, he considers the work of Azuma Hiroki on the character as a reference. As Azuma comments, 'Even when we can perceptually make a distinction between a human and a character, emotionally we cannot'. (Azuma, in 伊藤剛, 2005: 273). Therefore, Itō argues that 'besides, the device called kyara does not necessarily express a body or a subject (actor-protagonist) in a modern sense, at least, it entices us because of its capacity to express an emotion' (伊藤剛, 2005: 273).

The malleability of Hatsune Miku based on her independence from any narrative is an element commonly regarded by her developers and analysts as one of its features, but this malleability does not make any difference with that of tools and musical instruments. This is Vocaloid technology, as was originally designed by Yamaha. However, the emotional attachment that the consumers feel towards Hatsune Miku as a character when they act as her producers and 'ask' her to sing, plus the malleability and freedom that users have over her, can only be possible because of the 'sub-human' nature of Hatsune Miku that Itō Go and Ideguchi regards in the kyara. She does not pretend to be human, and we can describe her (using Azuma (2001) and Shirota (2008: 110) as reference) as a system of symbols composed of a database, where iconic elements, a bank of sounds and a software that organises this bank interact to create a device called Hatsune Miku. The artificiality of her voice and the songs written by the users, like in the cases of songs with a singing speed that is impossible for any human being, along with her CG graphic design and other features, are constant reminders of that.

As we shall see in the following sections, this characteristic of the software design was essential to merge the field composed of the dōjin productivity and industrial practices based on such productivity into a dynamic and conflictive network of several actors.

4.3 New Environments for New Practices in Consumption and Production

On the 4th of September 2007, five days after the release of Hatsune Miku, the user 'Otomania' uploaded a flash animated video in Nico Nico Dōga called, 'I tried to sing to Vocaloid 2 Hatsune Miku the "Ievan Polka"' (有村 2008). This video was perhaps the first hit of Hatsune Miku. In the 'promotion video' (PV) of the song, the illustration of the package of the software appears first, but when the song starts, a 'cute' small body parody of the character of Hatsune Miku appears, moving a leek up and down with her arm. The character parody was later known as 'Hachune Miku'. The parody was drawn by the user 'Tamago'. In fact, this song uploaded by Otomania is a parody of another movie. The movie being parodied is titled 'Loituma – Ieva's Polka' which was uploaded in Nico Nico Dōga on the 6th of March in 2007, by the user 'Tororo', which was a parody of the character, Orihime Inoue, of the popular TV animation and manga 'Bleach'. This earlier video featuring the character from Bleach was only one of many videos uploaded by several users depicting characters singing and moving a leek in circles. This is an example of the kind of 'collective creations' of the MAD culture, representative of Nico Nico Dōga at its beginning.

However, there was something different in the example of the MAD video uploaded by Otomania. The elements of the 'Hatsune Miku shaking a leek' and the parody character 'Hachune Miku' were introduced in the product 'Nendoroid Hatsune Miku', a figurine or small model of the character that was released in March of 2008, six months after the video was uploaded on the internet. The figurine was produced by the major firm Good Smile Company, Inc., a manufacturer of hobby products, under the official licence of Crypton Future Media, Inc.

The fact that the parody character Hachune Miku and the leek was turned into official elements of the product was the signal of an important turning point of the dōjin culture and the contents industry. At the back of the production of this small toy, it was the transformation in the structure of production and legal frameworks that allowed the incorporation of amateur works. We have been calling this kind of productivity, a Consumer Generated Contents. By the end of 2007 and the beginning of 2008, through trial and error, several companies like Crypton, Dwango (Nico Nico Dōga) and Kadokawa were developing the framework that allowed the achievement of a new environment of production and consumption. In this section, I will address to the case of Crypton as an example of a system that we can call a 'platforms of contents management', and see how it is opposed to the former 'contents industries'.

4.3.1 Contents, interfaces, and intellectual property

Itō Hiroyuki, the representative director of Crypton, has stated several times that there is a difference between a ‘platform’ and a ‘character’ in the case of Hatsune Miku. Here, I will address the structure and the ideals of the system that supports and encourages the creativity that Crypton strove to develop that is rooted in this distinction.

In the ‘First Nico Nico Scholars Association Beta Symposium¹⁹’ in December of 2011 (江渡 2012), in a session entitled ‘Creating Architectures for Creating’,²⁰ Itō Hiroyuki referred to three main activities of Crypton. One is the importation and development of ‘virtual instruments’. Hatsune Miku, which is a virtual instrument, belongs to this category. The second is to provide the system and the services of music aggregator. In his words, ‘This is taking the role of an intermediary by providing the music files from the artist to each service for downloading, and receiving the profit generated by the downloads from each downloading service to distribute it to the side of the artist’ (伊藤 2012). The third is to provide and manage web services. There are several examples of the web services provided by Crypton. Here, I will focus on ‘Piapro’ and ‘Karent’. These websites are catalogued as ‘sites style CGM for uploading’, and described by Itō as ‘a [service] focused on enabling the uploading of illustrations or music of Hatsune Miku or other Vocaloid characters by the own creators, and sharing those works enabling its use by other creators’ (伊藤 2012: 50). The structure that supported the transformation of ‘Hatsune Miku’, a fan or amateur creation into official content, is based on these three elements.

From the perspective of a ‘virtual instrument’, Hatsune Miku is Crypton’s merchandise; it is a software to be used as a tool. Consequently, as Itō has repeatedly stated, as in the case of any instrument, Crypton is not the holder of any of the songs produced by this instrument. However, Hatsune Miku as a character is a creative work; therefore, it is automatically protected by copyright law. For that reason, if the company has the basic policy of allowing the free use of the character for any user, it becomes necessary to issue a licence.

Therefore, Crypton created a licence called the ‘Piapro Character License²¹’ (PCL). The aim of this licence created by Crypton, in the words of Itō, is to transform a ‘principle of NG’ (not good) into a ‘principle of OK’. (2012: 478). As Itō clarifies,

¹⁹ 「第一回ニコニコ学会βシンポジウム」

²⁰ 「作るアーキテクチャを作る」

²¹ 「ピアプロ・キャラクター・ライセンス」

‘Copyright law applies automatically to all creative works without regarding the creators will’ (ibid). However, ‘the copyright holder, by determining in advance the range of the authorization to exploit the creative work and making it public, is able to allow its use within that range by anyone, omitting the steps needed for individual authorizations’ (2012: 478). Therefore, Crypton, which is the copyright holder of Hatsune Miku, abbreviated the process of issuing individual licences to each creator in order to allow the use of the character. By changing their stance to ‘OK’, they allowed the production of several secondary creations, transforming the status of this activity, from a copyright infringement to a legal activity.

As Itō Hiroyuki relates, a ‘Guideline for the Character’s Use²²’ was issued by Crypton as early as December 2007, and ‘it was the first time that all the persons became able to produce secondary creations with confidence in a legal manner’ (2012, 480). Furthermore, the ‘Piapro Character Licence’ was issued in June 2009, allowing the free use of all the characters produced by Crypton whenever their use does not infringe on the following conditions: 1) to have a non-commercial use and to not generate profit; 2) to not violate the public order and morality; 3) to not infringe on the rights of third parties (ibid). Additionally, in December 2012, it adopted the ‘Creative Commons Licence’ (CC BY-NC) (美術手帳 2013). In an email interview with an advertising personnel representative of Crypton, the company detailed their aim with this stance in the following way:

The licence of our company is not something that we have thought to facilitate the ‘character business’; rather, it was thought to support the ‘productive activities of the creators’. Basically, secondary creations are not allowed without the agreement of the [original] author. However, formerly there was the segment where secondary creations have been created within an unspoken agreement (grey zone). In our company, to enable creators to produce their secondary creations with confidence, our company has developed a licence regarding the use of the characters and decided to acknowledge unrestricted production within that licence. Until that, the places that have set up a licence with that aim were few. Therefore, I think it is possible to say that, in that respect, this was a new way of thinking. (Crypton representative. 2014. Email interview with the author.)

Besides the acknowledgment of the unrestricted use of the character by Crypton, the aggregating services and the management of CGM style websites formed the structure

²² 「キャラクターの利用のガイドライン」

that allowed the commercialisation of users' creations as with the example of Hatsune Miku. As we will see, it is interesting to note the emphasis by Crypton in not categorising this system as 'character business', which has been widely used by the content industry as we saw in Chapter Two.

The difference stance of Crypton towards IP and the management of the character became the focus of attention of several companies in the sector. In the case of music, the services of aggregators are similar to the role of the contents distributor. If the work produced is an original one, there is not much difference in the use of this kind of services between the Vocaloid contents and the former scene of indie music. However, through the management of licences, it is also possible to commercialise the Hatsune Miku related contents by Crypton. The multiple uses of UGC for different products featuring Hatsune Miku is an example of this. Here, it is essential to focus on the paradoxical fact that the original creative works generated with Hatsune Miku are, at the same time, secondary creations, depending on the point of view of the use of the character. Here, an understanding of the difference between character and tool is essential.

As in the example of Hatsune Miku and the leek, the creativity rooted in *dōjin* productivity behind the MAD culture or in many creations on the internet is not based on a single person's creativity. The practices of appropriation, as we saw in Chapter Three, may be regarded as the collective construction of a stock of cultural resources. These contents are, therefore, at the same time an intellectual property and the shared resources of a particular collectivity. From that perspective, we can focus on this system that allows the creative collaboration between amateur users and industrial actors as a marriage between commercial practices based on the idea of creativity and contents' intellectual property, as well as non-commercial practices based on the idea of play and contents as cultural resources. This marriage has proven to be as conflictive as it is productive.

The role of the CGM is central in this structure. In the case of Crypton, there are the examples of 'Piapro' and 'Karent'. Piapro was launched in December 2007, at the same time as the issuing of the 'Guidelines'. It is a website where it is possible to upload music, illustrations, texts or 3D models (for MMD). Its particular feature is that the uploader must be the creator of such content and must agree on the use of the uploaded content by a third party as a resource for producing a new work. For that reason, the website has adopted the Creative Commons Licence (CCL) system. Therefore, it becomes possible to create various 'secondary creations' on the base of an explicit agreement by the creators. This way of collective creation is usually called 'collaboration'

in the Vocaloid scene, although most of the times it lacks the mutual commitment and communication between collaborators that a collective work usually entails.

The works that are created by using this website usually take the form of a short video which can be shared in Nico Nico Dōga. The website allows content to be linked between both websites. (美術手帳 2013). As the website states, '[Piapro] provides a 'place for creation' for creating new contents' (Piapro, 2014). It is therefore an environment that supports the 'chains of creativity', 'N-ji sōsaku' (濱野, 2008; 2012) or 'internet native contents' (濱崎雅弘, 後藤真孝, & 中野倫靖, 2014; 濱崎 & 武田, 2008). In addition, the website 'Karent' was launched in 2008; as the website states, it is 'a CGM style record label by the artists and for the artists' (Karent, 2014). The users who upload content to this website can manage such by themselves, and can put their creations on sale using several downloading services such as the 'iTunes Store', 'Amazon MP3' and the Japanese 'Tsutaya DISCAS'.

What were the motivations behind Crypton's encouragement of the free use of the character of Hatsune Miku? Similar to Kenmochi, Itō conveyed their surprise when soon after the realising of Hatsune Miku, began 'the dynamic movement of the so-called secondary creations' (伊藤 2013: 99). As he explains, 'I thought we have to do something so this chain of creativity does not stop [...] we are Miku's protectors' (ibid). Among the works focused on Hatsune Miku as a subject, there were not only songs, which are the output of the software, but also illustrations, several kinds of animations, cosplay, amateur dancing or 'odotte-mita' (I tried to dance), amateur singing or 'utatte-mita' (I tried to sing) among other kinds of content, most of them uploaded as videos on the internet. As Itō states, 'It formed a kind of cultural area, and Miku became a platform for creation' (伊藤 2012: 50). The system of management and the stance towards the IP of the character undertaken by Crypton was to protect that dynamism of creativity. This stance opened new possibilities for the dōjin productivity and the development of new services in relation with those activities, linking industrial actors and consumers in a way that was seen as revolutionary by the end of 2010. The stance towards the open use of the IP of the character and the emphasis on the software as a creation tool became the standard in the Vocaloid scene.

Internet, Co., Ltd., was the second company in Japan that began to produce voice libraries for Vocaloid. Murakami Noboru, the president of the company, reflects on the popularity of the Vocaloid scene at its beginning:

Of course, before Vocaloid, there was the stream of making music with computers and publishing it. [...] Before the Vocaloid, in particular, there was the so-called CGM, so that [kind of thing] was nothing new. It already

existed as a way of doing things. However, the opportunities of seeing that increased, in particular [with the] launch of the video site Nico Nico Dōga, or the secondary creation in PIXIV. But I think it was the fact that those movie sites or tools or ways of doing the work coincided in time, particularly an important factor. [...] I think that it was because of that, that the amount of people in contact [with that kind of contents] augmented explosively. For example, the secondary creations, until now, there has been created a lot of those secondary creations of anime, for example. However, there was no official stance allowing the secondary production of contents until now. So the fact that the characters of Vocaloid were since its beginning allowing that kind of thing, I think that was an important factor. [...] The person who draws the characters also allowed that, so, now is not necessary to do [that secondary creations] secretly. Doing that now quite openly is, I think, a very important factor! (laughs). (Murakami Noboru, President of Internet Co., Ltd. Interview with the author 2014)

Internet Co., Ltd., debuted in the Vocaloid scene with the popular voice library and character Gackpoid (July 2008) followed by Megpoid (June 2009). These popular characters were among the first and most famous voices libraries and characters produced by this company. The use of the character is discussed here:

We are not doing it as a character business. So, if it is about the use of the character for a commercial purpose, of course we issue the licence. However, Vocaloid itself is basically a voice synthesiser software, so we regard it as an instrument, which is not a character good, right? We only added the character originally just to make easier to understand who is singing. So, we didn't start from the perspective of producing and selling a character, so I think that is the difference [with the character business]. (Murakami Noboru, President of Internet Co., Ltd. Interview with the author 2014)

The stance of Crypton and Internet Co., Ltd. is clear. They are software companies and their focus is not on producing contents but rather on selling the software, or in any case, the environment of services and software. The way in which they regard the customers is therefore as 'users' and not as 'audiences', as in the case of the contents industry. Therefore, they were able to conceive and build a system which otherwise is regarded as an act of suicide by the contents industry. Sakurai Susumu, CEO of the anime and manga company C.P.U.C.O Ltd., regards it in the following way:

I think that they will realise it at a certain point. Of course! You know, you have everyone making and selling at their will secondary works like dōjin magazines and the like, using the character goods. And no money is coming to the side of the original creator. Any money is coming to the animation company, of course. This is a bankrupt business! [...] But you have some of those who are doing their [dōjin] activities here are also becoming professionals. Are not they will be smashing their entrance? [in the professional field] I think that is also another point to be worried about. [...] Here in this business we also have the word ‘pro-dōjin’. There [are] a lot of people who [are] not drawing a manga in a commercial editorial house and can earn their living only with a dōjin magazine— people who are eating [learning they living] by drawing and using others’ content. That is not [at the level of] a hobby, don’t you think? At least that is what we think. [...] So to tell the truth, I think that the dōjin market has grown much too big.

[...] The ‘pro-dōjin’, they are not producers [producer forces] but they are becoming producers. [...] I think that what they are doing is a kind of culture that ‘strangulates’ [limits] us, the first contents holders. [...] Today’s user participatory culture [style][yūzā sankā-gata], for me, is nothing more than participating in an event of merchandise [that has already been] created. So I think that [for the most part] they are not participating in the creative [part]. (laugh). You have for instance the ‘I tried to sing’ [utattemita] in Nico Nico Dōga, and people becoming singers. [...] OK, I know, the chances have increased, but [that is not real participation]. Let’s say, for example, there is an announcement of ‘this animation is going to be produced’, and then ‘these are the lyrics of the theme song’. I think that only if there is a case like that can they then say ‘we are doing a recruitment in Nico Nico Dōga. Please everyone try and sing it, and the best singer will be the singer of this song’... If there is something like that, then I think, that is a user participatory style. [...] But it is not like that, right? Those people with talent just upload [their contents] as they please, and then there is a promoter who thinks, ‘if we make a CD with this guy it will perhaps sell’, and then they release a CD with some of them as a singing voice. That is the way in which now those CDs of singers have been produced. But I wonder if these guys [singers] are going to be here five years later... They may disappear after everything is consumed, I think. It looks like it’s

becoming professionals, but is that a professional? I wonder...

(Sakurai Susumu, Interview with the author. April 2014)

As we will see in Chapter Five, there was also a similar view to Sakurai's, but now not from the side of the contents industry, but from the side of some creators I interviewed in the Vocaloid field. The first enthusiasm for 'transforming the scene of music' and 'dissolving the barrier between professionals and amateurs' began to fade when the 'amateurs that became professionals' seemed to become a 'disposable cheap labour force'. However, in regard to the perspective of the contents industry, if this is a 'bankrupt business' how did the way system impulse by Crypton and the user-generated media such as Nico Nico Dōga become so popular and viable? Here, the emphasis will be on the difference between the *contents* industry and the CGM based on UGC, or what we can call a 'platform industry'

4.3.2 Contents, platforms and ownership of the character as IP

Way companies like Crypton allow people to use their products without restrictions on their intellectual property like the characters. The character is a content', like in the case of an animation industry and the media-mix' and at the same time, a platform or an interface as it is a software used to produce songs. Without regarding this difference, in any case there is an intellectual property. However, the property rights regarding each case have a different stance and nature. As Itō explains, as with the examples regarding the use of Creative Commons Licence or free software, allowing the open use of a software is not a novelty for a software company.

As Crypton notes, the character is for them not a content but a platform or an interface. Here, is important to focus on the differences between the platform and the interface, as Itō regards it. From his perspective, 'for an interface, in order to be useful, it must able to be used for anybody. [...] it is needed to be public' (伊藤 2012: 478). This way of thinking is natural for a software company, but as the interview with Sakurai shows, a similar attitude from the contents industry may bring dire consequences. We can summarise the different viewpoints by making an opposition between the contents industry and a platform industry. If the focus of the first is to produce a 'content', the second is focused on producing an environment where users' activities are managed as contents. This is precisely the case with consumer-generated media, which are supported by user-generated content.

As it is natural for a contents industry to focus on, for example, manga or animation, the high cost of the production process makes indispensable the profit from the

secondary use of the product. As discussed in Chapter Two, there is a particular fragile situation of the animation industry in Japan, in relation to TV companies, makers or promotion companies. As we saw, the character is a particularly easy content or IP to be used in several platforms and mediums. The profit that comes from the use of the character from third parties' industrial actors (e.g., makers, advertising and pachinko machines) are essential to keep the industry alive.

As Hesmondhalgh has pointed out, cultural industries face the continuous uncertainty and risk of producing unsuccessful contents (Hesmondhalgh, 2012). Likewise, it is well known that unsuccessful contents are rather the standard. The high uncertainty that the industry must face makes it necessary for several companies to share the risk of the production cost and, therefore, the rights of the intellectual property. Likewise, the profit from an eventual successful content must be distributed among all the contents holders, making the protection of the IP essential.

However, as Odagiri (小田切, 2010: 98) notes, notwithstanding that the market of secondary creations is a clear infringement to the copyright, in most cases, the content holders give tacit approval. This is the 'grey zone' that Crypton's representative pointed out earlier. They not only approve in an unofficial way the existence of large scale events, as is the case with Comiket, but also participate in some of those events. As Nagata notes, 'the purpose of actively using fan activities is perceptible' from the side of some companies (永田 2014: 43). Itō Hiroyuki, the representative director of Crypton, who several times has stated he was unfamiliar with the dōjin culture when they released Hatsune Miku, has also expressed his surprise when he noticed that situation (柴, 2014). Therefore, instead of a 'grey zone', 'I thought that it [would] be possible to create a new business model between the creators and the other party' (Itō Hiroyuki, interviewed by Shiba in 柴, 2014: 137). The 'creators' Itō refers to are the dōjin circles and the 'other party' are the industrial actors. This stance, which is natural and highly productive for the 'platform industry', is regarded by Sakurai, who supports the contents industry perspective, in the following way:

Nico Nico was doing their 'Chou Kaigi' [big meeting] until yesterday, Sunday, right? Their [slogan is] 'everyone [is a] protagonist' (laughs). 'Everyone [is a] protagonist'? What does that mean? [There] they can make public [their creations] or do something, so they say to them, 'All you guys are protagonists!' And then everyone 'waaaaa!' gets excited, but, is everyone really a protagonist? (laughs) I wonder. What I think is, 'Hey, you guys, in reality not everyone is a protagonist'. 'All of you are paying money to come here! (laughs). I feel they are being deceived. [...] Now, Nico Nico Dōga, or

the dōjin is a wide culture [and] the people who think ‘we also are participants’ [and] ‘we also are creators’ are increasing, but what I really think is that ‘eh? In reality, all you guys are not here!’ [Then, Sakurai discusses the different stances within the industry.] A producer of a movie, a real producer, or the persons from Aniplex, or from Amuse, or the DVD maker, I think none of them can say something like that! For these persons it is all about [monetary profit] [kutte nannbo]. So for them the conclusion I think is [like], ‘Everyone thinks it is OK; it doesn’t matter! But it must sell! So, it is profitable? It is not a good way to say it, but they are making anime only because it sells. So if anime does not sell anymore in ten years, they will say, ‘We will produce no more anime’, and that’s all. But for us, who are in a place near the creators, if the anime industry ends, we will lose our purpose (laughs). [...] I really feel a crisis. [...] So what we think is, [you may begin doing dōjin magazines but] if you become professional, ‘you must stop secondary creations’. I think it is a culture that is allowed because [they] are amateurs, but amateurs are amateurs, and professionals are professionals. I think it is a problem when the borderline between these two is broken.

(Sakurai Susumu, Interview with the author. April 2014)

The way that Sakurai regards participatory culture reflects the structure and actual state of the contents industry in the sector of animation in Japan. His perspective makes evident the different stances regarding the intellectual property depending on the association with the creative process. Sakurai’s perspective reflects the concerns of those closer to the creative process, as opposed to a perspective more concerned with the management of the work.

4.4 The Productivity of Participation: Networks of Communities and Markets

In summary, Hatsune Miku, as a voice synthesiser, was developed by Crypton using Yamaha’s Vocaloid technology. The system of symbols, devices or *kyara* that Hatsune Miku embodies is sold as a software ready to be used in the production of songs. As we have seen, the songs produced by the users are original in many cases and are mostly released through Nico Nico Dōga, Piapro and in recent years in YouTube as well. In the case of Nico Nico Dōga and Piapro, it is generally the original creator who puts the created content into circulation among the internet community under his/her own pen name. This user-generated content is recognised as the original creations of each user and as Miku’s performances. Therefore, Hatsune Miku comes alive and grows as a truly

group creation.

Along with the creation of songs, many users appropriate the iconic design of Miku and generate new images or videos. The website and internet community PIXIV has been an important forum for these graphic productions. Besides illustrations or videos, Mikus's fans also generate story-based content like amateur comics or novels or, in some cases, animations. These contents are distributed among fan markets through many websites and fan-built media and fan networks, which like in the case of the Comic Market or fan stores, are not always limited to the internet. Other notable appropriative uses of Miku's kyara is in the activity of cosplay, where fans dress up like Hatsune Miku and produce pictures or dancing videos which also circulate on the web and in fan networks.

It is important to note that the free appropriation of Miku's kyara in many different fan productions is, in the majority of the cases, independent from any Crypton's control. The channels where fans distribute their creations are also chosen freely by the own creators. Therefore, the networks that are developed (like the activities on Nico Nico Dōga or PIXIV) are also beyond any Crypton management. As the Crypton website states, 'In 2012, Crypton decided to adapt a "Creative Commons License CC BY-NC" for the original illustrations of Hatsune Miku to support open creative activities all over the world'. Thus, although beyond its management, Crypton encourages the fan appropriation of Miku as a kyara.

Yet, Crypton also exerts its own direct management towards Miku. This particular management has three general courses: 1) the management of the fan-creators' creative activities and contents; 2) the management of the licences and the use of Miku by other companies with a commercial interest; 3) the management of a mix of both. The website Piapro and its special Piapro Character License 'PCL' system, alongside the official '39ch HATSUNE MIKU OFFICIAL CHANNEL' on YouTube, the Facebook Hatsune Miku official account and the official community of Hatsune Miku on the site mikubook.com are platforms owned by the company that play an important role in this management.

In the first category, we can focus on the encouraging role of Crypton towards the non-profit creation of UGC related to the concept of Miku either as a voice or as a visual icon. Here, the adoption of the CC licence system for the illustration of Miku and the PCL system for the contents uploaded on Crypton's Piapro website is fundamental. Of course, the role of other websites and services in adopting these policies, although beyond Crypton's management, is also central. An example of the success of this management is the general high and increasing popularity of Miku, along with the rise

of many popular creators. They, in their role of Miku's producers, are central actors who shape the body of Miku and give life to her. Their creations, not only songs but videos, comics, novels and other media, also present Miku as a truly 'public good' (For more on the relation of public goods, see below in Chapter Five). They fill the empty symbol that Miku represents.

In the second category, we can find the direct licencing activity executed by Crypton, ensuring the creation of contents by other companies. For example, the creation by the Good Smile Company of licenced products, like figures or toys that use the image of Miku, and some of the publicity campaigns by other companies that featuring Miku, like Toyota spots, the FamilyMart's campaign 'Miku loves Famima' and the Miku application for smartphones developed by Domino's Pizza. In these cases, other companies obtain the licences to generate profit-making content using Miku's image, and, for the most of the part, this content is produced by the company.

The third category is perhaps the most important and characteristic in this model because of the lack of original content in the kyara designed by Crypton. Moreover, this is why it is different from the standard 'character business model'. Here, we can find the mixture of UGC distributed by several CGMs and later commercialised by other industries as profit-making goods or services. This is where fan communities and their productive culture meet the profit-making structure of contents industries and their markets and where creativity and new use-values become exchange-values driving the development of new markets. The contents generated by the users (UGC) are commercialised by a third company under the licence of Crypton, and the creator is employed as an official collaborator. Some of the content in the examples I listed for the second category can also be listed here, because it is very difficult to strictly discern the origin of each content related to Miku. Nevertheless, the most famous example here is the video game series 'Project DIVA' supported by SEGA. In this game, the songs composed by some of the users that have gained popularity in internet communities are performed as part of the game by a 3D computer graphics design of Miku, who sings and dances in the game (alongside other kyara from the CV series). The songs and the 3D CG Miku are also used to perform the live concerts I mentioned above, and the songs are also released on albums as song collections by Sony Music Direct (Japan) Inc.

There are many other examples where user-(or fan-)generated contents are commercialised as licenced goods by several companies, like Kadokawa Shoten Publishing among other smaller publishing houses, realising Miku's illustration albumens, original novels and comics. There is also the release in karaoke by Joysound (Xing Inc.), of some of the popular songs. The goods commercialised by the Good Smile

Company also use UGC, and there is even the juice ‘Poppippo- Mirai yasai’ produced by the Japanese beverage company Ito EN, Ltd. for the convenience store franchise chain FamilyMart. The Poppippo-Mirai yasai juice first appeared in a UGC music video called ‘Poppippo’.

Finally, and also as part of this category, there are the users who have become professionals through the use of Miku releasing into the market their contents through big companies like SEGA, Sony Music and Victor Entertainment. I include them in this category because they are also at the intersection of Crypton’s Miku, UGC and other big media companies. Two examples of this kind of user are the producer (user) ‘ryo’ who leads the J-pop music group Supercell, and the producer ‘kz’ (livetune) whose song ‘Tell Your World’ is in the background of a Google Chrome commercial spot. These two creators as well as many others have benefited from the technical characteristics of Miku as a tool and also from the horizontal and consumer-based business model that I am describing here.

4.5 Conclusions: Platform and Contents Industries, Dōjin Communities and Participatory Networks

The Vocaloid scene is a complex field composed of several actors interacting in the intermediary realm between markets and communities. In Chapter Two, I discussed how the productive structures and organisations that are associated with the market exist as institutions of cultural commodities. In Chapter Three, we addressed the practices of appropriation with a community orientation as institutions of activities. Thereafter, I focused on the role that appropriation has in regard to meanings and resources for action. Dōjin productivity, which concerns the creation of secondary texts, was presented as a focal point of the institutions we focused on in Chapter Three.

The explicit orientation towards these activities ‘in a self-serving’ manner and without a particular interest in the group of peers committed to the same activity or object was the reason to regard activities as ‘focused on the emotive consumption of the text’. However, we also regarded its nature as relatively closed, hierarchical and highly concerned with what is regarded as the proper use of the text as a symbolic and material resource for the collective use of the members of the concrete groups of interaction. For that reason, I focused on the importance of understanding the interaction of collective categories for the actors to interact in what can be described as a lived community.

In Chapter Four, the focus was in the Vocaloid scene, which I am regarding as an institution of participation. In general, the Vocaloid scene represents the linkage of different groups and institutions in a relatively open network. Among such groups, the most representatives are the industrial actors, with an open and market orientation, and the practices of the *dōjin* cultures, with a rather closed and community orientation. The general orientation of the Vocaloid scene is an orientation towards the scene itself, i.e. towards participating in the scene. Yet, when focusing on the scene in detail, it is primarily composed of the conflictive and productive relation between the *dōjin* cultures and the market-oriented structures. As we will see in Chapter Six, through several concrete examples, tensions are identifiable between ‘play’ and ‘labour’, ‘communal ownership’ and ‘individual property’ and, in a more general sense, regarding closed communities oriented towards absolute values as well as open networks oriented towards a relativistic understanding of value. The analysis I conduct in Chapter Six involves several interviews of actors who are deeply involved in the Vocaloid scene and are able to share different perspectives.

In order to establish the foundation on which I base the analysis presented in Chapter Six, I provided a general overview of the Vocaloid scene in this chapter. Specifically, the following elements were considered: 1) the impact of the informational networks and the mutual connection of face-to-face groups of interaction, as well as the new activities enabled by media architectures; 2) the particular nature of the fictional character Hatsune Miku and the role it played in the configuration of the Vocaloid scene.; 3) the difference between the contents and the platform industries, and the role of Crypton in configuring a new environment of creativity on the base of its use of the character IP, as well as the former practices of the industry and the *dōjin* cultures.

In regard to the role of the informational networks and the development of new media technologies, the main focus was on the transformation of users’ activities into texts, which in turn made commercialisation possible. Therefore, in the commercial orientation of the informational networks, the texts created by users represent the commercialisation of the appropriative activities. In addition, this transformation presents new possibilities for the development of a dynamic and productive network of a combination of different practices. The initial impetus of the Vocaloid scene was backed by a cultural crossroad that linked heterogeneous imaginaries and practices in a single field of interaction. The tool and fictional character Hatsune Miku was the empty symbol that served as a melting pot. The impetus behind her was understood by the actors committed to the scene as a ‘movement’.

The second element I focused on was the nature of Hatsune Miku as a tool and, at the same time, as a fictional character. Here, the word 'kyara' allowed us to address the novelty of Hatsune Miku as lacking a background narrative though maintaining a strong personality. This personality, expressed in an aesthetic way through a voice and in an illustration, has become the raw material for fuelling the imagination of many users. Therefore, through a variety of texts such as songs, illustrations, cosplay pictures and music videos, among many others, the existence of Hatsune Miku as a fictional character appears as the truly embodiment of a collective creation. Moreover, as we observed, the double nature of Hatsune Miku as a tool and as a character is essential for understanding the structure that allowed the free use of her iconic presence within a unified although heterogeneous productive system.

Therefore, the third element I focused on was the structure developed by Crypton in order to allow the free use of the character and to 'protect' the productivity that gives life to the Vocaloid scene. This system, which can be regarded as a 'platform industry', is somewhat different from the contents industry as it is not focused on producing any content and instead concerns the management of the textual productivity surrounding the original concept, in this case, of Hatsune Miku. This textual productivity is what we regarded as the *dōjin* productivity in the Japanese context. It is closely related to the development and support of the Japanese contents industry related to animation or manga culture. However, the shift in a focus of the system, from the production of the text to the management of the text, causes the relation between these orientations towards the commodification of cultural texts to be antagonistic.

When the production of contents and the participation of audiences and media users as content creators seems to allow a more horizontal and 'democratic' shape of the media, the blurring of the difference between professional and amateurs might also end in the transformation of amateur creators into cheap and disposable labour forces. Without regarding the initial intentions behind the development of participatory culture by actors like Crypton or Nico Nico Dōga (now Kadokawa-Dwango), the system might worsen the status of the 'creators' if we regard it from the perspective of the contents industry.

In the present research, my interest is in focusing on these perceived tensions in the field, as I seek to understand how they demonstrate the different logics of value behind the complex field of the Vocaloid scene. Following the argument developed in Section One, we can describe these particular differences as the tensions that exist among the value of the commodities, the value of the activities and the value of participation. The analysis I present in Chapter Six, has, at its base, the existence of these tensions of

different understandings of values within the same field of interaction. The analysis shows narrative accounts that stem from several interviews, which captures part of the feelings present in the atmosphere around the actors committed to the Vocaloid scene in 2014 and at the beginning of 2015. As we shall see, this narrative may be summarised as the story of the rise and fall of the Vocaloid scene, as well as the defeat of the author. However, before beginning the final part of the analysis, I shall clarify the theoretical stance that animates this research and my understanding of the role of institutions, values, cultural texts and their relation with the configuration of collectivities.

End of Section One: An Interinstitutional Field of Markets and Communities

1. A Massive Network of 'Subcultures'

The subcultures we observed in this section are in the logic of the massive and narrow. They shape a massive cultural field composed of a multiplicity of small areas of pop culture. The narrow culture components of this massive field are connected to each other in a shape that exceeds the logics of cultural distinction and class that Bourdieu described half a century ago. The evaluative logic of 'high' and 'low' culture described by Bourdieu and referred to in cultural studies research are, as I will address in the next chapter, already insufficient to approach the dynamics of the massive field we are addressing in this research.

One example of this is in the precarious system of Japanese animation production I described in Chapter Two. Although most of the anime industries (precisely the industries related to the subcultures) cannot be considered part of the mainstream, their cultural influence expands inside and out over Japan, in many kind of products and services. In most cases, they do not generate a direct and proportional economic profit.

This minor status gives the opportunity to place itself as a 'separate territory' of the culture, sometimes opposite to the mainstream culture as a proudly self-called 'subculture'. This subculture' distinguishes its own limits and draws a line apart from the 'official culture'. It builds 'spaces of liberty on midnight Japanese television, in the alleys of Akihabara, on the internet forums and video streaming websites or at the events held by the fans.

The small domains of culture shaped by the fans and their texts also define themselves as an idealistic realm apart from the commercial world, even though as we saw above, this 'anti-commercialism' could bring dire consequences for the industry and is in contradiction to the consumerist nature of fan culture. In Section One, I approached these subcultures from their productive side as *dōjin* cultures, cosplay practices, and the large and relatively open networks of small groups shaped by the Vocaloid scene and the role of the fictional character Hatsune Miku.

All of these fields shape a particular place of interaction, which following their traditions, we can denominate as 'asobi-ba' or a 'place for playing.' These places for playing have different logics and shape different environments of orientation, as we saw in cosplay practices, and in the informational places that shape the Vocaloid scene. In addition to these different fields, there are also the industrial activities of companies

and creations as well as policy makers that shape particular fields of interaction. If these fields are usually set apart, and most of the approaches to any of these fields tend to regard them in separate, we have seen how the Vocaloid scene mixed activities of both, or more accurately, shaped a field of interaction where the actors of the different fields can constantly meet. If each one of the different fields is enacted by its actors in a particular institutional system, my suggestion here is to regard the field of interaction composed of the several institutions as an 'interinstitutional' field. This field is particularly applicable to the Vocaloid scene, but indeed, as a carefully focus on each of the fields should reveal, it has been always there. The very beginning of the media-mix system with the birth of Japanese TV animation is a clear example of that. However, if we are able to understand 'all together' in the same interinstitutional field, now the problem left is the biggest problem. It is the problem of finding a way to understand the link between these different fields and the role of the cultural texts that seem to be central in each field.

I have partially addressed this problem while referring to some of the particularities of each institution. Now, I shall more directly address what has been fundamental approach to this problem. If the field in interaction is composed by the culture industries and is the linkage between culture and industry, consumption and production and use-value and exchange-value, the fundamental problem lies in understanding the logic that binds the field together.

2. Two Values in Contradiction: Culture and Industry

As it is well known, the term of 'culture industry' used by Adorno and Horkheimer (1944/2002) is a criticism of the emerging film and radio industry. This criticism is part of a general condemnation of the Enlightenment's 'instrumental rationality', and as with many others Marxist critical approaches to mass culture raised after the World War II, it is driven by a pessimistic view of what modernity has become in the twentieth century. As Touraine (1992/2006) indicates, the experience of the war and totalitarian governments transformed the old enthusiasm of modernism into a general feeling of disenchantment towards modernity.

In this context, the film, radio and TV industries have become the primary objects of criticism. As one example, there is the stance of Dwight McDonald and his attack on the 'mass culture'. As Strinati (1995) notes, this stand holds urbanisation and industrialisation as responsible for a growing individualisation where the people appear as isolated atoms. Here, the social bond is maintained by the mass media, which

becomes a vicarious source of social experience. These media reflect the consumers' feelings and desires but produce them massively and make them standardised (Eco, 1964/2011; Strinati, 2004).

In addition to Adorno, other Marxist points of view such as Barthes (1957/1999) highlight the role of the mass media supporting the status quo and legitimising the ideology of the capitalism. Here, borrowing the words of Adorno and Horkheimer (1944/2002), mass media appear as mass deception.

However, there has been a lot of criticism of this pessimistic position and its elitist and conservative nature. As Hesmondhalgh (2002) points out, by emphasising the use of the plural in the expression of 'cultural industries', the concept of 'culture' is idealised by the intellectuals represented in Adorno's point of view, depicted as a 'unified field' linked to the idea of art and creativity and losing sight of the complexity of cultural dynamics (Hesmondhalgh, 2002; Strinati, 1995). Additionally, J.B. Thompson (1990) indicates that in the modernist point of view of the German intellectuals of the nineteenth century, the concept of 'culture' is closely related to a hierarchical distinction between 'kultur' and 'zivilisation'. Moreover, the denouncing of the instrumental rationality's will of control in Adorno emphasises the opposition of culture to industrialism and the sake of economic profit.

Here, my interest is to call attention to, as the expression 'cultural industries' connotes, the commonly regarded existence of two values in fundamental contradiction inside of the production of cultural goods. There is a 'spiritual' value linked to creativity and aesthetic experience, and, on the other hand, there is a rational and economic value linked to industrial production and consumption. This well-known characteristic of the cultural industries also underlies the conflictive and productive relationship in popular culture we have regarded in this section. As we will see, this relationship may be understood as that between market and community.

The idea that the community has become subordinated or even substituted by the market in modernity is closely related to the argument of the commoditisation of culture and the subordination of the use-value to the exchange-value. According to Adorno, the cultural industry plays a central role here since it turns every cultural experience into consumption.

In opposition to this argument, some of the authors previously mentioned (e.g. Abercrombie & Longhurst, 1998; Grossberg, 1992; Hills, 2002; Jenkins, 1992b; Sandvoss, 2005a) focus on audiences and stress the active role of the consumers. This is the case of Hills (2002), who poses a 'dialectic of value' and calls for a reassessment of the place of use-value in fan culture (Hills, 2002). This interaction between the use and

exchange values within a specific group of consumers supports the idea of consumption as an agent in the construction of a community. This is in some authors' view, however, a form of consumption representative of the fan culture that we have regarded as emotive and productive in the semiotic sense, as in the case of dōjin productivity or Vocaloid networks. The theoretical work in fan studies (mostly Jenkins (1992a; 1992b), Fiske (1992; 1989/2010), Hills (2002), Grossberg (1992) and Sandvoss (2005a; 2005b; 2007)) are accounts of this general characteristic regarded in fans as 'participatory cultures'.

Thus, in the case of the Japanese subcultural interinstitutional field, we have observed that 'dialectic of value' while describing some 'horizontal' characteristics of the anime industry in Japan in close connection with their particular audiences. We characterised those audiences by their appropriative activities based on 'emotive consumption' as in the case of 'fans', commonly referred to as the category of 'otaku'. As we observed, they are also engaged in 'productive activities,' which we have called dōjin productivity. Nevertheless, this perspective requires a closer examination of the question of the use-value and the exchange-value as is commonly addressed in cultural texts. Therefore, is important to emphasise the focus that has been directed towards the role played by the texts as commodities and the transformation of the aesthetic experience into consumption.

3. Commodities and Consumption: The Subordination of Culture to the Exchange-Value

One of the main concerns of Adorno in his assessment of the culture industry was the way in which this industry transforms every aesthetic experience into consumption by reducing artwork into commodities. One of the main theses of his essay 'On the fetish character in music and the regression of listening' (Adorno 1972/1991) is that when artwork like classical music, is produced and reproduced by the industry, its final purpose becomes the same of the industry's: the reproduction and expansion of capital. Productions are no longer 'artwork' but commodities, and their value is no more in the object itself but in the market, so their use-value appears as illusory (fetishism) or, in the best of the cases, as irremediably subordinated to their exchange-value.

The question raised by Adorno is not solely a condemnation of the utilitarian purpose of the industry and the loss of quality of the cultural texts by low-cost serial production systems and an emphasis on standardised and formulistic contents. Furthermore, it is the claim that, alongside the transformation of art in commodities, comes the

transformation of pleasure in enjoyment and the loss of the aesthetic experience, now transformed by the industry into consumption.

For Adorno, the pleasure that derives from the aesthetic experience is not illusory because the surface of the artwork, like the sounds in the music or the colours in the paintings, are linked to 'the underlying' (Adorno 1972/2005: 32) or to the meaning. When Adorno speaks of pleasure, he regards the 'part' as indivisible from the 'totality', and the aesthetic experience as the synthesis that joins the parts, while also including the individual experiences of the spectators according to their social conditions. In the words of Adorno, '[I]n such unity, in the relation of particular moments to an evolving whole, there is also preserved the image of a social condition in which above those particular moments of happiness would be more than mere appearance' (Adorno 1972/2005: 32). In Adorno's view, this link between the individual experience of happiness and his social conditions brings reality to the aesthetic experience, giving to this experience a creative and therefore insubordinate character.

In contrast, enjoyment derives from consumption, and it is an individual experience unable to link with 'the whole'. Therefore, for Adorno, in the experience of enjoyment, the subject becomes unable to unite the parts with the totality nor his individual experience of happiness with the social conditions. The subject becomes a 'purchaser', and his fragmental experience of happiness is illusory. The experience loses its insubordinate character because of being unable to understand the place of the subject in society, thus giving birth to a creative force. Following Adorno, it can be said that the superficial experience of consumption is unable to give birth to a new value because this creative power lies in the insubordinate character of art.

Returning to the problem of value, Adorno explains how the exchange-value deceptively takes the place of the use-value when the artworks are transformed into commodities. In the case of the audience of a concert, Adorno argues that people believe that they enjoy the music they listen to, while indeed what the consumer is really doing is 'worshipping the money that he himself has paid for the ticket' (Adorno 1972/2005: 38). Adorno then adds, '[I]f the commodity in general combines exchange value and use value, then the pure use value, whose illusion the cultural goods must preserve in on a completely capitalist society, must be replaced by pure exchange value, which precisely in its capacity as exchange value deceptively takes over the function of use value' (ibid 38-9).

It is important to emphasise the link of the commodification of art, the losing of use-value and the fragmented experience of enjoyment in the consumption of the goods of the cultural industry. This also leads to a loss of the social ties and to the loss of the

‘revitalising’ and ‘insubordinate’ character of art, as well as its creative power. For Adorno, in capitalism, the use-value is an illusion and art is a fetish.

Eco criticises this radical stance and presents a much more depoliticised analysis of culture and art, but he also raises a similar point when he focuses on the messages of popular culture. In his essay ‘The Structure of Bad Taste’ (Eco, 1964/2011), he focuses on the use of rhetoric in the production of texts in mass culture as a way to achieve an ‘aesthetic experience’ already made and easy to understand. In a later work, Eco (1968/2005) distinguishes the characteristics of the aesthetic message from other kinds of messages, stressing the same ‘insubordinate’ property. In short, the aesthetic message transgresses the language of the message (the surface), in turn forcing a creative reading in order to understand its meaning (the underlying). This leads to a creative work of interpretation, where the message can be appropriated as a whole, which can give birth to new meanings. However, in the case of the rhetorical message, this creative force is absent. Instead, the surface of the message refers to already existing meanings through which popular culture produces an illusory aesthetic experience.

The emphasis of Adorno and Eco on totality and aesthetic is an example of the general view on the place of value in popular culture and art. The focus on a total experience is the same in ‘real use value’ which is ultimately incommensurate, as unique as each real experience. The other one is commensurate, which is reduced to exchange. Therefore, the dialectic of use and exchange as values in contradiction is at the base of these arguments.

Nevertheless, industries and culture are bound together. The coexistence of these two contradictory values in the cultural industries is described metaphorically by Moran (1979) as the conflictive relationship between the producer and the director in the film industry. For while the producer of a film does his best to achieve the economic success of the movie, the director struggles to realise an artwork within the stringent regulations of the industry. This division of labour within the industry can be understood as a reflection of the contradictions of value in the production of cultural goods. Furthermore, it makes evident the need of the industry to produce (deceptively or not) ‘extraordinary goods’ (a subjective and incommensurate use-value that an object has for its own sake) through creativity. But, as Jenkins comments, fans do ‘extraordinary readings.’ And, as Hesmondhalgh (2002) notes, ‘cultural industries manage and circulate creativity’ (2002:4). As discussed in Section One, creativity or textual productivity is an important feature that links culture and industry in the interinstitutional field. Therefore, while Hesmondhalgh focuses on the strives in the

industry to generate 'extraordinary goods', Jenkins calls attention to fans' ability to do 'extraordinary readings.' In any case, the arguments turn to the same direction: to the problem of how bring 'extraordinary value' back to the experience of consumption in modernity, capitalism or 'late modernity'.

In the following section, I will argue that the distinction between use-value and exchange-value collapses any possibility of understanding value in the plural sense, or incommensurate 'extraordinary' values. This is more than a condition of capitalism; the overlooking of the autonomous role of culture is what makes it impossible to understand the dynamic between both poles. This dynamic of value underpins the conflictive and productive nature of the interinstitutional field we observed in Section One.

Fan cultures studies and studies of culture have been characterised as describing these same dynamics that we observed here. However, as they tend to neglect the autonomy of culture, they encounter an unrealistic 'contradiction' of values, underpinned by the modern narrative of 'Industry vs. Culture', or the loss of community and real experience to the industrialisation and fragmentation of social life. As I will argue in the following section, this narrative overlooks the actual interaction of heterogeneous values which, rather than being contradictory, are the poles of different orientations of social action that unfold precisely in the middle ground between both poles.

Section II: Values in the Aesthetic-Rhetoric Field

Chapter Five. Theoretical Framework

5.1 Institutions and Values

5.1.1 Institutions, voluntaristic structuralism and action

Institutions are central elements of social life that are concerned with action and order. Because of the centrality and the pervasive nature of institutions, the different approaches concerned with their nature and characteristics need to encompass such an approach into a broader understanding of the nature of action and actors, whether they are individuals or organisations, as well as their understanding of the world.

Durkheim regards institutions as ‘all the beliefs and modes of behaviour instituted by the collectivity’ (Durkheim, 1895/1982: 45). This classical definition includes some details that with further theoretical elaboration will be fundamental in this research. Those are the linkage between *beliefs* and *behaviour*, which address the problem of agency and values; the process of *instituting* those beliefs and behaviours, which points out the dynamic nature of order and structure; and the substratum of the *collectivity*, which represents the empirical materiality of institutions in a non-individualistic way. In this study, I will approach these characteristics in the study of institutions mainly from the following theoretical perspectives.

The main presuppositional basis comes from Parsons’ structural-functionalistic model of the ‘social system’ (Parsons, Shils, & Smelser, 1965, 1962; Parsons, 1951/2005). Some of the criticism that Parsons’ theory has received, as well as new insights from recent structural changes in social organisation (e.g. with the impact of the internet in the organisational fields) is incorporated mainly from recent studies on institutional and organisational theory (Mohr & White, 2008; Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999, 2008). However, some of the main presuppositions from the Parsonian model are, not without revision, maintained in this work due to their relevance for the present study. In this respect, I follow most of the broad perspective developed by Alexander as ‘structural hermeneutics’ (Alexander, 2003) and many of his insights on social theory. However, there is an important difference of perspectives between the theoretical model I propose in this work and some of Alexander’s central suppositions. This disagreement concerns in particular with the place, nature and role of the ‘individual’ as a social category. Regarding the model of institutions in this

research, the work of Castoriadis (1975/1997), which complements some aspects of the Alexander's thesis, allows for the suggestion of a different notion of the institution of the symbolic. This different approach, in turn, will be the foundation for further elaboration of the general category of persona and its relation to action and the structural environment.

Parsons regards institutions as an integrated complex of institutionalised roles with structural functions that allow collective action (Parsons, 1951/2005). From a phenomenological perspective, institutions are also described as objectivised patterns of experience which allow for the orientation of our actions in a socially constructed world (Berger & Luckmann, 1966/1991). They are also said to manage social interaction by means of 'linkage mechanisms' that bridge different social elements of reality (Mohr & White, 2008). These different perspectives about institutions all concern the mutual relation of two opposite elements in social life: action as agency and order.

As Alexander (1987) indicates, the social sciences focus on the same problem. He classifies different theoretical projects as either *individualistic* or *collectivistic* according to their approach. Individualistic theories are characterised by an 'unrealistic and artificial voluntarism' (Alexander, 1987: 13), while collectivistic theories recognise social control. Likewise, he classifies theoretical assumptions on the nature of action as *rational* and *non-rational*. Assumptions on action as rational suppose actors are governed by their relation to the objective reality. Action is the best choice in reaction to that reality; this leaves no room for subjectivity in action. On the other hand, non-rational action recognises that actors are guided by ideas and emotions, which are internal and not an external objective reality. Parsons' theory is, as Alexander explains, a collectivistic approach to non-rational action. This posture brings back subjectivity and motivation in a 'voluntaristic approach to order'. These general suppositions are the guidelines in the model of institutionalisation in Parsons' and Alexander's theories.

It is important to emphasise the importance of non-rational action as the base to postulate a non-deterministic relation between structure and action. From a collectivistic perspective, non-rational action means the following:

[M]oral and normative elements can themselves be seen as organized structures or 'systems.' On the one hand, these subjective systems act 'over and above' any specific individual, creating supra-individual standards [...]
On the other hand, such systems have an intimate relation to agency, interpretation and subjectivity. (Alexander, 1987: 28).

Moral and normative elements embody a structure that can be realized only through effort and the pursuit of individual ends. This is what Alexander calls a 'voluntaristic

structuralism' and supposes a relation between structure and action where no side determines the other. This mutual independence that allows interdependence and avoids one-sided determination is formulated in Parsons' 'social system' as three different dimensions of social life: personality, society and culture. These dimensions have their particular necessities and internal aims for consistency, which categorise them into three different systems of action (Parsons, 1951/2005).

In order to understand the place of institutions in Parsons' system and the later discussion in this research about values, symbols and social actors, it is important to keep in mind the collectivistic/non-rationalistic approach summarised above, as well as the basic features of the social, the cultural and the personality systems in Parsons' theory.

Parsons describes personality as an 'ego system' with a consistent system of 'needs-dispositions' that governs ego reactions to the world and goals. The cultural system, which is built upon an ego's action, is composed of a commonly understood system of symbols. More specifically, it is composed of the organisation of the values, norms, and symbols which guide action. Finally, the social system is a system of action itself and involves the process of interaction (Parsons, Shils, & Smelser, 1965).

The social system is composed of acts and is organised into units of 'status-role'. The status is the place of the actor in the relationship system considered as a structure, and the role is one part of the orientations of an individual actor organised around expectations. The basic components of institutions are comprised of institutionalised roles (Parsons, 1951/2005).

It is important to clarify that the social system is not an institution, and institutions are not collectivities. An institution is made up of a plurality of role-patterns. These patterns are brought together throughout the integration of action-expectations in relation to specific value-patterns concerning a particular object of action. Two important components of action now present themselves: values and the orientation of action.

Meaning gives orientation to action, and orientation involves a set of objects that are social, physical or cultural. When action is from individual actors Parsons refers to motivation as a narrower category. Orientation is classified as cognitive, cathetic and evaluative. Therefore, cognitive orientation is associated with the positive knowledge of the object. Cathetic orientation is concerned with immediate and affective reactions to objects in relation to gratifications or deprivations. Finally, there is the evaluative orientation, which is a synthesis of the previous two. It is composed of standards or values that can correspondingly be subdivided in cognitive, cathetic or moral standards

(Parsons, Shils, & Smelser, 1965 ; Parsons, 1951/2005). Value-orientation is a key element in institutionalisation, i.e. the stabilisation of a social system, because it provides a motivational element in action. This element is in relation not with objective or psychological criteria (cognitive and cathetic) but with a shared system of meanings, which legitimises commitment and mobilises sanctions.

The problem that immediately arises concerns the integration between the different components of action and dimensions of social life. It is the central problem of institutionalisation and socialisation as a way to internalise value orientations into the personality system. Institutionalisation and socialisation are integrative forces in interaction. Thus, for example, a poor integration will result in an anomie, where cultural, social, and personality systems will not meet their mutual needs. The extreme opposite would be a perfect integration or perfect institutionalisation where role-expectations and the allocated resources of the social system coincide with the personality needs. Consequently, the prerequisites for equilibrium in a social system will be the coordination of roles within an institution and the integration of the cultural, social and personality systems.

This model of social action where the constraints for integration are emphasised has been sharply criticised as a 'monolithic system' (Thornton et al., 2012) and regarded as inadequate to explain social change and the complexity of nowadays societies. In response, as Alexander notes (1987, 1988), Parsons will later focus on 'institutional separation' and social differentiation (Parsons, 1971). This thesis will be the starting point before approaching some models from contemporary institutional and organisational theories.

5.1.2 Social differentiation and institutional logics

Contemporary society can be characterised as an increasing specialisation, differentiation and even fragmentation of social structures. The increasing flexibility of society poses new difficulties to the on-going problem of control and free-will, order and agency. As Berman (1982/2001) would say paraphrasing Marx, the 'destructive creativity' of modernity seems to 'melts into air' 'all that is solid', and the modern landscape has turned from a rigid iron cage into a desert of mobility and instability (Bauman, 2001). The same problem of structure and agency is redefined by Bauman as the contradictory search for security and freedom (Bauman, 2001). This present landscape brings the forces of change and stability to a more dynamic stage. Parsons and Alexander approach this problem by focusing on social differentiation and

integration through solidarity (Alexander, 1988; Parsons, 1971).

Parsons approaches social change and differentiation from an evolutionistic point of view. For him, differentiation is a directional process of change in systems through the emergence of differences among parts of the previous system. This differentiation process results in a multiplicity of sub-systems derived from 'one single system', where its constitutive parts are in organic relation to each other (Parsons, 1971). It is important to clarify that, for Parsons, the concept of a system does not deny free will and contingency, nor the possibility of change. Contrarily, as Alexander remarks, the term 'system' is introduced by Parsons 'to emphasize that the subjective ends of individual actors are socially organized in a nonrandom way' (Alexander, 1998: 149). Systems represent a set of choices for the actor that offers an explanation of order without becoming coercive and mechanistic.

Notwithstanding this possibility of variability, the prerogative of function rests upon any process of change in systems. Differential parts are both systematically related each other are comparable in a functional sense; they are compatible. The differentiation and specialisation process, however, generates inequality or instrumental and expressive differences, making the functional integration of the system and its sub-systems difficult. Then, following Durkheim, Parsons poses the imperative for 'the development of "organic solidarity" as the essential condition of institutionalizing the *combination* of instrumental-expressive differentiation and equality of status' (Parsons, 1971: 107). Parsons points out the role of what he calls 'adaptive upgrading' and 'value generalization' as central aspects in order to achieve integration in this heterogeneous system. The relevance of general values for this research is central and I will return to a discussion of it at a later point. For the moment, it is important to emphasise that, notwithstanding that Parsons' 'morphology' does not explain social change (Alexander, 1988), it does pose many key issues that will be reformulated by contemporary institutional and organisational theories.

From this perspective, it can be determined that the principal appeal of contemporary models, such as the one proposed by Thornton et. al. (Thornton et al., 2012; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999, 2008) or by Mohr and White (2008), is their current approach to the differentiation problem. Their models present an accurate account of the actual stages of differentiation and fragmentation of social structures, and their transformation into what authors like Terranova (2004) or van Dijk (2012) have addressed as the 'network nature' of actual social ties. However, the principal unattractiveness of such model is, as I will note in advance, their over determinacy of structures over action, despite their claims for agency. This flaw can be exemplified in

what Thornton et al. calls 'embedded agency' and 'embedded goals' (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). In what follows, after providing a schematic introduction to the principal features of these theories, I will briefly contrast them with the Parsons' model summarised above in order to identify the adequate and inadequate elements of these theories for the aims and characteristics of this research. As I will argue, the openness to accept contradiction will be their main desirable characteristic, and their lack of the category of personality in a Parsonian shape will be their most unattractive feature.

For Mohr and White, rather than 'structure', the key words for understanding institutions will be 'linking' and 'bridging'. For them, institutions are mechanisms that bridge what they approach as different domains of 'level, meaning, and agency' (Mohr & White, 2008). They argue that 'institutional stability derives from bridging while instability is the result of over-bridging' (Mohr & White, 2008: 488). As their model incorporates recent studies of social networks in a perspective that empathises dynamism in a changing environment, it is a valuable reference with explicative insights on the nature of institutional dynamics.

The domains they distinguish are organised into three sets of links. The level set includes links between the micro (individual), the meso (organisations) and the macro (societal) levels. The meanings set is comprised of links between the symbolic and the material. Finally, the agency set focuses on links between the 'agentic' and the 'structural'. These linkages shape the articulation of subsystems into a structured whole, which, as has been argued, is the essence of an institution.

The analytical starting point is not the 'individual embodied persons' but rather identities which 'can be generalized to include any source of action' (Mohr & White, 2008: 489) Mohr and White see identities as being in direct relation with action and in relation to a particular situation or event. For example, a 'firm, a community, a crowd, oneself on the tennis court, encounters of strangers on a sidewalk' (ibid). Events are 'relational situations that emerge from the flow of social events, switching from one network situation into another, that produce a need for control over uncertainty and thus a control over situated actions and fellow identities.' (ibid).

Their approach supposes an explicitly changing environment. Identities flow between different 'network situations' that are organised around different 'network domains', that are correspondingly organised around particular activities. Participation will depend on an actor's degree of understanding the 'logic' of each particular network. This understanding is 'localised meaning' that is produced through interaction and embodied in a narrative form. Meaning is organised in 'cultural networks' that link 'meanings, values, stories and rhetoric'. Consequently, 'cultural networks' are the centre

of the institutional life. In short, 'institutional life' will be social networks plus cultural networks. Here, '[it] is not the inherent attributes or properties of objects that define them, but rather their relational location within a field of relations.' (Mohr & White, 2008: 489)

Thornton et al. (Thornton et al., 2012; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999, 2008) incorporate the above model among many other current tendencies in institutional and organisational theories in order to develop what they call 'the institutional logics perspective' (Thornton et al., 2012). Thornton et al. distinguish three levels of social systems: 1) institutional fields, 2) organisational fields and 3) societies. Correspondingly, they propose four levels of analysis: 1) individual, 2) organisational, 3) field and 4) societal. One of the most appealing characteristics of their approach is that, depending on these different levels, they can deal with multiple sources of rationality and contingency. From this theoretical perspective, I will address 'institutional logics,' 'institutional fields' and the 'interinstitutional system'.

The basic idea about institutional logics is that, similar to the localised meaning (Mohr & White, 2008) addressed above, each institution makes its own categories of knowledge or particular rationality. They are 'the implicit rules of the game' (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999: 806). Likewise, '[...] institutional logics [...] emphasizes how institutions provide social actors with a highly contingent set of social norms' (ibid: 106). These norms, however, do not imply 'universalism', 'moral behaviour' or 'deeply internalised values'. Individuals and organisations identify with the logics or strategies for action provided by institutional logics. Furthermore, they are also 'sources of legitimacy and provide a sense of order and ontological security' (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008: 108). It is important to note that as the 'culture system' in Parsons' model, the 'assumptions, values, beliefs, [and] rules' comprised by the institutional logics, determine the available answers and solutions for actors (ibid). In a similar shape, 'goals' along with 'identities' 'are culturally embedded within alternative institutional logics' and its content differ between the different institutional logics (Thornton et al., 2012: 87).

It is also important to note the relevance of 'identification' rather than 'internalization' in this model. Thornton et al. described identities as identification with particular roles (Thornton et al., 2012: 85). In the same way, identification, as opposed to internalisation, is the mechanism that exerts its effects over individuals and organisations (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008: 106)

In the case of what Thornton et al. call 'institutional fields', following their approach, we can define them as an analytical category which also has an empirical existence. It is

a 'field' of action formed by a boundary of different institutional logics in which the interaction takes place. The actual outline of the field, however, varies depending on the research methodology or analysis from which it is observed.

In a similar shape, the 'interinstitutional system' refers to the linkage of different institutional orders composed as a system of different societal sectors. Each sector represents a different sector of expectations of social relations, humans, and organisational behaviour. It is also an analytical category, but, in contrast to the institutional fields, its shape is defined by its systematic nature and not by actual and empirical interaction. Approaching society as an interinstitutional system makes evident the complexity of differentiated and divergent institutional orders and logics that gives form to social life and interaction.

The differences between different levels and logics in the interinstitutional systems generate 'contradiction' and heterogeneity. In this model, agency, which is always 'embedded' in a particular logic, strives for consistency between the different logics. This striving and continuous interaction of heterogeneity can lead to social change. As Thornton et al. propose, 'understand[ing] society as an interinstitutional system' answers the question of 'how actors change institutions in the context of being conditioned by them' (Thornton et al., 2012: 18).

5.1.3 The missing subjective action in architectures and the social imaginary

After this schematic approach to the general features of some current theories on institutions, we can identify some similitudes and divergences with the model proposed by Parsons. In general terms, we can say that while Parsons' interest remains in integration, current theories postulate *contradiction* and *contingency* as essential features. Thus, rather the internalisation, they speak of 'identification' with 'logics', 'orders' or 'styles', arranged in accordance with a continuously changing environment (Mohr & White, 2008; Thornton et al., 2012; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999, 2008). In Parsons' words, this would mean a poor integration or inclusion, or even an anomy state when contradiction is emphasised. However, even when Parsons addresses differentiation and describes social systems as integrated with sub-systems in inequality or conflict, he maintains the idea of 'a single evolutionary origin' (Parsons, 1971: 109) as the basis for the functional compatibility between the differentiated parts. Therefore, rather than social differentiation bringing anomie or randomness, organic solidarity becomes here a necessary premise achieved through the socialisation processes of adaptation between the social systems and the personalities of individuals.

Consequently, indetermination, contingency or contradiction as a constitutive element in institutions would then turn institutions into their antithesis if contemporary models do not ensure order in a different way. In the theories I outlined above, this role is left to the institutional logics. Here, individuals appear as able to cross between different orders and logics as long as they are capable of adapting to and understanding the rules of the fields. The necessity for consistency appears only as an external drive. In other words, the constraints posed by interaction is embedded in a particular environment of action, which is consistently, in turn, the only room left for agency and social change. By coping with inconsistencies, actors may change the institutional logics. However, without a truly independent category of personality, this 'embedded agency' driven by 'embedded goals' is no more than action subsumed to the logics of the environment.

The relation between users and computational architectures is, despite its inaccuracies, a useful metaphor for understanding the logic behind these perspectives. In this context, an architecture may be provisionally described as a dynamic structure that allows systematic relationships between its users and the given environment of interaction. For the aims of the present investigation, I will apply the explicative power and particular accuracy of this model in the study of contemporary collectivities and organisations, but I will reject its determinism of the environment over agency.

In contrast to Parsons' model, which emphasises the integration of all conflictive and different values into a general value, the architectural perspective allows a dynamic interplay of values and action in a social reality which seems more 'liquid' than 'solid'. However, its attempt to explain dynamism without randomness ironically ends in a kind of environmental determinism. Drawing on the 'collectivistic/non-rationalistic' perspective outlined by Alexander and his further argument on culture as an independent variable (Alexander, 1987, 2003), it can be concluded that architectural perspectives are deterministic primarily because they lack a clear differentiation of a system of action and a system of cultural significations and also lack a real variable of personality. I will address the problem of values in relation to institutions following this section and will later focus on the problem of culture and significations in general. However, before doing so, it is important to clarify the importance of an independent category for what Parsons regarded as a 'personality system'.

The 'needs-dispositions' in the ego system described by Parsons is a means to explain the 'sensibility' that humans have towards objects. This sensibility enables the organisation of 'positive-negative' discriminations, that will build on a subjective element (Parsons, Shils, & Smelser, 1965). As we have seen in Section One, this

subjective orientation to objects addressed here as the cathexis described as 'object-oriented affect' (ibid: 10) are central elements in this research. Cathetic standards as one component of evaluative orientation are part of what Parsons calls 'culture patterns', which belong to the cultural system (Parsons, 1951/2005). This perspective allows Parsons to build a link between subjectivity and collective cultural patterns, granting a volitional aspect in motivation. Architectural perspectives leave this volitional or 'voluntaristic' aspect in action unexplained or determined by external logics, as in the case of what Thornton et. al. refers to as 'situated, embedded, boundedly intentional behaviour' (Thornton et al., 2012: 78-102)

Parsons' model is a synthetic attempt to solve this longstanding problem of the agency of the actor without subsuming it to social structure. However, as Alexander remarks, it also has an 'overemphasis on the normative' and equates 'normative equilibrium with the realization of a good society' (Alexander, 1987: 107). The emphasis on equilibrium and integration, the problems with approaching contradictions, the stress of the functional imperative, and what we will address as a deny of 'radical alterity' evident in the evolutionistic view of history are some of the principal reasons that make Parsons theory, as it is, difficult to use to explain many issues in social dynamics. For the aims of this research, it is at this point of great interest to bring attention to Castoriadis' approach to the problem of history and the institution of the social imaginary (Castoriadis, 1975/1997; Thompson, 1982).

The starting point in Castoriadis is a severe criticism of Marxist historical materialism, particularly the place of revolutionary action and history. What is relevant about this perspective concerning this study is his focus on the problem of agency and its institution. Castoriadis approaches this institution not as determinacy but rather as the institution of what he calls the 'social imaginary'. This social imaginary is closely related to the 'radical alterity' of the indeterminacy in history (Castoriadis, 1975/1997).

Castoriadis' criticism of Marxism centres, among other points, on the role of technique as an autonomous factor in determining social action. The role of technique is, as we have seen in earlier chapters, a central topic in this study as well as a constant premise in 'architectural' notions of institutions. For Castoriadis, technology is understood in Marxism as the autonomous motor of history that poses individual human nature as unalterable. Thus, an individual's motivation can be understood as an economic motivation (Castoriadis, 1975/1997). Economic motivations can be described as goal-means orientation by virtue of their instrumental nature (See for example Gudeman, 2001, although I will address to this problem in other place).

Castoriadis views causality and evolutionism in history as one particular perspective of history which corresponds to capitalist societies. This perspective of history, far from unveiling the 'real' and 'material' drive in history, denies its radical alterity and indeterminate nature. Thus, it explains history as a coherent process subsumed to succession. This coherence in history can be described as a closed system that overlooks the very essence of temporality in history and therefore rejects history itself (Castoriadis, 1975/1997). It is interesting to note that this criticism of the perception of history is not limited to Marxism; rather, it is imputable to the same modernism that drove Marx's considerations. Thus, this same modernism is imputable to the evolutionism in Parsons' theory of differentiation.

In contrast, for Castoriadis, the social contains the 'non-causal' in itself. The 'non-causal' is an element of unpredictability and, in fact, an element of radical alterity, 'immanent creation', or even the imaginary understood as 'creation *ex nihilo*' (Castoriadis, 1975/1997; Thompson, 1982)

The non-causal [...] appears as behaviour that is not merely 'unpredictable' but *creative* (on the level of individuals, groups, classes or entire societies). It appears not as a simple deviation in relation to an existing type but as the positing of a new type of behaviour, as the *institution* of a new social rule, as the *invention* of a new object or a new form - in short, as an emergence or a production which cannot be deduced on the basis of a previous situation [...] historical being goes beyond the simply living being because it can provide new responses to the 'same' situations or create new situations. (italics in the original) (Castoriadis, 1975/1977: 44)

I will address Castoriadis' social imaginary' in detail later. Now, it is important to note the imaginary as an essentially undetermined creation through which reality and rationality are created. In his criticism of Marx's philosophy of history, Castoriadis focuses on an objectivist rationalism that, following Hegel, links the rational and the real in a notion of history as rationality. This notion is, in short, regarded by Castoriadis as determinacy (Castoriadis, 1975/1997: 41-2). Therefore, the institution of the imaginary is the institution of a particular reality, a particular rationality and a particular understanding of history. This institution of the imaginary is built on the basis of symbolism, with which it maintains a mutual relation. Furthermore, 'institutions cannot be reduced to the symbolic but they can exist only in the symbolic; they are impossible outside of a second-order symbolism; for each institution constitutes a particular symbolic network' (Castoriadis, 1975/1997: 117).

As this quote suggests, the emphasis on the symbolic does not make Castoriadis deny the functional imperative in societies or their objective of coherence. However, similar to the cultural system in Parsons, Castoriadis regarded coherence as a matter of signification which ‘construct[s] an order of interconnections other than, and yet inextricably linked up with, that of causal connections’ (Castoriadis, 1975/1997: 46). Causal connections pose the problem of a coherence that ‘holds together’ a given society. This coherence is not only in a level of significations but is also in a functional level without which societies will not survive.

Beyond the conscious activity of institutionalization, institutions have drawn their source from the social imaginary. This imaginary must be interwoven with the symbolic, otherwise society could not have ‘come together’; and have linked up with the economic-functional component, otherwise it could not have survived. (Castoriadis, 1975/1997: 131)

In contrast to Parsons’ model, Castoriadis’ perspective on ‘the social imaginary’ allows for the integration of indeterminacy and change, as well as the evasion of its evolutionist perspective. The ‘imaginary’, as a different category from ‘rationality’, also enables a focus on the place of non-rational action from a different standpoint. As I will argue later, non-rational action is also a kind of rationality which, whenever ‘positively goal oriented’, Parsons regards as instrumental in its essence (Parsons, 1951/2005). For instance, actors’ tendency to be motivated by the ‘optimization of gratifications’ is one example of this instrumentality. Gratifications are a subjective element classified by Parsons in the personality system. For Alexander, this ‘internal’ rather than ‘external’ drive in orientation makes action essentially non-rational (Alexander, 1987)²³. However, the maximising nature of this action has an instrumental function from an ego perspective. Values, as symbolic elements essential in the orientation of action, are directly related to this problem.

5.1.4 Personal values, value generalisation and economic institutions

For Parsons, ‘institutionalized value-patterns’ are ‘the most important single structural component of social systems’ (Parsons, 1971: 126). Values hold this place in Parsons’ model because of their integrative function in relation to the cathetic, the symbolic and the action-orientation aspects of the action system.

²³ I regard this perspective in Alexander as a different theoretical stance towards the meaning of action, society and persons.

Values are a way to approach the meaning of social action. Shared values make social life meaningful for a collectivity and give social actors a common orientation to engage in collective activities. Parsons differentiates values from motivations, where values present the moral acceptable alternatives of response towards different situations in action. The evaluative nature in values also makes them normative. Thus, the institutionalisation of value patterns in a role-expectation system, whenever it is built upon commitment towards such values, shapes a major structural and integrative function in the social system. Value-orientations are the cultural content of selective standards. This content comes from cultural traditions and therefore is collective rather than personal. However, the existence of a 'system of personal values', different from a 'social system of values', is an important element in Parsons' theory that is related to integration, but it can also be regarded as related to contradiction and creativity (Parsons, Shils, & Smelser, 1965; Parsons, 1951/2005, 1971).

Personal values have an ego integrative instrumental function in the sense that they integrate cultural standards into the personality system. For Parsons, a culture is a particular variant of 'emphases and selections from the major combination of themes' (Parsons, Shils, & Smelser, 1965: 180) generalised from personalities. Consequently, what he calls 'the culture of a personality' will be 'a particularized version, selected from a more comprehensive total pattern' (ibid). This 'particular version' adds 'something of its own through interpretation and adaptation' (ibid) in reference to elements relevant to particular actors and situations.

Parsons establishes a connection between 'general' and 'particular' where there can never be a total identity between personal and social values. As motivations in a social system only can come from individuals, i.e. the personality system, the 'contradictions' posed by differences between personal and social values present some 'orientation dilemmas'. Social interaction and structure impose modifications to an innate structure. From the perspective of the personality system, gratification and the cathetic significance of the attachment to the object are the primary orientation 'dilemmas'. Consequently, there are always different degrees of acceptance or rejection of the available cultural patterns, from which the personality system will select some elements in order to shape the actor's orientation system (Parsons, Shils, & Smelser, 1965).

The personality system can also create new values through the selection and integration of contradictory content in the value patterns. As Parsons, Shils and Smelser explain, 'Creativity here refers to the production of new patterns of personal value-orientation which diverge significantly from any of the available cultural patterns'

(ibid: 182). The new patterns will be now part of the existing body of orientations, and thus, susceptible of institutionalisation (Parsons, Shils, & Smelser, 1965). However, the functional imperative causes Parsons to argue for the existence of an 'essential' value pattern. In the end, the possible contradictions or 'eclecticism', regarded as the tolerance of actions incompatible with the value pattern, will be excluded (Parsons, 1971). The idea of 'value generalization' in Parsons is central in this respect.

Value generalisation, as we already observed, follows from cultural differentiation. It traces the same logic of generalisation that allows cultural values to be collective and not only personal and particular. This approach to different values and conflict, including Parsons' attempt to understand these conflicts within the institutionalisation of a 'moral community' holds particular relevance to contemporary issues. Alexander (1988) takes the same path to approach the differentiation problem and the problem of solidarity in civil society (Alexander, 1988). For him, institutional differentiation is a fundamental element in the formation of 'core solidarity' in civil society as a subjective feeling of integration (Alexander, 1988).

From a different perspective but with a similar motivation, Joas (2008) focuses on value generalisation as an alternative to 'rational-argumentative discourse' when communicating values (Joas, 2008). Joas points out the 'bracketing of value commitments' (Joas, 2008: 92) in everyday collective action and interaction, in addition to the differentiation between experiences and values, in order to avoid conflict. Although rejecting Parsons' functionalist assumptions, Joas views in general values an alternative to rational discourse in social integration. For Joas, 'the result of communication about values can at once be more or less than the result of rational discourse: not a full consensus, but a dynamic mutual modification and stimulation toward renewal of one's own tradition' (Joas, 2008: 94). In this research, I will address the notion of value generalisation in a different but not unrelated way to Parsons, Alexander and Joas' use of it. I will approach value generalisation as a central element to achieve intersubjective interaction between different institutional imaginaries and levels of social action.

After this outline of the role of values in institutions, I will briefly focus on a more narrow view of values from an economic perspective while discussing their place in the institutions of markets. As it is well known, Marx understood value as the capacity of labour to produce social wealth, which is objectivised in products of human labour—i.e. commodities. Following Aristotle and Adam Smith, Marx distinguishes between the 'use' and 'exchange' value in commodities. The exchange value, according to Marx, makes measurable the incommensurable and particular use value of each particular

commodity because they are the product of human labour (Harvey, 2010; Wayne, 2003). As I discussed in some sections of Section One, Marxism and perspectives heavily influenced by this Marxist viewpoint, such as the cultural studies, focus on 'use value' or a 'dialectic of use-exchange value' in order to understand the relations between the cultural life and the material constraints in consumer societies. Though I will not discuss this point again, it is important here to comment on the relation of this view of value to the model I am sketching in this chapter by focusing on Castoriadis' criticism of Marx.

Marx's instrumentalist approach to value reduces all forms of value to one single rational logic determined by material constraints. This is certainly the purpose of his historical materialism and his modernist approach to ideology (Thompson, 1990; Touraine, 1992/2006). As many have indicated (e.g. Bottomore, 2002; Alexander & Giesen, 1987; Strinati, 2004; G. Turner, 1990), researchers are concerned with the role of ideas or culture in society like Adorno (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1944/2002; Adorno, 1972/2005), Benjamin (1955/1968), Gramsci, Althusser, and Marcuse, among others, who have presented different perspectives of the problems of this reductionism within the Marxist framework. For Castoriadis, who was also a Marxist theorist, the criticism of materialism and technical determinism in Marx's model leads him to steer away from the model in a radical way (Thompson, 1982). The focus of Castoriadis' criticism, as we have seen, is the role of radical alterity of history and its indeterminacy in symbolism. In other words, it concerns the independence and interdependence of the functional and the symbolic.

For Castoriadis, Marx's models reduce all human motivations to economic motivations. Marx overlooks the fact that motivations and the corresponding values are social creations, which are different in each culture in a non-functional way. This unidimensionality in Marx reduces all motivations in humankind to economic motivations and portrays all individuals as maximising. Yet, in regard to alienation and the fetishism of merchandise, when Marx refers to mystified consciousness, he goes 'beyond a purely economic view and recognize[s] the role of the imaginary' (Castoriadis, 1975/1997: 132). Marx's approach here corresponds to what Castoriadis regards as the imaginary, however, Marx regards it solely as 'a functional role'; as 'a 'non-economic' link in an 'economic' chain' (ibid). At the end, we can say that Marx's view of values as use and exchange linked by labour is a dynamic model of a single maximising and instrumental value in capitalism. This instrumental value is, however, in the view of many authors, not only another possibility among different values. It is also by no means the only possibility, even within economic life (Appadurai, 1986, 1990;

Castoriadis, 1975/1997; Graeber, 2001; Gudeman, 2001; Polanyi, 1957).

Polanyi's 'formalist-substantivist' approach is famous and has oriented many anthropological works in the study of economic life in non-capitalistic societies. For him, human economic activities may have two different meanings. The 'formal' meaning 'derives from the logical character of means-ends relationship' (Polanyi, 1957: 243) in a situation of rational choice between insufficient means. The 'substantive' meaning refers to the exchange of man with his natural and social environment 'as this results in supplying him with the means of material want satisfaction' (ibid). The latter 'implies neither choice nor insufficiency of means' (ibid). Thus, the concept of 'economy' has two meanings for Polanyi, which in Western Europe and in the North America Society have coincided for the last two centuries. For Polanyi, that is the reason researchers like Parsons do not make any distinction between them. Nevertheless, this distinction has proved to be very useful to anthropologists in their studies of economic institutions other than markets.

What is relevant about this for the present research is that Polanyi's approach to 'economic' action is the plurality of values in the orientation of action in an environment not defined by a scarcity of means. For Polanyi, as an 'instituted process', the economy is composed of 'motion', 'unity' and stability'. Motion, as the processual side, is concerned with location (production and transformation) and appropriation (circulation or transaction; administration or dispositions). The institution of this process brings unity and stability, which in correspondence with other noneconomic institutions, produces a structure centred on values, motives and policy. For these institutions, 'reciprocity, redistribution, and exchange' will be forms of integration (Polanyi, 1957: 248-250).

Polanyi's differentiation of 'formal' and 'substantive' meaning of economy enrich our understanding of economic behaviour in concordance to a plurality of values. It also offers the opportunity to approach the relation between markets and communities in what Gudeman (2001) sees as 'the community realm' and 'the market realm' of economy. I will later address Gudeman's model as a way to approach the relationship between communities and markets and will focus its connection to the creation and dynamics of value. However, before that, it is necessary to focus on the nature of the objects we are dealing with in this research and, more essentially, the nature of the field that enables interaction through such objects.

5.2 Culture, Meaning, Aesthetics, Rhetorics and Texts

5.2.1 The dimension of culture

The important role of the imagination and fantasy in social life is commonplace in human sciences and in studies of popular culture in particular. In the same way, the role of culture, aesthetics, symbolism and socially codified meaning in this respect is an everyday reality. The aim of this section is not to assert the importance of such imaginary, cultural and aesthetic dimension again, neither is it to regard it as the most important feature in the case of the present research. Rather, the aim is to grasp such a dimension, understood to be under the broad category of culture, in a way that facilitates the understanding of the institutions that are the subject of this research. In other words, the aim is to address the cultural dimension and some relevant elements in it in a way that allows us to describe and analyse the institutions discussed in the first section in relation to the social actors that enact them. This will be done by paying particular attention to the unique relation they maintain with a set of meaningful texts that flood the field and the dynamics of value that animate their interaction.

Therefore, in this section I will address culture following a movement into two directions, back and forth: going from texts to social interaction and from interaction to texts. In a broad sense, these are the movements suggested by Clifford Geertz, on one side, and by Paul Ricoeur, on the other side, in which I am incorporating the role of the imaginary into my argument as in Castoriadis. Therefore, I approach culture by reading shaped behaviours as texts and texts as shaped behaviours, where meanings unfold within the instance of social discourse and against the backdrop of social interaction. In this sense, culture will be a meaningful dimension, which is, at the same time, a way into the symbolic and a way out the symbolic dimension of meaning. In this section, I shall clarify the importance of this particular approach for the present research by analysing the following elements: disembodied meanings, the cultural imaginary, aesthetic autonomy, aesthetic and rhetorical messages and the appropriation of texts.

Succeeding the argument of institutions and values in the previous section, I am following in the broad sense Alexander's project of 'cultural sociology' and many of its particularities. For example, I focus on the attention he pays to aesthetics concerning social action, as in his 'iconic consciousness' (Alexander, Bartmanski, & Geisen, 2012) or 'cultural pragmatics' (Alexander, Geisen, & Mast, 2006). At the same time, I follow the criticism on a strong structuralist position for a more 'interpretative' one. In this respect, I again follow Ricoeur's hermeneutics search for 'understanding' and not only

‘explanation’ (Ricoeur, 1981), and Castoriadis’ distinction between symbolic meaning and imaginary meaning (Castoriadis, 1975/1997). In a similar way, I also focus on Geertz’s warnings about the overemphasising of the form and function, as in his approach to Yoruba’s art (Geertz, 1983).

Although Ricoeur, Castoriadis and Geertz differ in aim and object, their perspectives call attention to a significant dimension beyond the purely structural and symbolic. This dimension, nevertheless, cannot be without the structural and the symbolic. This approach is also in Thompson’s structural understanding of culture—an approach that, as he clarifies, is not ‘structuralist’ inasmuch as an attempt to overcome the limitations of a ‘symbolist’ conception of culture (Thompson, 1990). Following these perspectives, the relationship between aesthetics and meaning can be differentiated from instrumental cognitive meanings. I regard this perspective as departing from Lash and Urry’s emphasis on the role of the body in what they have called ‘aesthetic reflexivity’ (Lash & Urry, 1994).

By following this perspective of culture and by regarding the place of the imaginary and aesthetic forms, we can approach the role of cultural texts within institutions and between the actors engaged in them, constantly keeping in sight the social, the cathetic or affective and the cultural dimensions. The efforts that the authors I am following in this section put in finding a place for cultural phenomena, symbols or meanings as a different dimension not subordinated to the social or the psychological, hold a particular relevance for this research. This relevance is particularly evident when we consider the tendencies towards explanations rooted in a strong emphasis on either the psychological orientations of the actors or in the socio-economic environment of action that constrain, as I briefly addressed at the end of Section One.

At the same time, it is also important to stress that this posture does not mean a reification of the culture as such, as, for instance, Strauss’ criticism of Castoriadis’s imaginary (Strauss, 2006). The meaningful dimension of culture unfolds within social life, not outside of it. My interest is not to regard culture as a ‘kind of force’ or ‘power’ of its own, nor is it to regard it as a ‘causal’ factor by itself. Rather, my interest is precisely in understanding the particular dynamism and productive force in social action that arise from a particular relation among these three factors. The particular dynamism and productive force cannot be understood if one of these factors is ignored or assimilated to one of the other two.

5.2.2 Disembedded meanings: The symbol and the allegory in the aesthetic

In their analysis of contemporary society, Lash and Urry focused on the transformation and disorganisation of capitalism in late modernity, where objects and subjects circulate in greater distance and at greater speed. The mobility of objects accelerates alongside a progressive increase of the production of symbols, which substitutes the materiality of objects embedded in particular locations, for 'de-territorialized' objects empty of 'content', whether symbolic or material (Lash & Urry, 1994). Lash and Urry, following Giddens, regard modernisation as 'a process of 'time-space distancing' in which time and space 'empty out', become more abstract; and in which things and people become 'disembedded' from concrete space and time' (ibid: 13). In this section, I will regard this process of distancing, disembedding, and emptying out as a starting point to approach the different roles played by the aesthetic, the symbolic and the imaginary in regard to the broad notion of meaning.

Giddens observed the peculiarities of modernity by addressing the 'separation of time and space' (Giddens, 1991/2013), which also entails the reintegration of separated time and space in a standardised time. The 'disembedding of social institutions' (ibid: 17) entails a 'lifting out' of social relations from local contexts. Here, he focuses on the role of 'disembedding mechanisms' (ibid: 18), such as 'symbolic tokens', which perform as 'media of exchange' with a 'standard value' like money or 'expert systems', which represent independent 'modes of technical knowledge' and which position trust in a central place. The other peculiarity he addresses is an 'intrinsic reflexivity' (ibid: 19): a reflexive monitoring of one's actions (Giddens, 1991/2013).

The consequences of the transformation of time and space that modernity have brought have been a particular object of analysis for researchers interested in information technology and media (Castells, 2008, 1996/2011; Terranova, 2000, 2004; Thompson, 1990, 1995; van Dijk, 2012). Among them, Terranova poses an interesting problem for the place of meaning in 'informational cultures', where she stress 'meaning has evaporated as the main point of reference within the scene of communication' (Terranova, 2004: 13). She focuses on the internet as a way to approach the increasing 'network' nature in contemporary culture. For her, the unicity of time and space of the internet's informational space has constituted a 'single map' that she characterises as the incarnation of 'a modern dream for a completely homogeneous and controllable space' (Terranova, 2004: 44). According to Terranova, informational space is the best example of how the logic of the network is transforming the nature of contemporary culture, where meaning is displaced from the central place of communication and

replaced by 'informational dynamics'. For her, the flow of 'massless' commodities in late capitalism has affected culture not only in a quantitative way but also in a deeply qualitative manner. Massless or disembedded symbols lose their semantic content and begin to shape a milieu in which communication takes place.

Terranova's argument is that contemporary culture is taking the qualities of information in the scene of communication. Information, she notes, is not simply the 'content of communication' (ibid: 7). Information can also be a 'valuable commodity' (ibid), as the issues related to intellectual property make clear in the contemporary internet 'free culture' debate (Lessig, 2004). However, more importantly, information has become 'the environment within which contemporary culture unfolds' (Terranova, 2004: 8). Within this environment, culture is transformed; the meaning of the message becomes secondary, and communication is reduced to the role of 'establishing a bridge or contact between a sender and a receiver' (ibid: 15). As Terranova remarks, information is not meaning, but meaning cannot be 'outside of an informational milieu' (ibid: 9). As culture is not 'immaterial and transcendent' (ibid), the informational nature of culture she observes makes her move 'away from an exclusive focus on meaning and representation as the only political dimension of culture' (ibid). In the scenario she depicts, the informational milieu in which culture unfolds constantly threatens meaningful experiences, floods the communication scene with 'signs that have not reference', and pushes for an 'obsessive' tendency to redundancy, where the importance is not in the message but in the establishing of contact. In this informational culture presented by Terranova, the principal concerns of communication are to avoid 'noise' and to solve operational problems of 'channel and code' rather than 'exchange ideas, ethical truth or rhetorical confrontation' (ibid: 16). Communication here 'is not about signs, but about signals' (ibid).

Terranova's work is informative about the contemporary scene of culture and holds particular relevance for the present research, as the role of the internet is in a central place. In this respect, I will refer later to her approach to the problem of value and work on the internet as 'free labour' as a valuable reference to focus on consumer-generated media and the relations between the cultural industries and the internet architectures (Hesmondhalgh, 2010; Terranova, 2000, 2004). In this section, the distinction she draws between meaning and communication is particularly interesting.

Meanings have clearly not vanished from the contemporary cultural scene of abstract space and time, and, contrary to Terranova, I believe that it has not left its crucial place in social action, not to mention politics, even within the architectures of the web. In the case of the internet, for example, Ritzer previously indicated its role as

one of the new means of consumption (Ritzer, 2005). More than ten years after his observations, the internet has become increasingly similar to one of such spaces he called 'cathedrals of consumption'. The 'quasi-religious' character of the new means of consumption, as described by Ritzer, lures the consumer and submerges him in a world of fantasy, luxury and enchantment. The fetishist 're-enchantment' of the world behind the present consumer culture cannot be approached without recognising consumption as a meaningful experience, even when this meaning is deceptive. As Castoriadis remarks, the 'disenchantment of the world' has destroyed previous forms of the imaginary but instituted new ones (Castoriadis, 1975/1997: 139). However, as Alexander and Mast have observed, regardless of whether social action continues to be meaningful and that 'icons' have not lost their power, 'disenchantment' may indicate, rather than the fading of meaning, 'unconvincing cultural practice[s]' or 'failed symbolic performance' (Alexander et al., 2006: 15).

Terranova's observations help us to understand the way in which the place of meaning in communication and its relation to objects and persons is changing. It is, however, necessary to focus on certain aspects of the relation of meaning, culture and symbols in order to describe their role and centrality in the abstract scenario depicted by Terranova. Lash and Urry provide a good starting point in what they called 'aesthetic' or 'hermeneutic reflexivity'.

Lash and Urry have focused on 'aesthetic reflexivity' as a way to find an alternative to what they see a pessimism rooted in an 'overly structuralist conception of social process' (Lash & Urry, 1994: 3). Rather than focusing on the process of modernisation as a process of differentiation and functional integration as Parson did, they rely on Durkheim and Mauss to indicate, as Giddens did, a process of disembedding or 'emptying out', which was also described by Giddens as 'time-space distanciation'. In the case of Durkheim and Mauss, the 'emptying out' refers to the categories through which people classify the world of modernisation. In an increasingly abstract time and space, objects are 'emptied out of meaning, of affective charge' (Lash & Urry, 1994: 14). Following Baudrillard, they argue that meaning was already disembedded from objects even in their 'use value', since 'symbolic significance' was cast away by a domination of the utility and functionalism of the object (ibid: 14).

Moreover, in the 'postmodern sign value' which is, as Baudrillard describes it, the value of the object as a 'simulacrum of a simulacrum', objects are even more 'de-territorialized' and 'emptied out of symbolic content'. Therefore, Lash and Urry focus not on symbols but on signs which become increasingly produced in post-industrial economies. Some of these signs, as they remark, have cognitive content, and some

others have primarily aesthetic content (Lash & Urry, 1994).

The point that interests us here is not in the postmodernist narrative that leads them to focus on aesthetics but rather their criticism towards the specific kind of modernism present in Beck and Giddens when they examine this situation in reference to the concept of 'reflexivity'. In Lash and Urry's opinion, the notion of self in Beck and Giddens' 'reflexivity'—which informs the increasing role of the subject as a conscious agent in the construction of meaning within the disembedding mechanisms of late modernity—is not 'sufficiently embodied', as the self is structured too much along the lines of the ego' (Lash & Urry, 1994: 32). This perspective will lead them to focus on, among other authors, Marcel Mauss' concept of the habitus, Charles Taylor's sources of the self, and Walter Benjamin's or Baudelaire's vision of modernity.

Lash and Urry regard reflexivity as agency and identify a 'cognitive bias' in Giddens and Beck, rooted in a particular understanding of modernity. For Lash and Urry, reflexivity, or self-reflexivity in Giddens, reflects a 'subject-object dualism' where the body is 'monitored by the ego'. While in Beck the idea of reflexivity is attached to modernity as an Enlightenment project, Giddens' emphasis on 'ontological security' presents a self-reflexivity that is too focused on a 'positivistic ego psychology'. In a similar way, Lash and Urry sustain that life narratives or biographies that in Giddens are essential elements in maintaining the self's continuity (Giddens, 1991/2013: 33) are a heavily 'cognitive notion of reflexivity' (Lash & Urry, 1994: 41) that neglects 'the hermeneutic or aesthetic dimension' (ibid: 42).

Lash and Urry pay attention to the 'aesthetic dimension' in order to establish distance from the idea of rational reflexivity as the only source of self in modernity. They look for a place for 'aesthetic play' and 'ideas of metaphor and depth' (ibid: 44) which are also associated with the idea of self. In other words, they seek to find a meaningful dimension that again fills the empty space of a world full of disembedded signs and 'monitored' by a functional and rationalistic 'almost cybernetic-like' (ibid: 44) reflexive self. The 'aesthetic', the 'hermeneutic' and the 'displace of the subject in reflexivity in direction of the body' offer them a way out of excessive structuralism and a way to return to meaningful experience in late modernity.

For Lash and Urry, the concept of habitus in Mauss is the key for access to self-subjectivity. In particular, they focus on Mauss' view of 'techniques' as more culturally immediate and practical than 'rites' that imply a deep mediation of culture and symbols. Therefore, they address 'body techniques' to find a different perspective from that of Giddens, where 'the body is the object but not the subject of reflexivity' (ibid: 46). They also contrast Mauss' understanding of habitus from that in Bourdieu

(1979/1988). In Mauss' structuralism, the self is constituted 'via the total social fact' (Lash & Urry, 1994: 47); therefore, unlike Bourdieu, Mauss understood reflexivity as 'being upon or through the classification category' (ibid: 47).

As Levi-Strauss explains, Mauss' notion of 'social total act' entails that all differentiation between the subject and the object must be provisional. To understand an act in its totality, it should be regarded from the outside, as an object in which the recognition of the subject is a constitutive part (Levi-Strauss, 1971: 26). The dissolution of all social categories leads to a blurring of the borderline between the 'unconscious' and the 'collective thought'. The unconscious, then, will be a mediator between the self and the others. Thus, from this perspective, to deepen into ourselves leads to something that is ours but at the same time belongs to others. The body and the habitus are a way for Mauss to overcome social categories and reach the collective (Levi-Strauss, 1950/1971: 28).

This idea of 'totality' and a sort of 'collective mind' beyond all categories and symbols, which is particularly strong in Levi-Strauss' structuralism, has been widely criticised. Among the criticisms, those from Ricoeur (Levi-Strauss, 1970; Ricoeur, 1981) and Castoriadis (1975/1997) about the closed nature of the structuralist model are relevant for the present research. However, the notion of totality as linked to nature and the immediate, as well as the symbolic linked to culture and the mediate, greatly resonates for many French writers.

As Lash and Urry point out, this particular kind of reflexivity breaks with the Cartesian 'self' as identical to 'ego'. They find a link between aesthetics in Mauss' view of classification and those categories with lower levels of mediation, like those rooted in place and the particular or concrete. The 'emptying out' of late modernity precisely affects the symbolic in those more mediated categories. Therefore, as they regard 'everyday objects of consumer capitalism' as particularised and least mediated categories, they regard 'hyper-commodification' in 'post-organized capitalist order' as a process in a parallel relation to the growing importance of such *not mediated* categories. Therefore, as they comment, '[t]he connection of these least mediated universals becomes specifically aesthetic only in modernity' (Lash & Urry, 1994: 48).

Lash and Urry differentiate the aesthetic from the symbolic and the cultural mediated and regard in the romantic search for 'unmediated universals' as a reaction to the Enlightenment cognitive tradition. They pose the 'aesthetic reflexivity' as an alternative in late modernity to this cognitive stand. This is not only because of the growing importance of aesthetics in late modernity but also because, as they see it, '[r]eflexive action not only entails the mediation of [...] abstract systems, it also involves

significantly deciding between alternatives' (ibid: 50). In a 'post-organized order', there is a shift in the sources where reflexivity finds its sources, from the abstract systems like political institutions, to cultural, media and educational institutions. In late modernity, 'aesthetic reflexivity comes to pervade social process' (ibid: 54). Here, Lash and Urry identify two different aesthetic sources of the self: the allegory and the symbol.

The symbol represents the romantic tradition where nature is thought of as a source of moral order. When modernism displaces romanticism, this moral order was displaced from the natural world to an internal world. The romantic tradition finds unity between the sensual and the spiritual and finds in the materiality of symbols a continuity with such moral and spiritual order (ibid: 52-3).

Modernist tradition, however, repels the symbol and becomes associated with allegory. Modernists' allegory separates the sensual from the spiritual and repudiates nature as a source of 'amoral power' (ibid: 52). Therefore, this tradition neglects a continuity between form and content, giving preference to the signified and turning occasions 'against form on the side of the referent (or the reality)' (ibid: 53). As Lash and Urry indicate, the Jewish tradition, such as Benjamin, Adorno and Derrida, and some forms of post-structuralism and post-modern thought are related to this radical differentiation (ibid: 52-3). In contemporary social life, symbol and allegory both offer two different aesthetic goods as sources of the 'aesthetic rationality', shaping particular and different cultural and political sensibilities. One is a romantic commonality associated with commodities as symbols, and the other is an anarchic impulse associated with commodities approached in an allegorical sense (ibid).

As Lash and Urry remark, the romantic perception of identity in form and content expressed through the symbol is behind the sensibility of communitarian movements. We can regard Victor Turner's (1969/2008, 1975, 1979) reference to the dissolution of symbolic and social structures in liminal and the horizontal *communitas* in affinity to this romantic source of identity. However, as we will see, the 'urban tribes' described by Maffesoli (2000/2004) or the productivity of internet communities based on a kind of 'gift economy', such as the examples analysed in Section One, seems to present both sorts of sensibilities. They are based on a similar communitarian logic that shares the emphasis on the particular or the concrete and finds in symbols the embodiment of the collectivity but, at the same time, presents many of the characteristics Lash and Urry find in the anarchic sensibility.

The 'allegorical' impulse, as Lash and Urry note, is more anarchistic and 'less well-structured' (ibid: 54). It looks not for 'rural unity' but for 'urban complexity'. It

pushes forward a global and continuous change. It is not rooted in 'the privacy of place underscored by symbol' (ibid), but rather in a kind public space which is, in turn, not that of the 'Enlightenment discursive rationality and communication' (ibid), but that of 'figural communication', as in Benjamin or Baudelaire.

In the next chapter, I will present the collectivities I researched as an example of both logics acting together. To do so, I focus not only in the relation between the body and aesthetic reflexivity that Lash and Urry find in Mauss but also on the social category of *persona* which is also an important component in Mauss' theory. From my perspective, the category of *persona* in social action, in addition to non-structuralistic approaches to meaning like that of V. Turner or P. Ricoeur, notwithstanding the explicit communitarian orientation of the former, permit the finding of a way to understand the interaction between what Lash and Urry sees as the symbolic and the allegorical. Therefore, I regard both logics as two different orientations acting together not only within the same fields of interaction but also through the same subjects. Regarded from a general perspective, this is a particular feature of social interaction mediated by cultural goods as it unfolds in the environment of disembodied meanings constituted between the informational and the face-to-face interinstitutional networks.

As referred to above, in the abstract logic of networks described by Terranova, meanings are displaced from centrality, but icons stand as a guiding stars in a homogeneous milieu of disembedded time and space. At the same time, the peculiarities of modernity, such as the separation of space and time, disembedding mechanisms and intrinsic reflexivity, bring social actors' agency to a central place in everyday life. However, while high modernity dynamics pose reflexive agency not as an option but as the only way to survive in such an uncertain environment, the 'emptied out' space and objects leave too much the burden of giving continuity to the world and the self in a rational ego. In my opinion, Lash and Urry's interest in the body and the immediateness of aesthetics is a way to bring back disembedded meanings to the object world and, at the same time, to free the self from the burden of an excessive rationality.

The distinction between the symbol and the allegory also informs two different ways in which meaning is actualised in social reality. In addition to the importance of aesthetics and meaning in the present research, this distinction between symbol and allegory shed light on the dynamics we observed in Section One between two different logics towards objects of consumption. We can call one an 'iconoclast' and the other an 'idolatry' logic and regard them as associated with two different logics of value (relativistic and absolutistic), which actors associate to acts and objects. I will show in Chapter Six the way in which these logics towards value interplay within a field of

interaction.

The authors I will refer to next can be generally classified as belonging to this 'allegorical tradition' but their account of meaning and form provides a particular way to understand the relation of symbolic forms like texts to their institutionalisation in actual life. To understand these logics and their interaction, I shall now address such 'disembedded meanings' by focusing on Castoriadis' imaginary. Thereafter, I will refer to symbols as a 'way out' within the cultural, to the purely aesthetic beyond experience, by focusing on the problem of the 'autonomy of art'. I will then briefly focus on the 'way in' to the structured, focusing on rhetoric and iconic signs. After that, I will focus on appropriation in consideration of Ricoeur.

5.2.3 The imaginary and indetermination

When we observed the broad distinction in the relation of symbols and allegories to content as the disembedded meanings, the question of meaning and signification, in addition to their relation to objects, was only partially answered. This broad distinction is, however, still insufficient to understand the nature of the relation that gives life to the interaction between meaning and objects. This problem, in terms of the relation of form and content, *signifie* and *sinifian*, surface and depth, or material world and ideal world, is approached by Castoriadis by referring to the imaginary. In turn, this problem is closely related to criticism towards a romantic idealism, or materialist, functionalist or structuralist approaches to the problem of meaning and signification. It has, in this way, an important affinity with the role that Ricoeur gave to understanding and interpretation in his particular definition of hermeneutics. This theoretical background is present in J. B. Thompson's analysis of 'symbolic forms' and the media (1990, 1995) and in his search for a structural but not a structuralistic understanding of culture. In the context of this research, the principal merit in Castoriadis' theory of the imaginary and its institution is in providing a way to understand what we have approached as 'disembedded meanings'—in Castoriadis' words, an 'independent core that comes to expression' (Castoriadis, 1975/1997: 139)—in their particular significance, without reducing them to the psychological, the material, the functional or the rational.

To understand the autonomy that the imaginary has from the functional and the material needs of institutions, Castoriadis focuses on what is not symbolic. He departs from seeing the imaginary, in an ordinary sense, as that which is 'invented,' 'a story entirely dreamed up' or a shift of meaning, wherein symbols are invested with other elements beyond its 'normal' significations (ibid:127). In any case, the imaginary is

something different from the real; it is something that *is not there*. This ‘something’ needs, nevertheless, to use symbols not only to ‘express itself’ but also to ‘exist’. As Castoriadis remarks, phantasy is composed of ‘images’ that present ‘something else’ and therefore have a symbolic function. However, those symbols ‘presuppose an imaginary capacity [...] to see in a thing what it is not’ (ibid: 127). This ‘capacity of evoking images’ is what makes symbolic function possible, inasmuch as symbolism establishes an imaginary relation which is not given in perception. Castoriadis calls this capacity a ‘final or radical imaginary’ and regards it as the ‘common root of the actual imaginary and of the symbolic’ (ibid).

For Castoriadis, the ‘radical imaginary’ is what makes the symbolism and the rational possible, and as such, it makes institutional life and meaningful social action possible as well. However, in most cases, signification is reduced to its functional aspect. Institutions draw their sources from the imaginary, such as law institutions and religion in the image of God or totemism as a principle of a world organisation. Such imaginary constructions of God and totem ‘must be interwoven with the symbolic, otherwise society could not have ‘come together’” (ibid: 131). However, the ‘effect’ of the imaginary exceeds its function. Symbolic determination brings specificity and unity; in addition, functional determination brings orientation and finality. However, without an understanding of what exceeds any determination, the imaginary remains incomplete and incomprehensible (ibid).

The problem of needs, motivations and ends, which are essential in institutional life, has a fundamental relevance. For Castoriadis, needs in man are born in history and ‘[do] not contain in itself the definition of an object that could satisfy it’ (Castoriadis, 1975/1997: 135). Man exists ‘by defining himself in each case as an ensemble of needs and corresponding objects, but he always outstrips these definitions’ (ibid). Social life and institutions understood only by their functionality face the problem of ends, and in human life this cannot be regarded without approaching intentions, orientations and ‘chains of significations’ (ibid: 136). However, symbolism in this case is only the entrance to the real problem. The real problem is *the particular meaning* conveyed by the symbols. In other words, action in social institutions is significant not only because it is invested in meaning but also because of *that particular meaning* in which it is invested. This particular content gives cultural life its variability of forms and institutions, and neither the functional strives nor the symbolic structures can fully give an account of this variations. Here, Castoriadis shifts from the criticisms towards functionalism to the criticism of structuralism.

For Castoriadis, '[t]here exist a meaning that can never be given independently of every sign but which is something other than the opposition of signs' (Castoriadis, 1975/1997: 137). This meaning can be differentiated from a particular signifying structure. It is what remains invariant when a message is transmitted in different codes. Castoriadis emphasises that regardless of meaning's need for certain means of actualisation, like signs and symbols; meaning is not the output of such forms and their logic structures. The possibility of translation is, at least partially, one of the consequences of such property, but the interest of Castoriadis is in liberating meaning from a one-sided determinism of the structure. For him, an extremist structuralism will reduce sense to an 'unconveyable interiority' (ibid: 138), which leaves no other option than to find sense only in a 'limited psychological and affective acception' (ibid: 138). As we will see, Ricoeur's criticism of romantic hermeneutics and structuralism follows the same path (Ricoeur, 1981). If meaning has to be instituted and institutions rely on meaning to give shape to collective action—i.e. meaning is relevant to social interaction and is not merely decorative—then meaning cannot be reduced only to the actuality of its representation. Doing so will ultimately collapse its collective significance into a purely individual or bodily dimension. For instance, that is the case of Randall Collins' ritual theory (Collins, 1987, 1993, 2004), as we shall see below.

For Castoriadis, religious symbols are able to create value and organise human acts only if they have become autonomous or independent in the sense that they can subordinate social life to its meaning. This autonomy is the actual potency of symbols, icons, images or mythological forms that have fascinated humankind and countless researchers. For Castoriadis, this autonomy and the independent value of the symbol is 'borrowed' from the imaginary, which can unceasingly 'cast meaning' in new symbols and 'create new signifiers' (ibid: 139).

Castoriadis then focuses on discourse. Discourse is not independent from symbolism, but its *intention* is other than symbolism. This intention is the *meaning* of the discourse, which is composed by the *perceived*, the *thought* or *rational* and the *imaginary*. For Castoriadis, these three poles are always connected but must be regarded as different. He uses 'God' as an example, which he defines as a 'central signification':

[T]he organization of signifiers and signifieds into a system, that which supports the intersecting unity of both those components and which also permits the extension, multiplication and modification of this signification. And this signification, which is neither something perceived (real) nor something thought (rational), is an imaginary signification. (ibid: 140)

In addition to religious significations or those that look fabricated, even significations without a collective representation can be regarded as a social imaginary. Moreover, abstract, ‘rational’ concepts, such as the phenomena of reification in Marx, can be understood in this sense. As Castoriadis explains, metaphors like workers represented as a ‘cog in the machine’ are something imaginary, i.e. something that is not real but which has operative significance. As with these examples, the imaginary creations cannot be taken into account by their reality, rationality or the laws of symbolism. A central signification is, rather, a significance operative in practice—the meaning that organises social behaviour and social relations—which has no need to become a representation in order to exist.

The collective significance of the imaginary, therefore, is not to be found in the ‘sum,’ the ‘common part’ or the ‘average’ of particular representations or images but rather in the condition of possibility of such representations as instituted in society. From the theoretical perspective of this research, the particular relevance of Castoriadis’ conception of meaning and the imaginary is not only in drawing the undetermined condition of a meaningful dimension separated from social or functional determinants and affective or psychological conditions. It is also separated from linguistic or structural constraints. The philosophical project in Castoriadis is to bring back history as radical alterity and to reach the possibility of creation and transformation beyond any previous determination. For him, if meaning cannot be regarded as different from the functional, social, psychological, rational or linguistic systems, it will be inexorably contained in a closed system. This closed nature leaves no chance for alterity—that is, for something external to such systems.

Castoriadis’ imaginary theory spotlights the existence of a meaningful dimension different from symbolic determinations without relying on the purely aesthetic and physical experience rooted on the ‘surface’ of the symbol, as well as what can be considered a ‘meta-structure’ or ‘meta-narrative’. Therefore, the relevance of Castoriadis’ imaginary for this research is in providing us a way to understand fiction as different from ideology (that does not mean unrelated to ideology) and narcissistic semiosis. It is, therefore, another way to go beyond rationality without only relying on the body as with Lash and Urry. However, when focusing on narratives from this perspective, it is necessary to focus on what Castoriadis called ‘the actual imaginary’.

The ‘actual imaginary’ is a functional articulation of systems of significations; it is their constitution and actualisation. Its role is to provide ‘answers’ to problems of meaning and definitions that every society poses. These answers appear in ‘the doing’ of each collectivity as embodied meaning (ibid: 147). The self-definition of every human

himself/herself and the definition of the collectivity are central to social life. These definitions are symbols, which not only designate the collectivity by denotation, such as in the denotation of the name, but also by connotation. This connotation refers to a signified that, again, is not 'real or rational, but imaginary.' The institution is constituted as 'another reality' such as in the case of the Nation. Therefore, each institution will constitute its definitions by a particular 'world-image' not only as representation but in practices, i.e. embodied meanings and values. The plurality of values and worldviews present in many different cultures, again, is rooted in something imaginary that provides relevance to an actual difference. From this perspective, valuation or devaluation can be regarded as the collective constitution of meaningful differences exceeding the possible functionality that such differentiation may bring to the actual collectivity. This perspective holds relevance, for instance, in reconsidering the dynamics of judgement and differentiation, as approached by Bourdieu, from a larger perspective other than the focus on the body like Lash and Urry. This position also shares its aim with the general project of cultural sociology, although from a different theoretical background: the recognition of the autonomy of culture.

Before moving on to a focus on the aesthetic and the bodily experience, it is important to stress the status of the abstract radical imaginary in Castoriadis from what he calls the imaginary as 'the image of' rooted in Platonic ontology. It is, rather, 'the unceasing and essentially undetermined (social-historical and psychical) creation of figures / forms / images, on the basis of which alone there can ever be a question of "something". What we call "reality" and "rationality" are its works.' (ibid: 3) Castoriadis claims about the imaginary follow his criticism against what he regards as a misleading contrast between 'materialism' and 'idealism', for both are rooted in totality as the principle of all determinations. For Castoriadis, Marx's criticism of the idealism in Hegel is rooted in the same principle of Hegel's. Hegelian dialectics, as Castoriadis explains, is grounded in the postulate that 'all that is real is rational' (ibid: 55). The Marxist substitution of 'spirit' or 'logos' for 'matter' does not change the Hegelian dialectics if matter and spirit are posited as possessing the same rational essence. The imaginary is the way in which Castoriadis looks to overcome such false opposition. In his words, 'a "non-spiritualistic" dialectic must also be a "non-materialistic dialectic" and must eliminate "closure and completion, pushing aside the completed system of the world"' (ibid: 56).

5.2.4 Aesthetic autonomy, self-reflective codes and rhetoric messages

In this and the next section, I will approach cultural texts or 'symbolic forms' as carriers of meanings. These symbolic forms are discourses in the sense that they actualise meaning, or, more exactly, actors actualise them through reading and interpretation (Eco, 1968/2005, 1964/2011; Harrington, 2004; Ricoeur, 1981; Thompson, 1982). These symbolic forms are texts not only because they are able to be read but also because they are a form of work, and, as such, they encompass intentionality. In other words, they have an objective structure, and their meaning cannot be reduced, neither to the social and psychological conditions of production nor to that of reception. At the same time, as the product of work, they are unlike the abstract meanings, able to be produced, reproduced and commercialised. This characteristic holds particular relevance for what we have seen as the disembedding of meaning for two principal reasons: meaning in a work is objective and autonomous from social and psychological conditions because of its distanciation from the instance of discourse (Ricoeur, 1981). In other words, disembedding is, in a sense, a condition for hermeneutical reconstruction, which differentiates a text from, for instance, a conversation (ibid). On the other hand, disembedding in the particular conditions of media communication and text commodification brings, as numerous authors have noted, particular conditions to the work itself and to the act of reading or 'reception'.

First, I will refer to the aesthetic element in symbolic forms as a way out of the structure of the work that this same structure proposes to the reader. I approach this element in reference to two different perspectives concerning the effect produced by the aesthetic work, in correspondence to the distinction between 'symbol' and 'allegory' we addressed above. One is the sensual experience, and the other is the 'auratic' *not experience*, as mentioned in Benjamin (1955/1968) when he focuses on Proust. After a brief overview of some of the characteristics of each aesthetic effect, I shall return, in the next section, to meaning and text in relation to cultural codes.

The importance of aesthetics in post-industrial consumerism is, as Lash and Urry noted, rather than in what may be regarded as artworks, in the experience of objects as a source of disembedded meaning. This experience is not only a particular condition of temporal and spatial distanciation and reconfiguration (Lash & Urry, 1994), 'diffused' consumption (Abercrombie & Longhurst, 1998) or due to the decreasing centrality of meaning in communication and the increase of 'empty signifiers' through informational networks (Terranova, 2004). As a process of commodification not only of texts but of everyday life experience, both the diffused consumption and

interaction-participation-labour through informational networks depend for its efficacy on the impact and force of aesthetic forms. The kind of 're-enchantment' that the new means of consumption produce (Ritzer, 2005) may not be able to be understood without an approach to the aesthetics.

However, it is not only the material aesthetics implied in the surface of the message that drive contemporary consumerism. As Harrington (2004) and McGuigan (2009) point out, socially sanctioned forms of art have played an important role in attaching particular meanings or imaginaries to particular commodities or to a consumerist way of life. For instance, that is the case with Picasso, Rivera, and Kahlo as examples analysed by McGuigan in the convergence of art and consumerism in producing a 'cool' consumerism (McGuigan, 2009). From his side, Harrington, following Robert Witkin, identifies modernist art since the nineteenth century as 'self-referential' and as relying on 'provocative codes.' This art, rich in the use of parody, quotations and irony, is characteristic of 'high differentiated' and 'sometimes anomic structures of integration' where 'social relations are intra-actional, expressive or reflexive personal identity projects' (Harrington, 2004: 70).

From this perspective, the self-referentiality that reverts to the form as a way to 'provoke' meaning in modernist art is contrasted with former 'codes', such as 'invocative' and 'evocative' codes (ibid: 69). The 'invocative' codes 'invoke meaning' from social authority, and meaning is mainly external to the object, as in the case of the Middle Ages' Christian artwork. This form is distinctive in societies with mechanical integration in the Durkheim sense. The 'evocative' code is characteristic in the Renaissance's realistic and naturalistic art. Here, meanings are evoked by relating the artwork to the sensory impression from the external world from an individual perspective. This kind of art is more characteristic in societies with organic integration based on more interactional social relations (Harrington, 2004). This schematic approach to art history draws attention to an increasing autonomy of aesthetic forms in art expression in relation to what Durkheim, Parsons and Alexander view as differentiation (Alexander, 1988; Parsons, 1971) and to what Giddens sees as the disembedding of social institutions (Giddens, 1991/2013).

This approach to the aesthetic is rooted in a metaphysical conception of art as perception or 'aísthēsis', regarded since the Enlightenment as the key element in the experience of pleasure in sensory objects. More importantly, since Kant's aesthetics it is usually regarded as the grounds for intersubjective valid judgements of taste about sensory objects, and more recently, in the twentieth century, as the 'aesthetic autonomy' has been regarded as a 'self-evident value' (Harrington, 2004). This conception, which

was criticised by Bourdieu (1979/1988), still holds particular relevance when Lash and Urry approached habitus in the Mauss sense, as we saw earlier (Harrington, 2004; Lash & Urry, 1994; Mauss, 1971/1979).

As Harrington explains, Kant's aesthetic judgement is rooted in the particular but with reference to something general. This 'harmony between reason and sense' entails a common feeling or 'sensus communis' (Delanty, 2003: 16; Harrington, 2004: 85). Thus, aesthetic judgement entails a commitment towards showing that the referred object could be an object of pleasure for everyone. This is, for Kant, the distinction between 'pleasure of sensation' in aesthetics, which is different to that of taste or 'pleasure of reflection' where the latter cannot be ground for common agreement (ibid). This position was criticised by Bourdieu in his 'La Distinction' (Bourdieu, 1979/1988).

For Bourdieu, taste can classify the object of taste as well as the classifier, and he therefore demolishes the opposition between sensation and reflection (Bourdieu, 1979/1988; Harrington, 2004). In this respect, inasmuch as the idea of 'pleasure of reflection' and taste is linked with the body, the category of habitus in which merges cultural and social categories into the body is a key element. Bourdieu finds in the concept of cultural capital the logic of social distinction that imprints the body and the taste. However, in a similar way to Lash and Urry's criticism of the over-rationalization of the self in Bourdieu, Maffesoli (2000/2004) has criticised his instrumentalism through the same category of habitus. Likewise, Alexander has regarded his posture as overlooking the relative autonomy of culture which in Bourdieu is like a 'gearbox, not an engine' (Alexander, 2003: 18). In a similar vein, Harrington criticises the strict correlation in Bourdieu among taste, prestige hierarchy and social class hierarchy, arguing that contemporary transformations of consumption and class structure have come to shape a more horizontal (heterogeneous, in Maffesoli's words) logic of differentiation in cultural consumption.

For Harrington, aesthetic judgement still can be generalisable without being regarded as a reflection of psychological and behavioural peculiarities (Harrington, 2004). In other words, the sociostructural, instrumental or strategic particular orientation towards particular taste does not erase the possibility of claiming the validity of aesthetic judgement as general. In the same sense, value in the text as a work is constructed in relation to particular social contexts and certain psychological peculiarities, but the value of such work is not exhausted by these contexts or peculiarities. This is a condition present in the process of distanciation and is of central importance in Ricoeur's hermeneutics (Ricoeur, 1981). At the same time, as we will see, this is also of central importance for understanding textual appropriation in a

non-formal economic sense, as it is, for example, in de Certeau (1980/2000) or in the cultural studies tradition (G. Turner, 1990). This view is also essential for understanding value generalisation not as the generalisation of value through aesthetic forms. For this last problem, it is important to more closely examine the nature of the aesthetic message.

For Umberto Eco, the aesthetic message is an ambiguous and self-reflexive one. He departs from Roman Jakobson's differentiation of the function of language (referential, emotive, conative, phatic, metalinguistic and poetic) and focuses on the poetic function as an aesthetic one. Any message may contain all functions in different degrees. For example, if in a message with a focus on the referential function the aim is to denote the referent, the aesthetic or poetic message is ambiguous, and the referent is unclear. Therefore, the attention is directed to the message itself. In the aesthetic message, the ambiguity is produced by an excess of information that brings the order of the message on the verge of the disorder. This is the reason behind the productivity of the aesthetic message, in which the apparent disorder calls for an interpretation and the finding of the particular code in which the message is constructed. The aesthetic message constitutes its own code by transforming the usual code in, for example, language or social conventions. However, as the message entails intentionality and is not a random disorder, the code of the work appears as an 'idiolect' that is related to the body of its discourse (Eco, 1968/2005).

This redundancy and excess of information is opposed to the referential function and 'opens' the message for different possible readings. For Eco, an aesthetic message 'enacts an experience' which cannot be reduced to a structural system. However, this productivity is not indeterminacy. The structure of the message makes it auto-referential, but this structure is an objective structure which determines the open process of interpretation (Eco, 1968/2005). That is, the aesthetic message, as a message, proposes a particular way into an aesthetic experience. For Eco, the 'empty form' of the aesthetic message causes the convergence of new meanings controlled by a logic in the signifiers that puts in tension free interpretation and, at the same time, fidelity to the structured context of the message (Eco, 1968/2005: 152). This entails a distancing from the messages that de-automatize language, turns the object into something 'strange' for the reader, and brings back a feeling of an immediate experience. This process, in turn, leads to an emotive richness in the message (ibid).

Eco describes the aesthetic message in a detectably similar way to the rhetorical message and the iconic sign. The nature of these elements is also closely related to what Barthes regarded as ideology, mystification and the naturalisation of the message in his

famous work on contemporary myths (Barthes, 1957/1999). My particular interest here is to emphasise the process in which the aesthetic message produces experiences as 'natural' through an objective structure. This is a way to approach a non-structural element embedded in the structure of the aesthetic message as an 'open work'. It is, in turn, directly related to the emotive effectivity of the message: its 'call' for a productive interpretation. Furthermore, at the same time, it is also the basis of its opposite: the rhetorical message and the naturalisation of the message through emotive commitment.

This theoretical background holds central relevance to understanding the place and dynamics of values towards cultural consumption, as well as the nature of interaction through textual exchange and textual productivity. That is the case of the *dōjin* culture and the productivity of Vocaloid scene I have regarded in this research. At the same time, it holds relevance to understanding the partial indeterminacy or 'openness' of an aesthetic message, and therefore, rejecting a completely 'narcissistic' or ego rooted psychological interpretation of aesthetic or rhetorical messages. As I shall refer to in the next section, this point is also fundamental to understand Ricoeur's hermeneutics and his neglect of 'intersubjective communication' through textual interpretation (Ricoeur, 1981, 1976/1995).

Before going forward, I will briefly discuss Eco's understanding of rhetoric and the iconic sign. If the aesthetic distanciation from the usual code of communication turns the object alien and brings it back to the sphere of experience, the persuasive rhetorical message supposes the contrary movement through a similar mechanism. Rhetoric is a key element for focusing on the link between meanings and actions since the aim of the rhetorical message is to induce or persuade about something, through an emotive rather than rational assent.

As with the aesthetic message, the rhetorical message 'oscillates between redundancy and information'. Rhetoric seems to show something different, or inform about something, but it is grounded in previously coded experiences. It renders the possible lectures of a message in concordance to the expectations system of the receiver. Here, the redundancy and information do not put the code in crisis, as in the aesthetic message. Rather, it restores and reinforces the code and convinces by offering confirmation of what is already known (Eco, 1968/2005).

Rhetoric is also referred to as pre-constructed and culturally coded stylistic techniques used to persuade (Eco, 1968/2005). This is what Alexander regards as 'the cookbook of rhetorical configurations' inscribed in culture (Alexander et al., 2006: 58). Eco enumerates those as the kitsch, as figurative or iconographic messages, as connotations with a fixed emotive value or as resources for an already secured emotive

response. When rhetoric is regarded as a technique to generate persuasive arguments rather than as stylistic conventions, rhetorical effectiveness is connected, as it is in the aesthetic message, to the capacity of producing an emotive effect. However, if the effect in aesthetics comes from an estrangement from the code and bringing close the indeterminacy of experience in the sensual surface within the message, the rhetoric, in contrast, deceptively presents the code (which is external to the message) as a new experience through the sensual surfaces. The rhetoric, when it is effective, presents the already given as new and, in that sense, actualises and reinforces cultural conventions.

The iconic sign in Eco is, in its narrow sense, the graphic representation of something. It is in part related to the broader cultural constructions concerning a feeling of sacredness which Alexander regards as *icons*. However, it is important to observe some of the characteristics Eco finds in the iconic sign that are in close relation to his understanding of aesthetics and rhetoric. For instance, for Eco, the iconic sign does not aim to denote or imitate the object but instead seeks to reproduce the experience that such an object produces.

As Eco explains, an iconic sign (e.g. a portrait of someone, a picture of something or any figurative representation) does not reproduce the properties of the represented object, as commonly believed. Rather, it reproduces some of the conditions of the perception of the object in the base of perceptive shared codes. It selects and discriminates certain stimulus and builds a perceptive structure which on the basis of codes learned through experience, has the same 'meaning' of the real experience (Eco, 1968/2005). This characteristic of icons is interesting as, following Roman Gubern's analysis of comic books' aesthetics (Gubern, 1972), the 'moral characteristic' of the objects can be represented iconically by reproducing the experience of the object (in this case, a fictional character) through abstract codes.

5.2.5 Text appropriation and self-understanding

In this approach to the dimension of culture from the symbolic forms and their disembedded meanings, I have been following the emphasis that Alexander, following Parsons' system model, places on the importance of the place of culture as a 'relatively independent variable'. Thus, culture is regarded as not assimilable to, on the one hand, the system of social action or the logics of social structure and, on the other hand, to the system of ego integration or psychological particularities of the individual. Besides this model, I have approached culture, mainly following as major guidelines the work of Geertz (1973, 1983), Castoriadis (1975/1997), Ricoeur (Ricoeur, 1973, 1981, 1988/1991,

1976/1995) and J. B. Thompson (Thompson, 1990, 1995). In the case of particular or technical aspects, with reference to Eco (Eco, 1968/2005, 1964/2011) and Barthes' (Barthes, 1977, 1957/1999) semiotics, as well as other theoretical paradigms such as the work of Benjamin (1955/1968), Bataille (1957/1988) and Adorno (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1944/2002; Adorno, 1972/2005) among others I cannot directly approach in this outline. These works find, in different degrees, a recognition of the particular place of culture or significations as differentiated from socioeconomic or psychological backgrounds (as even Adorno recognises a non-deceptive use-value in children's purposeless play). They also find the relation, in some way or another, between this distinction or autonomy, or a certain indetermination or non-instrumental character in culture regarded in the broad sense.

It is important to make sure of the importance in the outline of the theoretical framework for this research, not only in the relative 'independence of culture' but also in its relative indeterminacy, potential arbitrariness, randomness and 'openness' to alterity, as well as in its non-instrumental side. In this chapter, I have approached this issue in particular from Lash and Urry's emphasis on 'aesthetic reflexivity', Castoriadis' imaginary and the notions of 'aesthetic autonomy' or the analytical approach in Eco to the aesthetic message. Other examples may be found in Benjamin's focus on what is beyond experience and translation (Benjamin, 1955/1968) and in Bataille's obsession with the role of transgression, excess and irrationality (Bataille, 1957/1988). Now, I will approach this same problem from the perspective of Ricoeur on the matter of appropriation and interpretation. Ricoeur's hermeneutics aim to understand interpretation as 'indeterminacy' and 'determinacy.' In other words, in the middle point between the concreteness of the *parole* and the abstraction of the *language*, and therefore, to reconcile romantic hermeneutics as with Dilthey's emphasis on 'understanding', and structuralist stress on 'explanation' of the text by proposing a different path to both traditions. This stance in Ricoeur allows us to find an understanding of textual appropriation as not determined by the social differentiation dynamics of social structure, or the oppositional dynamics of signs structures. It is a way to comprehend appropriation and meaning beyond a solely strategic and instrumental way, as in de Certeau (1980/2000) and many cultural studies approaches with similar theoretical bases (culture, texts and meanings, understood as resources) concerning the idea of appropriation.

Appropriation in Ricoeur is the appropriation of a world proposed by the work of the text, which unfolds or actualises 'in front' of the text through the event or instance of the act of reading. It is, rather than a kind of possession, a disappropriation of the world

and the self, where 'every reality is abolished and yet everyone becomes himself' (Ricoeur, 1981: 187). The work that the text proposes is a 'playful' presentation that 'shatters the seriousness of a utilitarian preoccupation where the self-presence of the subject is too secure' (ibid). Only in the indetermination of the play can the work of the text disclose a world, which is alien to the reader. For Ricoeur, in order to understand the world proposed by the text, it is necessary to disappropriate the self and let the matter of the text be. Therefore, appropriation means to receive an 'enlarged self' from the apprehension of the proposed world (Ricoeur, 1981).

This understanding of appropriation and the narrative understanding of the self, have fundamental differences from the concept of self-narrative in Giddens, which is essentially instrumental and ego oriented and therefore oriented in an opposite direction to the playful attitude presented by Ricoeur. This difference is not to be overlooked by a naïve differentiation between fiction literature or poetry in contrast to the 'real world'. For, among other reasons, as Ricoeur indicates, the process of distanciation from the instance of discourse make each work a different reality which is neither the *psychological* nor the *social* conditions of the author or the reader. Therefore, for Ricoeur, knowledge of the self is a narrative interpretation where history or self-history and fiction are blended (Ricoeur, 1988/1991). Furthermore, Ricoeur's regard of identity as self is not sameness and is not the psychological ego; the act of reading is not the reader projecting himself. Rather, it is the opening of the self to a new possibility by the dispossession of a 'narcissistic ego.' Ricoeur offers the following explanation:

By the expression of '*self* understanding', I should like to contrast the *self* which emerges from the understanding of the text to the *ego* which claims to precede this understanding. It is the text, with its universal power of unveiling, which gives a *self* to the ego. (Ricoeur, 1981: 193)

In the following section, in order to present a brief overview of Ricoeur's concept of appropriation, I will focus on the discourse, the text as distanciation from an intentional work, the autonomy of the world of the text, and appropriation as understanding. The aim is to find a model that allows us to understand the interaction through the appropriation and production of fictional worlds and characters as a form of discourse in which meaning is not reduced to its role as a resource or regarded merely as a 'bonding social glue.'

Ricoeur describes discourse as an event where language actualises in parole, always present or actual and not abstract. It is self-referential in the sense that it has a subject of utterance, is referred to something, i.e. a world, and is addressed to someone. In contrast to language, which is the condition for communication, the discourse as an

event 'is the temporal phenomenon of exchange, the establishment of a dialogue which can be started, continued or interrupted' (Ricoeur, 1981: 133). Through discourse, events and meanings are articulated, and language surpasses itself as a system; at the same time, the event surpasses itself in being understood as meaning. Meaning is 'intentional exteriorization' (ibid: 135) and is the first distancing from discourse, between 'the saying and the said' (ibid: 134).

The writing is a different form of distancing of such intentionality from the discourse into the work, which completely transforms the original situation of the discourse. Ricoeur sees in the text the work of objectivation of the 'creative energies of life,' which mediates 'meanings,' 'values' or 'goals' (ibid: 152). The work is a 'finite closed totality' product of labour which 'appears as a practical mediation between the irrationality of the event and the rationality of the meaning' (ibid: 137). The style of the work represents the singularity of a particular standpoint in the work that individualises and, as such, is the mediation between event and meaning. The style represents the 'openness and indeterminacy' of experience into the closed structure of the work, where it inscribes a 'sensible idea', a 'concrete universal' and, therefore, the subject of the discourse in the work as its author, in correlation to the individuality of the work.

However, the work not only poses the problem of objectivation and distancing from the discourse but also from its author. Writing makes the text 'autonomous' from its author's intention. The 'matter' of the text is freed from the 'the finite intentional horizon of its author' and presents a world which explodes the world of the author. The text decontextualises itself in a way that it can be recontextualised in a new situation by the act of reading. The text does not reproduce the dialogical condition; it is not a conversation between the author and the reader. This distancing of the text from the discourse and the author opens the condition for interpretation and poses the world of the text as a different reality than its author and its psychological or sociological context (Ricoeur, 1981).

For Ricoeur, the world of the text is incomparable to that of its author and is not the structure of the text. It is a proposed world that comes to be when there is no longer a common situation (referent) between the writer and the reader. For Ricoeur, literature destroys the world as a first order reference as the condition of possibility for a second order reference, 'which reaches the world not only at the 'level of manipulable objects'' (Ricoeur, 1981: 141) but on a more fundamental level as well, as is regarded by Ricoeur, Husserl's *Lebenswelt* or Heidegger's 'being-in-the-world'. Here, the interpretation will be, for Ricoeur, not to reach to a psychological author behind the text or to analyse the

structure of the text, but 'to explicate the type of being-in-the-world unfolded *in front* of the text' (ibid). To understand the text is not the understanding of others; it is being in a situation and projecting our own possibilities 'at the very heart of [such] situation in which we find ourselves' (ibid: 142). Therefore, fiction is not a 'being-given' but a 'power-to-be' which opens new possibilities in everyday reality as 'imaginative variations' (ibid). Hence, for Ricoeur, the text is the medium through which we understand ourselves inasmuch as it 'opens up its readers and thus creates its own subjectivity *vis-à-vis*' (ibid: 143).

Appropriation, therefore, is not an affective affinity with the intentions of the author as in romantic hermeneutics, or that of the 'texture of the text' as in structuralism. It is the appropriation of a proposed world which is not behind the text but in front of it. The aim is 'to understand oneself in front of the text' and not impose but expose 'ourselves to the text and receiving from it an enlarged self' (ibid). If from distanciation in inscription from the instance of the discourse follows the reality of the world of the text, in the same sense, the subjectivity of the reader must be placed in suspense in order to let the matter of the text constitute the reader's self:

[...] if fiction is a fundamental dimension of the reference of the text it is no less a fundamental dimension of the subjectivity of the reader. As [a] reader, I find myself only by losing myself. Reading introduces me into the imaginative variations of the *ego*. The metamorphosis of the world in play is also the playful metamorphosis of the *ego*. (Ricoeur, 1981: 144)

There is left the task of understanding interpretation and reading as the instantiation of the text or its actualisation by bringing it again to the indeterminacy of the event of reading. The aim of interpretation is the reproduction of lived experiences where a structuralist 'explanation' only can 'bring out' the structure of internal relations and reduce meaning to it. For Ricoeur, to follow the structuralist method to its last consequences will leave the possibility of finding meaning only in a reduced psychological way. That is because structuralism overlooks the 'reactivation' that occurs in appropriation, through which the objective structure in the text restores the reference (the world and self which were destroyed by writing) in an actual world and self. The act of reading is to resume the referent in the text (the world and the subject) which distanciation puts in suspense. That is the 'power' of the work to disclose a world.

Therefore, reading is possible because the text is open 'to conjoin a new discourse to the discourse of the text' (Ricoeur, 1981: 158). This conjunction brings a 'renewal', and its outcome is the actual interpretation. The appropriation of the text world, which is other than of the reader's, has relevance in the struggle against cultural distance—that

is, against estrangement from meaning itself and from the 'system of values upon which the text is based.' For 'interpretation "brings together", "equalizes" [and] renders "contemporary and similar", thus genuinely making one's *own* what was initially *alien*' (Ricoeur, 1981:159).

The general relevance of Ricoeur hermeneutics for cultural analysis as an interpretative science (Geertz, Alexander, and Thompson) has a particular importance in this research, where the consumption and production of texts appear as the locus of social dynamism and structuration. In regard to fan theories, Hills (2002) has already approached Ricoeur's idea of 'disappropriation' of the self in order to understand the construction of fans in 'self-absence', placing special emphasis on a moment of emotive commitment towards the text (Hills, 2002). However, he lacks a clear notion of the autonomy of the text and identifies exchange-value to commonality opposed and connected with 'private' use-value (ibid: 170). The same focus on emotive commitment towards texts in interpretation leads Sandvoss, as we have seen, to an over-emphasised 'aesthetic' moment towards the text as the condition for a potential collapse of interpretative distance. From this perspective, his argument leads to posing a narcissistic 'self-reflection' in which the appropriation of making something 'mine' ends in a narcissistic 'me' (Sandvoss, 2005a). Stances like those and such as that of Fiske (1992, 1989/2010) and Jenkins follow the less hermeneutical and more economy-focused understanding of appropriation, which, although a powerful tool for regarding the common use of meaning as resources for social action, obfuscates the understanding of concrete meanings in a collective way.

Following Ricoeur and Castoriadis, we can regard the actual imaginary as the meaning that unfolds in collective readings, understanding 'collective readings' as the instance of interaction towards and by means of appropriation. In other words, this is a particular institution understood as the doing of its social actors. The centrality is in the institution of the radical imaginary because the scripts of what can be perceived as 'collective texts' are never fully written, yet underpin the logic of social interaction configuring the innumerable narratives and textual characters concerned. Narratives and textual characters appear as the elements of distanciation shaping particular worlds of meaning. The continuous action as reading and reading action unfolds in a field that is as closed as the field of interaction of each of the institutions that compose it. In addition, it oscillates between the aesthetic experience and rhetoric redundancy. We may understand this field in which radical and actual imaginaries combine to shape action through discourse and distanciation, as an aesthetic-rhetoric field.

5.3 Actions and Meanings: Collective Bodies and Symbolic Forms

5.3.1 Large networks of closed worlds: Individuals and persons

If 'meaning' has not left the centre of social life, any attempt to maintain its relevance besides a strictly individual or psychological manner seems to lead to a connection in some way to the idea of community. This is perhaps because, in contemporary discourses, community is a hermeneutic construction rather than a lived reality (Bauman, 2001; Blackshaw, 2010). In other words, the term 'community' works in current social practice as a tool for interpretation—as a way to grasp a natural, immediate and meaningful collectivity that goes beyond our daily experience. As Blackshaw has noted, the use of the word 'community' to promote various services denotes the commodification of a romantic nostalgia in a consumerist way that he refers to as the 'branding of community' (Blackshaw, 2010). Community services offer a 'readymade' experience of any sort, ranging from leisure and personal hobbies to political or social movements. The word has its particular appeal; as Bauman (2001) has stated, it feels 'warm' and gives us a sensation of security, natural understanding, participation and engagement. Community can be rooted in the political imagination as in the case of the nation-state; in the consumerist attachment towards cultural goods, as in the case of 'fan communities'; or in the collective euphoria towards participation, creativity, or engagement, such as with internet communitarianism and its 'collective intelligence' or 'gift economy'. When community stands for this kind of romantic nostalgia, we can say it appears as the actual imaginary that gives shape to a longing for the experience of something lost. As I will demonstrate in this section, this nostalgia for the community exists as a nostalgia for a lost totality, and there is a yearning for the dissolution of the self into it.

The idea of the loss of the self is essential in mythical and religious thought, and it finds particular affinity with the aesthetic experience of immediacy, as many authors have noted from several different perspectives (see, for example, Campbell, 1949/2008; Duch, 1998; Eliade, 1959). Durkheim's study of religious life in totemic societies (É. Durkheim, 1912/1993) and Cassirer's study of the myth in political twentieth century life (Cassirer, 1946) saw the same strong impulse in man to lose himself into a totality bigger than him, which for Durkheim was the moral community. When Cassirer describes the relation between myth and emotion in the example of a ritual for Dionysius, he refers to 'the deep desire of the individual to be freed from the fetters of its individuality, to immerse itself in the stream of universal life, to lose its identity, to be

absorbed in the whole of nature' (Cassirer, 1946: 41). Levi-Strauss saw a nostalgia for a totality of experience broken by symbolic thought (Levi-Strauss, 1958/1987), and V. Turner described the gate towards a 'subjunctive mood' in the ritual process (1979), which is the realm of possibility and play where social structure is dissolved into a 'generalized social bond' of homogeneity and equality (V. W. Turner, 1969/2008, 1975).

While this feeling of natural totality is usually regarded in non-differentiated mechanic societies, the narratives of modernity commonly refer to the birth of the individual, the achievement of its freedom and autonomy and, at the same time, the loss of the community and its security (Bauman, 2001; Blackshaw, 2010; Delanty, 2003). As Bauman explains, this was the freedom of the individual from the inertia of the masses, only to be condensed by the nascent capitalism. Community and society are, therefore, inseparably linked to a particular image of man, or how man understands his place in relation to others. For example, the individual, who Blackshaw regards as the 'trademark of modernity', is for Maffesoli a creation of the State in order to guarantee its particular political order, drawing away the man from the community (Maffesoli, 2000/2004:134).

Following the previous discussion on the role of aesthetic experience and meaning in consumption and collective life, and the notion of aesthetic reflexivity proposed by Lash and Urry, in this section I will address the problem of social action in the interinstitutional fields, in relation to a particular understanding of the social actors. As in the approach in Lash and Urry to the habitus as a way to understand the blurring of social categories in a less instrumental understanding of the self, I will find in Mauss' category of persona (Mauss, 1971/1979) a complement to the category of the individual. This category responds to the romantic feeling towards the community understood as a kind of natural totality. Here, social structure, symbols, patterns of meaning and culture itself appear not only as binding elements, like values, norms or categories but also as elements of differentiation, distinction and distantiation and, therefore, as the fragmentation of the experience. This double function of the structure is what I approached as the *way in* and the *way out* of the symbolic dimension of meaning.

I regard this category as a complement to the rational and instrumental self and not as its substitution. Rather than a postmodernist perspective, (or a kind of pre-modernist understanding of contemporaneous social life), I regard this insertion of the category of persona in contemporary social life as a way to cope with the same problems posed by high modernity. One of the possibilities that the moving and uncertain environment of high modernity poses to a self-reflexivity subject is the possibility of discontinuing reflexivity and giving up his or her individuality to a collectivity of imaginary

commonality.

In order to follow this approach, it is important to keep in mind that the collectivities I am regarding are not a homogeneous and defined social body. Rather, they are shaped continuously by social interaction of individuals through different institutional fields. While these institutions set the structural and material conditions, the commonality as a lived experience is always actual and authentic in the sense that it constitutes its own subjectivity. However, is at the same time imaginary and ephemeral. The condition for understanding this sort of provisional reality without portraying social actors, schizophrenic or narcissistic, is to understand its playful nature as in Ricoeur's sense, or its 'subjunctive' nature in V. Turner's sense.

In the following section, I will discuss Bauman's notion of 'aesthetic community' in relation to the 'cool' attitude of detachment as an important element for understanding some elements in the link between Lash and Urry's aesthetic reflexivity and the communitarianism it entails. Likewise, this perspective is useful to focus on Maffesoli's 'new tribalism' in relation to the centrality of Mauss' category of person, V. Turner's understanding of anti-structure, *communitas*, ritual process and social dramas and Bataille's obsession with the transgression of the social.

Following Agnes Heller and Zygmunt Bauman's theories of modernity and liquid modernity, Blackshaw (2010) proposed a four stage model to understand what he sees as the shift in the configuration of power between authenticity and identity. The four stages he recognises in a schematised progressive succession from pre-modernity to modernity and from 'solid' to 'liquid' modernity are 1) community consciousness, 2) class consciousness, 3) consciousness of classes and 4) consciousness of communities (Blackshaw, 2010).

According to Blackshaw, 'community consciousness' is a period in pre-modernity dominated by 'the consciousness of *unreflected generality*' (Blackshaw, 2010: 12). Here, the authenticity of the group and its members exist before identity. It follows that 'class consciousness' corresponds with the formative period of 'solid' modernity where consciousness changes to 'unreflected universality.' In the capitalist model based on production that characterises this period, the community is substituted by the notion of class. Notwithstanding the lack in class relations of authorised sanction as in the community, class still appears as authentic and 'comes before identity' (ibid). In the following phase of the 'consciousness of classes', modernity is 'dominated by the consciousness of reflected universality'. Society is still based on production, but consumption comes to play a bigger role in the definition of social hierarchies. The authenticity of class is still 'before identity, but increasing numbers of people are able to

imagine themselves in ways outside the class system' (ibid: 13). Finally, in the present phase of 'consciousness of communities', society is based on consumption and is 'dominated by the consciousness of reflected generality'. Here 'social hierarchies are reflected in culture, judgments of taste and juxtaposing of different lifestyles' (ibid) and the communities emerge again as central in identity but now *after it*. Here, the communities can be imagined as plural, and social mobility is approved (ibid: 14).

In this last stage, Blackshaw describes open-ended 'network communities' that 'bind the near and the far' and 'forge coherent patterns out of disparate events' (ibid). These communities create their own causality but, as Bauman remarks, have no previous history. Their genesis is based on 'the imagination and are sustained only through communication' (ibid). This commonality is always ephemeral and constituted by individuals who can never stop being individuals.

For Bauman, it is precisely the risk and mobility in contemporary social relationships that draw people to seek the protective warmth of the community. However, the closeness and mutual understanding supposedly in the community are also a continuous threat to individuality. He regards here the 'cool' attitude, as analysed by Pountai and Robins, as a dominant mind-set in advanced consumer capitalism. This mind-set is characterised by a loss of faith, whether in political alternatives or real commitment towards feelings, social relationships or intimacy (Bauman, 2001). For McGuigan (2009), as we already saw, the cool spirit of contemporary consumerism erects in capitalism the consumer as its 'sovereign monarch' and is behind the DIY culture or the agents of the digital democracy empowered by, for example, YouTube or, more recently, Google. The 'revolutionary crowd' on the internet described by Shirky (2008) can be regarded in a similar fashion, as another example of a communitarianism guided by sceptical 'cool' subjects who fill the gap between their individuality and real commitment with an attitude of indifferent engagement towards consumerism or social action.

This attitude of low expectations towards commitment raises personal taste to a 'complete ethos' (Bauman, 2001: 52). This 'cool' detachment is to be found in what for Bauman is the 'cosmopolitanism of a new global elite'. Cosmopolitanism, as Bauman regards it, is close to an anomic state and, regardless its mobility, it is however, not the place for multiculturalism, as in the case of a 'voyage to discover' or a 'hybrid lifestyle'. Rather, it is a kind of 'sociocultural bubble' of sameness (the same bars and hotels in London, New York and Tokyo) which exalts the authenticity of the individual no matter where he or she is (ibid). The cosmopolitans regarded by Bauman have built a worldwide uniformity as a kind of 'community-free zone' or community of the

'like-minded' where togetherness is understood as sameness and idiosyncrasies are regarded as insignificant. Here, the centrality of choice and taste causes one to regard, as we have seen, Kantian aesthetics again as a backbone in the configuration of commonality.

As Delanty (2003) observes, Kant's 'sensus communis' is the first attempt towards the sketching of a 'quasi-communicative' theory of community. As we have seen, Kant poses the possibility of 'universal communication' where identity found existential grounds in beauty (Bauman, 2001; Delanty, 2003). The shared agreement and the consensual approval of judgement brings objectivity to a subjective experience (Bauman, 2001). If we take into account the shift from the 'consciousness of class' and the cool detachment towards feeling and authentic experiences in current consumerism, the community that arises from this aesthetic judgement is quite different from that imagined by Kant on the one hand, and by Bourdieu on the other. The same can be said for Maffesoli's 'emotional communities'.

For Bauman, this Kantian 'community of judgement' is short and needs passion to pull it together (ibid: 66). However, passion is volatile and fleeting and poses the condition of a constant reinforcement of an experience which is lived as continuously present or actual. In this respect, we can regard what Collins described as 'emotional energy' and interaction through rituals (Collins, 1993, 2004) as close to the state of continuously situational experience maintained by shared emotions needed to sustain the aesthetic community described by Bauman.

Maffesoli's remarks on the aesthetic sensibility of 'emotional communities', 'postmodern tribes,' and 'masses,' hold great similitudes to this scenario depicted by Bauman. Notwithstanding that his work seems to restore a kind of pre-modern description of contemporary social life and entails a considerable quantity of idealism, his approach is particularly accurate to grasp the apparent contradictions we have found in current collectivities. It is their openness and closed nature expressed as anarchic indeterminacy on the one hand, and romantic commonality on the other hand. This is a tension also present between the emphasis on the freedom of the individual and his or her detachment or mistrust towards authenticity, as well as his or her willingness to plunge into a larger reality and blur his or her finite self into a broader social identity.

Now I shall focus on some particular points in Maffesoli's theory that hold special importance for the present research. From his famous work 'The Time of The Tribes' I will focus on the role of the aesthetic sensibility, symbolic forms and common emotions in his theory. Likewise, I will focus on his understanding of the categories of

individuality and persona and the tribes or small groups in their relation to the masses and the networks.

Maffesoli's argument continuously follows an opposition and distinction between different poles: between culture as creative and civilization as instrumental, between anomy as a dynamic disorder and institutions as 'imperialistic rigid structures' or between collectivity and individuality. In the most general terms, he contrasts what we can describe as the dynamic, playful potency of indeterminacy and incompleteness, in opposition to the static instrumentality of determinacy and its lethargic completeness. Even his distinction between 'aesthetic aura' and 'ethical experience' (Maffesoli, 2000/2004: 62) can be understood in an opposition between, on the one hand, a totality beyond concrete actualisation and, on the other hand, as a particular sensual and concrete experience rooted in symbolism. In this sense, his emphasis on aesthetics, emotion and 'proxemics' resembles Bataille's obsession with the potency of experience entailed in the transgression of sociality (Bataille, 1957/1988), while at the same time relies on Benjamin's aura as a transcendent and immanent encompassing value beyond individual experience (Benjamin, 1955/1968; Maffesoli, 2000/2004: 221). I regard this simultaneous understanding of the sensual and the transcendent as a link in Maffesoli between the romantic and the anarchic sensibilities observed by Lash and Urry (Lash & Urry, 1994).

In the aesthetics, Maffesoli regards the common faculty of feeling and perceiving (Maffesoli, 2000/2004: 149), and understands the 'aesthetic paradigm' within the communitarian environment as the experience of feeling together (ibid: 54). This feeling related to Dionysian and erotic forces, is lived by the individual as a loss of its substantiality into a kind of fiction or 'as if' mood that makes possible a multiplicity of the 'I'. Here, emblematic or religious figures work as 'empty forms' or 'ideal types' which allow each individual to recognise himself or herself and at the same time make communion with others. The 'mythic type' is only a physical continent that aggregates and permits the subject to lose himself or herself within the collective subject which he calls 'neotribalism' (ibid: 56). He focused, as Durkheim did, on the social nature of emotions that exceeds individual atomisation, although he does it not to unify but to bind together the different. For him, this is the condition to create a sort of aura, which he understands as aesthetic and beyond the individual. Therefore, the aesthetic feelings appear in Maffesoli not as individualistic interior experiences but as an aperture to otherness. The immanent aura that arises from the aesthetic form is the ethos of the community. Hence, collective sensibility through aesthetic forms results in the formation of ethical relations (ibid: 62). The complex of symbols in new tribalism is, for

Maffesoli, the base to shape the common sensibility grounded on emotional experience and a collective imaginary, which in turn is the foundation of societal life.

These neo-tribes forged by empathy draw their energy from passion and from the feeling of being together without any particular project, purpose or goal. This condition leads him to appropriate Mauss' category of *persona* and contrast it with the instrumental political and historical subject of the modern Nation-State: the individual. In regard to neo-tribalism, Maffesoli comments on the importance of 'emphatic sociality' and the sharing of 'emotions and affects' and even regards commerce as exchange and togetherness (exchange of love and ideas) (ibid: 32). In contrast to the 'solitary individual' of the social contract, he finds an 'emotional', 'fusional' and 'gregarious' subject with common passions grounded in a 'pre-individuality' (ibid: 35). They are the subjects of a collectivity that share a natural solidarity in the base of their habits or *habitus* (ibid: 158). This subject aggregates in tribes or small groups not to shape a strategic identity for distinction and self-definition, but as a process of de-individualisation. The subject, understood in the sense of Mauss' *persona*, 'play[s] a role' where the individual in contrast 'has a function'. The role of the *persona* is heterogenic and is not defined by the unifying logic of the individual. Identity appears here as something undetermined, and in a similar sense to Ricoeur's narrative identity, poses the possibility of the 'I' to play as 'another' (ibid: 138). Here, following Goffman, we can determine the *persona* resembles a mask that can change and adapt to different situations that, nevertheless, are only meaningful as long as they are presented to others.

The last feature of Maffesoli's 'new tribalism' that I would like to focus on is the relation between such tribes or small groups, the masses and the networks. Maffesoli regards these small groups in a similar way that V. Turner has described liminal groups integrated for a kind of 'essential We' (Turner, 1969/2008). The anti-utilitarianism inherent to Maffesoli tribes, composed of *non-political* and *non-historical non-individuals*, is grounded on passion and enjoyment of human closeness. Therefore, it finds no need for institutions or organisations. For Maffesoli, as in the sense of 'linking' in the word 'religion', these small groups set a 'concatenation of circles' that links the small groups to each other and forms the mass, as in the cases of carnivals or festivals. For Maffesoli, if socialisation is the 'saturation' of the individuals, 'big systems' or 'microstructures', this saturation ends in an overflow and spillage of the subjects and structures into the mass. However, Maffesoli insists that this mass is not mechanic; rather, it is an 'organic mass' (ibid: 181). Accordingly, it is the network and not the structure that is the perfect linking mechanism that binds together this sort of mass of

a plurality of small groups. This is, for Maffesoli, the anarchic logic of order without state and social organisation implied in the networks. Here, tribalism and massification go side by side, connected in networks in which creativity is expressed in the continuous creation of new communitarian forms. Consequently, the network does not organise the subject; it only relates small groups to each other (Maffesoli, 2000/2004).

The link between small groups of mutual understanding and open networks in Maffesoli allow us to find a middle ground between the romantic communitarianism and the anarchistic and anomic sensibility described by Lash and Urry (Lash & Urry, 1994). This is a middle ground where the double action of aesthetics in its symbolic experience and allegoric immanence play a significant role. However, Maffesoli's over-enthusiasm for the authenticity and renovating energy of new tribalism does not allow him to regard the 'cool' detachment and mistrust that the self-reflexive subject cast on their own subjectivity as well as on feelings of commonality. This tendency appears in my research regarding community continuously as 'absent'. Thus, regardless of the partiality of Maffesoli's 'new tribes', they present a synthesis of fundamental elements essential to understanding the institutions and their dynamism.

The central element of interest here is in understanding the integration of difference and alterity, as well as openness, not as the understanding of alterity in a modern sense or in a communicative rationalistic way. Rather, it is the understanding of heterogeneity as a way of neglecting the existence of the radical 'difference' (from other subjects) that is the modern subject as particular or 'alterity', and at the same time allows it to be part of the dynamic process of interaction.

5.3.2 Interaction, emotional energy and social performances

A focus on interaction and cultural pragmatics highlights key components in the understanding of the relation among small groups, networks and the place that textual appropriation or aesthetic reflexivity play in their dynamics. In traditional anthropology, rituals are commonly regarded as the condensation of social and symbolic structures of a given collectivity. In a similar way, the focus on 'ritual-like' activities through cultural pragmatics directs our attention to a fundamental aspect of this research: the interaction of action and meaning through textual appropriation within a concrete and specific social context. However, the conditions of high modernity or the 'consciousness of community' in a generalised environment with a lack of authenticity poses as a critical challenge to understanding the place of meaning in collective life. Social differentiation, disembedding of meanings, reflexive mistrust towards meta-narratives

or emotional detachment make it difficult to comprehend meanings without assimilating them to the social structure or reducing them to individuals' psychology. Therefore, in order to understand the relevance of cultural consumption and narratives in collective action, the question of how those meanings achieve authenticity for a collectivity becomes a central issue.

In this section, I will approach the problem of authenticity of meaning in social interaction by focusing briefly on two opposing perspectives: Randal Collins's 'interaction rituals' and Jeffrey Alexander's 'social performances.' Collins' 'microinteractive' approach gives us a helpful perception of the ephemeral and situational 'ritual' logic based on 'emotional energy' in small groups in a useful way to complement the 'emotional communities' described by Maffesoli. However, as Jacobs (2010) remarks, Collins' 'theory of interaction rituals represents a movement away from meaning', as he disregards 'how this ritual are shaped or informed by culture' (Jacobs, 2010: 229). In reference to the present study, the problem concerns the texts as meaningful objects besides the situational context. In Collins' theory, 'cultural texts' are no more than the reification of actual interaction. However, as Ricoeur empathised regarding the interpretation of literary texts, while the world proposed by the text cannot exist if it is not actualised through the act of reading in a concrete situation, its existence cannot be reduced to that of the situation. Moreover, as we already saw, the text 'destroys the world' of the reader, 'in a sociological and psychological sense,' (Ricoeur, 1981) in order to let the world of the text be. Namely, it exceeds the context of instantiation, not only as a 'macropattern' that distances from the context of conversation or interaction, as Collins would suggest (1987: 201), but as intrinsically external to it.

On the other hand, Alexander's approach emphasises the existence of social texts and details some of the essential elements in social performances that bring texts 'to life.' For Alexander, there cannot be successful social action if it is not meaningful, and meaning is not to be found in the context of action or interaction; instead, it is in a relative autonomous structure of meaning (2006). As he says, symbolic practice, or 'culture in its presence' always is in reference to 'culture in its absence.' Meaning, as the product of relations between signs in a discursive code or text, is brought to life by actors by performance within a cognitive environment of cultural codes and texts. Alexander criticises Goffman and Austin, whose 'one-sided' emphasis on the speech interactional contexts loses sight of what Derrida referred to as the 'citational' quality of any speech. The efficiency of performativity (the performative function of speech) is possible only if it conforms to an iterable model and only if we are able to identify the

citation to that model (2006). However, Alexander's theory lacks some elements relevant for this research. Although Alexander also recognises the importance of emotions as fundamental, his focus is oriented to public performance and not precisely ritualisation in social interaction. Therefore, his model pays little attention to the dynamics of meaning in interaction. Now I shall focus briefly on Collins' interaction ritual theory and, thereafter, Alexander's cultural performance.

Collins' interaction ritual is a heavily 'microsituational' and processual approach to social interaction as the only driving force in social life. His perspective based on Erving Goffman's theory highlights the importance of emotional energy and the body in face-to-face interaction, and in many crucial points is radically opposite to that perspective on culture that I have been focusing on in this theoretical framework. Some of these differences are, for instance, closely connected with his view of the 'autonomy of culture' as mere reification. For example, he regards symbolic constructions only as recipients for 'situational emotion' (Collins, 2004) and denies the importance of any particular cognitive content in symbols. He regards structure as the concatenation of micro events which are strictly defined by the pursuit of emotional energy. 'Macrostructures consist of [...] large numbers of microencounters, repeated [...] over time and across space' (Collins, 1987: 195). For him, the only variables which are not metaphorical are time understood as the duration time of the encounters; space as the particular configuration in physical space; and the number that measures the number of persons and encounters. This posture leads him to reduce any 'mesostructural' or 'macrostructural' element, like roles, values or power, to an accumulation of previous situations of interaction (Collins, 1987).

Following this radically body-based materialist approach, Collins dissolves the individual and regards it only as 'transient fluxes charged up by situations' (Collins, 2004: 6). He views personality as simply the reification of ways of thinking, feeling and acting (1987: 200). As a result, he poses the complete removal of agency from social actors and instead regards agency as embedded in the energy that animate bodies and which arises from local interaction face-to-face situations, i.e. interaction rituals (ibid). Emotional energy is not a cognitive element, and its general nature is what allows Collins to regard emotional energy as the 'common denominator' behind any motivation and value (Collins, 1993). Therefore, he regards 'emotional solidarity' as the 'primary good' in social interaction, and value orientated behaviour as 'rationally motivated toward optimizing this good' (ibid: 205). As he sees it, '[a]ll social action is explainable in terms of individuals attempting to optimise their expected benefits relative to costs of their actions' (1993: 203). Summarising, we can say that Collins' theory depicts social

actors as maximising bodies charged by an emotional energy that can only be obtained through the interaction with other bodies. These processes of interaction are the 'interaction rituals', which he describes as 'emotion transformer[s], taking some emotions as ingredients, and turning them into other emotions as outcomes' (Collins, 2004: xii). Such outcomes can be moral solidarity, symbols and thoughts, and in the long term, social structures (Collins, 1987, 1993, 2004).

Although Collins' praises Durkheim's theory of ritual and the importance he claims for the 'collective effervescence,' Collins' micro-sociology, which is based on a radical focus on situations, concentrates only on the side of the emotional energy created by rituals and dismisses the 'cognitive contents' (Collins, 2004). Consequently, he criticises the 'autonomy' of culture as a cognitive construction, where in his perspective what is important is not the content that circulates through the symbols but rather the 'process by which shared emotions and intersubjective focus sweep individuals along by flooding their consciousness' (ibid: 32). However, the theoretical incompatibilities with our model and, more importantly, the radical reductionism in Collins' theory, still have a particular and important contribution to the present research. As long as we keep in mind the reductionism in Collins' theory, it helps to understand the dynamics of 'emotional energy' and more precisely, to approach the non-cognitive side of interactions.

The elements in Collins' interaction ritual theory I will focus on are his views on emotional energy behind the dynamics of interaction and symbolic creation in networks of micro situations, as well as his criticism towards 'cognitivism' in the 'cultural turn'. In particular, I will apply his approach to emotional energy as a 'common denominator' to explain agency and his regard of interaction rituals as 'markets' entailing non-rational action on a micro level and rational action on a larger meso level. These issues are related to the same lines of reasoning we have been following. Thus, although different in perspective, they are in direct connection with the criticism towards the cognitive bias in Giddens' and Beck's reflexivity theory raised by Lash and Urry, as we approached in a previous section. They are, by the same token, related to Mauss' category of persona and habitus, as well to Maffesoli's emphasis on the importance of bodily proximity (proxemics) within small groups. Likewise, although in a broader sense, this focus corresponds with our interest in social interaction within the interinstitutional fields and with the energy that motivates actors to engage in action. This is, however, still in line with following Castoriadis' and Ricoeur's arguments regarding meanings beyond the actuality of representation and the importance of its contents and details as fundamental (Castoriadis, 1975/1997; Ricoeur, 1981), and, therefore, rejecting Collins' view of culture as mere reification.

First, Collins' consideration of community is valuable in this research. For him, the 'community' is a metaphor which in 'fine-grained reality' consists of 'various types of networks of repeated conversations among certain persons'. Groups obtain such status in consciousness because of the 'membership-identifying content' (1987: 200). He describes content as the symbols that are conveyed in interactional rituals, such as conversations. Rituals create these symbols in first-order, face-to-face interaction. The emotional energy generated by interaction is mediated by those symbols that generate, in turn, 'social membership and group structure' (Paget, 2001: 168). Furthermore, such symbols are infused with 'situational emotion' and circulate through networks of conversation 'charged up' by the energy generated by the group and marked by it. Words used in conversation or any element of common attention in the interaction rituals are examples of these symbols (Collins, 1983, 2004).

Consequently, 'conversational rituals' produce the moral solidarity of the group (Collins, 1987) and bind the members of interaction in 'networks of moral communities.' (Collins, 1993; Paget, 2001: 168). In turn, interaction rituals are always present and entail participation. In Collins' theory, they are commonly associated with daily life conversational encounters. The term 'rituals' is applied by Goffman, but for Collins rituals can be also addressed as 'mutual-focus/ emotional-entrainment mechanism[s]' (Collins, 2004). Here, body presence is a central factor as emotional energy is not a cognitive element and cannot be hypostatized. For Collins, emotional energy is generated when the 'nervous systems becomes mutually attuned' (Collins, 2004: xix). In this sense, it requires the synchronisation of rhythms and movements that share a mutual focus; this indicates that it requires a degree of participation. Moreover, TV spectacles or mediated interaction can generate a mutual focus of attention and the feeling of participation, but mediation always generates a poor experience. The need for contact also leads to search for real face-to-face interaction or to an increment in the frequency of mediated contacts in order to generate the required energy (2004, 2011).

Collins' approach to creativity is also relevant for this research. Following his focus on the creation of symbols through interaction, Collins regards intellectual creativity as a form of emotional energy. Additionally, as he locates agency in situations of interaction and not in the actors, creativity for Collins is consequently generated by the interaction rituals in a collective way (Paget, 2001). Therefore, when Collins refers to intellectual activity, he regards the importance of networks rather than individuals, viewing the intellectual activity as 'network-embedded' (Paget, 2001: 170). This argument holds relevance for understanding the creativity we have addressed in Japanese *dōjin* cultures. Collins' perception of rituals as markets is in direct connection with this topic.

Collins' regard of interaction rituals as similar to markets is connected to his non-cognitive approach. As he points out, interaction produces social solidarity, but such interaction does not mean communication in a cognitive sense. Therefore, interactions can be carried out without focusing on meanings or relying on a mutual understanding. Thus, for Collins 'the common denominator of conversational choice is emotional rather than cognitive' (Collins, 1987: 199). Therefore, notwithstanding the fact that Collins' paradigm of interaction is similar to a conversation wherein participants exchange symbols and negotiate a shared 'conversational reality' (Collins, 1983), this reality shall, for him, not be understood in a hermeneutical sense but rather as following the logic of exchange. In order to establish a conversational situation, resources and motivations are needed. This need produces a logic motivated by the exchange of 'conversational capital' in order to achieve the resources to perform in future interactions. However, Collins focuses on the 'inability of individuals to weigh complex decisions consciously' (Collins, 1987: 199) and neglects the logic of 'rational choice' at the micro level of interaction, which is defined not by calculation but by emotional commitment. Nevertheless, on a meso level, the exchange in conversational situations is regarded as rational as this increases the charge of individuals' emotional energy and their symbolic or cultural capital.

The focus on the condition of interaction as exchange situates property and power as a fundamental issue. Collins' theory pertains to the accumulation of anything that happens in the micro situations. Former situations accumulate and come to shape the conditions of the new situations, establishing what he calls 'chains of rituals.' Individuals, therefore, obtain resources from former situations—in particular, property and power. Consequently, for Collins, what makes a micro situation 'relatively more "formal" or "structured" is usually the presence of property' (Collins, 1987: 202). Micro behaviour is, therefore, the 'enactment of property' (ibid). Following this understanding, a property is also translated into an access to larger networks, increasing the power of its depositor. The relevance of this focus is in the proposing of a non-cognitive definition of organisational structures, without the need for definitions and rules in a cognitive sense. The architectural model of institutions we focused on in Section One of this chapter are in tune with this regarding of what we can define as 'meaningless structures of action'.

Collins' focus on emotional energy in interaction and the way this energy shapes social structures and networks connected to a market-like exchange logic and property, a logic which is not instrumental in the micro-situational level but instrumental in a larger level, is an important insight when thinking about interaction and textual

productivity in informational networks and in regard to what we have referred to as 'participative culture' (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013; Jenkins, 1992, 2006). Likewise, Collins' disregard of cognitive elements in some sense neutralises the problem of the authenticity of experience or mistrust in high modernity, as his battery-like actor only needs an energy charge to continue interacting. Here, however, the fundamental importance of the body as the source and receptor of emotional energy, for Collins, is an important obstacle to applying his theory as it is to analyse what may be regarded as interaction rituals through mediated networks. As Collins do not recognise any real status in culture, the only 'common denominator' left is emotional energy. Therefore, although his theory allows the meditation of such rituals, he emphasises vicarious participation through media as a poor substitute for real face-to-face interaction (Collins, 2004: 53). As Terranova remarked, here communication is a matter of connection and not of understanding (Terranova, 2004).

The central concern of Alexander's theory of ritual is authenticity. In sharp contrast to Collins' situational reduction, Alexander regards the centrality of a background 'theme' as a framework for action. Although he, as with Collins, regards the imminent reality of contingent situations, action or performance for him is like a screen projection (Alexander, 2006: 63), where authenticity is achieved through actors' dramatic ability to fuse the background cultural text to their performance and the spectators (Alexander, 2006).

For Alexander, there is no fundamental difference between modern secular society and those societies in which anthropologists commonly analyse ritual life. Therefore, he views a continuity between premodern and modern societies and, like Durkheim, finds in complexity and differentiation the key to understanding the particular features of contemporary social life (Alexander, 1988). For him, rather than seeing modern societies' performance or drama as heirs of former rituals, as in the case of V. Turner's social drama theory (Turner, 1975), the performance is what is central, inasmuch as 'all ritual has at its core a performative act' (Alexander, 2006: 38). Consequently, following Alexander, the symbolic action in performance may develop as 'ritual', 'theatre' or 'social drama', depending on the way the component elements of performance interact in concordance with the society in which they are placed. As Alexander remarks, 'Social action in complex societies so often is ritual-like because it remains performative. The social conditions that gave rise to theatre also gave rise to post-ritual forms of symbolic action' (Alexander, 2006: 58).

Thus, in a simple collective organisation where performances become rituals, the elements that compose the performance are 'fused' since the cultural and social parts

that compose such collectivity are less differentiated. In a more complex, segmented and differentiated society, the elements of performance tend to be 'de-fused' and the social performance appears as 'theatre'; here, there is a degree of autonomy in performances from religious or moral standards. Finally, to achieve authenticity and a successful performance in such complex societies, the elements of the performance must be 're-fused'. In this case, the symbolic action of the performance will appear as 'a kind of temporary recovery of ritual process' (ibid: 55). The symbolic act will recover, or try to recover, its authenticity and relevance for the social and moral life in the collectivity, such as with public performances of politicians or social movements. Consequently, the aim of secular performances is 'to create via skilful and affecting performance, the emotional connection of audience with actor and text and thereby to create the conditions for projecting cultural meaning from performance to audience.' (ibid: 55). According to Alexander, the elements of cultural performances are as follows:

1) The 'systems of collective representation'. Here, Alexander refers to two different kinds: 'background symbols' and 'foreground scripts'. The background is the symbolic framework with reference to the 'social, physical, natural, and cosmological worlds' (ibid: 33) as a given collectivity to understand them. In other words, this is the worldview of a collectivity that we can regard as its 'imaginary' in Castoriadis' terms. Against this background, performers will enact a particular script in concordance with the actual given situation and the specific aim of the performance. The relation between background and script that Alexander describes resembles the way in which the relation between the worldview of the text or 'diegetic world' and the actual plot is seen in narrative theory (see, for example, Barthes and Russian formalism).

2) The actors. For Alexander, the actors are situated in the middle of the collective representation and the audience or the collectivity as such. Therefore, their role is to 'fuse' such texts and the audience through their performance. For this aim, they must present their motivations as authentic and in agreement with the background text. The fusion of cultural texts, context and actors must 'flow' as natural, and therefore entails a 'loss of self-consciousness' (Alexander, 2006: 56). When a performance is successful, this 're-fuse[s] history' and 'signifiers seem to become what they signify' (ibid). In other words, symbols are actualised and experienced not as distanciation (text from context) but as the experience itself. In Ricoeur's sense, text becomes speech again (Ricoeur, 1981).

3) The observers or audience. To communicate cultural texts in a convincing way, texts need to expand from the script and actors to the audiences. Alexander describes this process as 'cultural extension' (ibid: 34), which must be accompanied by a process of

psychological identification, such that the members of the audience project themselves into the characters they see onstage' (ibid). This is achieved through more than observation and an understanding of what is occurring onstage. It requires an emotional commitment to the actor's performance. For Alexander, this depends on the ability of the actor to relate himself or herself to the cultural text in a cathetic way and the belief of the audience 'in the validity of the cultural contents' (ibid: 31). In fused societies, there is a mutual understanding of and a commitment to the cultural texts, so performance is automatically authentic, as in the case of rituals. However, in differentiated and complex societies, texts might not be shared, or there might not be any commitment to them. Social performance in these de-fused contexts needs to achieve authenticity by its own means. Here, the performative, narrative, aesthetic and rhetorical means and the actual power relations are of great importance.

Among some of the other elements that Alexander describes as components of the social performance, the 'means of symbolic production' and 'placing on stage' are of particular interest for us here as they encompass the means for representation and producing the experience of performance. Narratives or dramatic techniques, aesthetic elements, the use of iconic objects and rhetorical strategies become essential in conveying the messages in an intended way and presenting the experience as authentic. Here, Alexander makes reference to Barthes' analysis of contemporary myths and how they exist stage or are dramatised, as in the case of wrestling or a circus. Barthes' focus on myths analyses how a message is naturalised by linking its surface and its particular code to a particular reading (Barthes, 1957/1999). In particular, Barthes discusses how ideology is presented as one single 'natural' reading of the message among the many other possible readings. Therefore, in Alexander's view, the naturalising mechanism in Barthes' analysis of the mystification of messages specifically concerns the re-fusion of audiences and cultural texts that Alexander addresses. This is a similar process that we have regarded following Eco in the last section.

5.3.3 Intellectual property, gifts and markets in the informational networks

As explained above, Collins regarded property as an 'an overwhelmingly central [...] feature of structured microsituations' (Collins, 1987: 202). Property and resources give a formal and structural shape to the dynamic process of interaction and are the background in which it takes place. He also focused on an 'economy of participation' in the interactional rituals that shapes individual motivation, transforming an 'on the spot' non-calculative action of cost-benefice into a rationality in the 'medium run' (Collins,

1993). Collins' economic stance poses a link between the potency and energy of the emotional and 'irrational' concrete action unfolded in microsituations, and a rational action of medium level of structuration which is linked in chains of rituals. Here, the 'emotional energy' becomes the 'common denominator'— a 'good' to be optimised in the macro structures of 'markets of ritual participation'. As observed, we do not follow the main perspective of Collins theory, but it is interesting to focus on the important similitudes it holds with theories focused on the 'economy of participation' in the informational networks. Collins' theory becomes a clue to find a pathway to the link between the non-cognitive 'irrational' and the locally or situationally embedded action, with the structural, disembedded rationality having as a base the 'energizing feeling' of the 'focused crowds' that Collins describes, as well as the cultural texts. Here I will regard those texts as representations of values which are the object of focus and the common resources for participation. The important task that remains is to restore the category of culture in this schema. For this, I will primarily draw from Gudeman's economic anthropology and will focus on the concepts of public goods and inalienable possessions in particular.

The usual narrative from the studies of fans, participatory culture and internet communitarianism or positions related to cultural studies' perspectives presents this problem as the 'popular' or 'democratic' appropriation of formerly market (and private) resources in order to build with them a 'community' or a 'collective action'. Examples include de Certeau's use of 'appropriation' (Certeau, 1980/2000), Jenkins' 'textual poachers' and participatory cultures (Delwiche & Henderson, 2012; Jenkins et al., 2013; Jenkins, 1992a, 1992b, 2006a, 2006b), Hills' 'dialectic of value' (Hills, 2002) in the case of fan communities, Bourdieu's 'cultural capital' and Fiske's use of 'subcultural capital' and textual productivity (Fiske, 1992, 1989/2010), Levy's 'collective intelligence' (Delwiche & Henderson, 2012), Shirky' depicted activism from the crowds (Shirky, 2008, 2010) and Lessig's commitment and efforts towards the 'commons contents' (Lessig, 2004, 2006). These examples show different focuses on the central issue of community and property-appropriation—an issue that usually focuses on the concept of 'commons', 'public goods', 'inalienable possessions', 'intellectual or knowledge property', and recurrent issues in the matter, such as the 'tragedy of the commons' or the 'anti-commons'.

As Heller describes it, in a commons, 'multiple owners are each endowed with the privilege to use a given resource, and no one has the right to exclude another' (Heller, 1998:623-4). Commons are shared resources which are not only the base that supports collective action (Hess & Ostrom, 2011) but also the community as such (Gudeman,

2001). For Lessig (2006), the commons are resources for the community that ‘anyone within a relevant community can use without seeking the permission of anyone else’, and focuses on the absence of legal control or the granting of use (Lessig, 2006: 198). As Hess and Ostrom remark, the word ‘commons’ was originally reserved for ‘shared natural resources’ among a group of people. One of the first problems then is the boundaries and the number of the group. Here, commons may be distinguished from ‘bounded commons’, such as a community park; ‘transboundary commons’, like a river that crosses several countries; or commons without clear boundaries, like the ozone layer or knowledge (Hess & Ostrom, 2011).

During the latter half of the 1990s, the internet generated an increased interest in the debate concerning commons and its meaning and use in the new environment. Lessig notes how the new technologies have commonly posed new problems for the use and ownership of resources and has pushed for transformations of legal frameworks (Lessig, 2004). As Hess and Ostrom point out, the different sides of the recent debate centred on the informational networks are focused on knowledge and the threats that concern knowledge as a resource. Knowledge here is understood as intelligible ideas, information and data and ‘all types of understanding gained through experience or study’, including creative works (Hess & Ostrom, 2011: 8). Hess and Ostrom summarise those threats as the problem of commodification or enclosure, the problem of pollution and degradation and the problem of unsustainability (Hess & Ostrom, 2011: 5). In order to prevent those threats that may spoil the resources or cause them to be unusable, the ‘common property’ as a legal system frequently comes to the stage although, in principle, commons are economic goods independent of particular property rights.

Our interest here is mainly in the text as a cultural resource commonly regarded as intellectual property and the communities or networked communities that depend on such resources. Networks and, in particular, the internet, use the commons as a transboundary resource which, as knowledge, can be regarded as a ‘system of shared resources’. Following Hess and Ostrom, this system can be viewed as ‘common-pool resources’. However, as they point out, economists usually refer to ‘common-pool resources’ in the cases of subtractive resources. In other words, the use of such resources reduces the available benefice (e.g. fishing). In contrast, knowledge has usually been non-subtractive, and ‘the more people who share the useful knowledge, the greater the common good’ (Hess & Ostrom, 2011: 5). Therefore, as Hesmondhalgh (2012) and Wayne (2003) have also suggested in the case of creative works, the system of shared resources may be better regarded as ‘public goods.’ For example, Wayne sees the ‘cultural and informational goods [as] public goods because they are not used up and destroyed by

consumption'. Moreover, they 'acquire their meaning and values and pleasures *because they are shared*'; here they are part of a 'collective experience' (Wayne, 2003: 21).

Following Hess and Ostrom (2011), a basic distinction may be traced between the 'common-pool resources' and the 'public goods' on the basis of two axes: exclusion and subtractability. As the authors point out, knowledge is frequently adopted as a typical example of public goods, which are 'available to all and where one person's use does not subtract from another's use' (ibid: 8). Here, the emphasis is usually on exclusion, but more recent views on the problem focus instead on the costs of exclusion and have introduced the element of subtractability. Consequently, exclusion from the resources' use may be easy or difficult, and the resource itself may have low subtractability or high subtractability. A public good is characterised by difficult exclusion and low subtractability (e.g. 'sunsets'), while a 'common-pool resource' shares with the former its difficult exclusion but has high subtractability (e.g. libraries). In sharp contrast, private goods have easy exclusion and high subtractability (Hess & Ostrom, 2011). Here, it is important to note that the high and low subtractability is, in the case of knowledge or intellectual property, based on its intangible form whenever the tangible form is a private good.

Another important element is that, as subtractability entails rivalry (not everyone can use the same resource), the authors point out how technologies are able to transform a former 'non-exclusionary' good (public good) into 'common-pool goods'. An example is the restriction of access to information which may be used in the claims of protection or for intellectual property issues. As Hesmondhalgh explains, this is a strategy in the cultural industries that is frequently used to generate scarcity and ensure high profits. This particular issue is the focus of much of the debate and antagonism between the different players involved, such as the consumers, authors and industries surrounding the participatory and fan cultures, the internet communitarianism as in the open source movement or the *dōjin* textual productivity and culture I analyse in this work. The conflicting standpoints and usual dilemmas it provokes is easier to understand if we take into account the differences among public goods, common-pool resources and private goods. In general, we can determine that public goods and common-pool resources both have a communitarian orientation based on the principle of sharing. This perspective easily opposes privatisation and commodification but entails a radical internal difference. A common-pool resource needs for management, monitoring and protection to ensure sustainability (Hess & Ostrom, 2011), while public goods in principle do not.

The ‘tragedy of the commons’ posed by Hardin, where ‘freedom in commons brings ruin to all,’ and the proposed solutions of governmental control or privatization as the solution is a common problem focused on here. As Hess and Ostrom indicate, this posture has been commonly criticised for its inaccuracies, which include, the misleading confusion of access rather than management, the lack of assumption of communication and assumptions of self-interest as the only drive (Hess & Ostrom, 2011: 11). The other common issue is the ‘anti-commons’ issue proposed by Heller (1998) which poses a similar dilemma to Hardin’s in the field of knowledge-commons. The focus in this case is on the ‘potential underuse of scarce scientific resources caused by excessive intellectual property rights [...]’ (Hess & Ostrom, 2011: 11). Similarly, the trends of the enclosure and the privatisation of commons have promoted the movements’ advocating for unrestricted access to information and freedom on one side or self-governance on the other side, shaping the antagonism between the elites and the masses (ibid).

All these difficulties are at the heart of many kinds of contemporary activism regarding information, property, participation and democratisation, or even the construction of a ‘public sphere’ on the internet (for the latter, see, for example, Goldberg, 2010; McGuigan, 2005). The above analysis showed a distinction among public goods, the common-pool and private goods and is a valuable tool for understanding these conflicts and antagonisms. Here, public goods and the common-pool share a similar base, but the former is a rather anarchistic understanding of the commons, and the latter is a legal-based one. In the field of this research, the criticism of Ōtsuka Eiji (大塚, 2014) and some persons interviewed in my research against the Kadokawa-Dwango media-mix system, and towards the Creative Commons initiative backed by Lessig (Lessig, 2004, 2006) and followed by Crypton (伊藤博之 & 村上, 2013; 伊藤博之, 2012) reflects this difference.

The picture is, however, more complex if we also take into account the actual difference between the material and the immaterial shape of contents, and the different standpoints and interests of actors as fans or users, authors or industries. As is the aim of this research, I suggest that this complex picture can be understood by better regarding the values in motion in a complex field rather than the texts as such. This motion unfolds in a complex environment of action where actors are usually located in different, though not fixed and perhaps overlapping standpoints. Here, appropriation and private ownership, participation and interaction and knowledge as a resources are closely related rather than opposed, and they frequently hold contradictive nuances. In consideration of the theories drawn in this chapter and the empirical basis of Section One and Chapter Six, I will regard this environment of action as an ‘aesthetic-rhetoric

field' where the category of culture is a key element in order to make possible the movement and transformation of commensurate and incommensurate values.

Before approaching a concrete example of an aesthetic-rhetoric field and its values, I will focus first on some main characteristics of the issue on the informational networks following the traces of the 'gift economy' that has been claimed to exist on the internet. Here, Fuchs' 'Contribution to the critique of the political economy of Internet' (Fuchs, 2007) will be a good introduction to the issue. Thereafter, I will focus on Gudeman's anthropological theory of economy that, although not focused on the internet, brings a central component to the present theoretical framework—i.e. the perception of markets and communities as two realms connected by innovation. Gudeman's theory and the grounds we have been building on Mauss and Polanyi are key elements that help us depict a more complete picture where the category of culture is a common ground that allows the transformation of values among the different actors at play.

Fuchs (2007), as well as Terranova's free labour thesis (2000, 2004) and Hesmondhalgh's focus on UGC (2010), focuses on the activities on the internet from the perspective of productive forces. In doing so, he discovers a contradiction between these forces concerning the way they are present in the informational networks as these networks unfold in contemporary capitalism. The contradiction is summarised between the double nature of information as *gifts* and as *commodities*. Based on his understanding of information as an essentially public good, he concludes that, nowadays, society is a 'false information society' where the gift economy is subsumed to capitalism and the democratisation and participation that the 'technoptimism' show are instead a 'repressive tolerance' (Fuchs, 2007: 83). Web 2.0 is, for him, a contemporary example of Marcuse's 'totalitarian democracy' plus a marketing ideology where the audiences are commodified (ibid). The participatory cultures depicted by Jenkins and the 'revolutionary crowds' of Shirky (2008) are in this dystopian view the new commodity that puts in motion the economy of the informational networks. This posture is complementary to Terranova's thesis of 'free labour' that depicts the commodification of participation on internet, as well as the paradigmatic examples of the UGC (YouTube and, more broadly, Google architecture) as regarded, for example by Hesmondhalgh (2010) and McGuigan (2009).

Accordingly, for Fuchs, the 'technosocial [i]nternet system' is shaped by an antagonism between production forces and relation forces, expressed in a cooperative side of 'informational gift economy' opposed to a competitive side of an informational commodity economy (Fuchs, 2007: 76). The contradiction is present in the informational networks as 1) information is a 'strategic economic resource' that is 'hard to control in

single places or by single owners', 2) 'information is intangible', 'easily copied' and allows 'multiple ownership' which 'undermines individual private property' and 3) networks essence is 'establishing connections' and therefore are a 'negation of individual ownership and the atomism of capitalism' (ibid: 77). For Fuchs, the production of knowledge is inherently social, cooperative and historical (in the sense that is based on previous knowledge). Therefore, it is a public good that has no individual authorship and cannot be claimed as individual property. However, the importance of information as a productive force (e.g. R&D) in the 'global information capitalism' ends in new forms of accumulation that make this formerly public good a commodity (ibid).

The different postures on these issues are classified by Fuchs as three basic positions. One is the neoliberal position, which strives for commodifying open access; another is the social democratic position, which proposes a 'dual economy' as with Lessig or the Creative Commons (informational commodities and informational commons); the third is a 'critical position' that strives for advocating for the essence of information as a common good. The latter looks forward to 'transcend[ing] capitalism and the commodity form of information' (ibid: 79). The actual coexistence of both forms (commodities and gifts) is, for Fuchs, ultimately a subsumption of the gift form in the commodity form (ibid). Similarly, Terranova regards the internet as 'networks of immaterial labour' (2000: 42). According to Terranova, knowledge, as in the case of labour, is a collective human activity from which capitalism extracts value. We can summarise these Marxist perspectives as focusing on the appropriation of a collective value in a way that does not return to the collectivity or its reproduction but rather ends with the reproduction of the abstract capital. From Terranova's perspective, it is particularly important to note the following:

[...] the conditions that make free labour an important element of the digital economy are based in a difficult, experimental compromise between the historically rooted cultural and affective desire for creative production [...] and the current capitalist emphasis on knowledge as the main source of value-added. (Terranova, 2000: 36)

Terranova's emphasis on affective desire and creativity, as well as the collective intelligence posed by Levy present the image of an 'ephemeral commodity'. For her, the detectable disappearance of the commodity in the immaterial labour of the internet is, instead of being a material disappearance, 'its visible subordination to the quality of labour behind it' (ibid: 47). Here, the commodity is 'more a process than a finished product' (ibid: 48). Creative and innovative labour, as the foundation of market value, 'animates the commodity' (ibid). The valorisation of the labour and gift economy in the

informational networks regarded by Terranova and Fuchs, as in the case of other authors concerned with the critical economy of the information networks, has on its back a communitarian approach to property and value. The focus on creativity, the production of value and the relation between community and market values is central to Gudeman's theory, which seeks to understand the continuity among the kinds of contradictions that Fuchs points out.

Gudeman's principal thesis in *The Anthropology of Economy: Community, Market and Culture* (2001) is that market and community are separated 'realms' connected through innovation. Innovation brings the generation of profit that is the motor of capitalism, but the creation of value on which it depends rests on the presence of community (ibid: 21). In order to support this thesis, he presents a model for understanding different kinds of values in the economy. The model is constituted by two realms: market and community. The realms, in turn, are connected by four 'value domains': 'the base, social relationships, trade and accumulation' (ibid: 5). These four domains of value enable him to connect what neoclassical economics usually regards as separated. Thus, this model holds two basic differences from such economics. First, it breaks down the basic model of economy consistent in the institutions of household and business. Then, he proposes an understanding of value which is not as relative to individual preference and demand, but rather shapes 'inconsistent, or incommensurate, domains of value that are locally specified' (ibid: 6-7). In the households-business model, raw materials and labour located in households are sold in markets and are transformed by business into products and services. Here, the system of circulation it forms is self-contained, and, as Gudeman argues, the role of the government is regarded as indirect. Likewise, when 'communal transactions' are recognised in this model, they 'represent irrationalities, frictions, hindrances or "externalities" to a system that is otherwise efficient' (ibid).

In reference to Gudeman's model, the exclusion of community, values and beliefs embedded in concrete cultural agreements in neoclassical economics represents a vision where the abstract, measurable, concrete and incommensurable remain disconnected. In the model, Gudeman brings back the rationality of the economic system to the irrationality of social life (use-value → exchange-value → use-value, or community [←] → market [←] → community). However, he also shifts from Marx's model of value creation based on labour into a model based on innovation (ibid: 120). The slight change in emphasis makes the pervading abstract form of value in Marxist models only a transitional form which needs to be concretised again in order to generate actual values. We already regarded Castoriadis' criticism of the instrumentalist reduction of values to

one single measurable form in Marx's understanding. Marx's model is grounded in labour which material and concrete, but as we have being regarding in this theoretical chapter following different perspectives, it ignores the category of culture or subsumes it to social structure. In addition to the emphasis on labour and, in general, the kind of materialism unable to understand the relative autonomy of culture (disembedded), it leaves no place for a plurality of values in a concrete form to play any role. This kind of materialism denies any concrete form of value as it lacks the category of culture that supports it. The same happens when culture is only recognised as embedded, which is, in the end, a subsumed form. Below, we shall see an example of this in Appadurai's 'aesthetics of decontextualization' (Appadurai, 1986).

A consideration of the important role of values without a clear understanding of the relative autonomy of the category of culture will crash in the antagonism we regarded in Fuchs and Terranova's positions, which usually is the base of the 'resistance' models that are characteristic of cultural studies approaches. Observations from fan studies on irrational consumption as the restoration of community usually encounter this paradox and reproduce the 'community vs. market' narrative while actually describing in part what is happening in the dynamic connection between both²⁴. Gudeman's model is valuable for obtaining a better understanding of the dynamic productivity that links both realms by asserting the roles of culture, values and beliefs.

Gudeman's model is rooted in several theoretical frameworks, from Aristotle's distinction of use and exchange to Adam Smith's theory of exchange rates labour, and Marx's theory of surplus through the dialectic relation use-value and exchange-value in labour. He also focuses on Max Weber's distinction between substantive and formal rationality and on Polanyi's separation of the formal and substantive meaning of economy. His anthropology stance also brings Malinowski's observations on reciprocity, Levi-Strauss' focus on kinship and exchange and Durkheim's interest in religion into account. In particular, though, he pays attention to Mauss' theories of gifts, exchange, objects and persons.

In his analysis of Polanyi's work, Gudeman focuses on the relation among reciprocity, redistribution, and market. In Polanyi's evolutionist model, reciprocity becomes disembedded in the market economy after an earlier stage of reciprocity embedded in kinship and a middle stage of redistribution embedded in politico-religious systems (*ibid*: 85). The problem that Gudeman observes is the existence of an economic form that does not fit into any of those stages. From Gudeman's perspective, although Polanyi

²⁴ It is important to emphasise that this posture does not diminish the importance of the Marxist critical stance. Inequalities exist and should not be ignored.

recognises that reciprocity, redistribution and the market may coexist, he does not explain how (ibid). Gudeman's explanation is that Polanyi's models (for each stage) are models of exchange, and he does not include the autarky or the self-sufficiency that he (Polanyi) sees in the house holding (ibid). Gudeman's model integrates autarky as a community economy and brings it into relation with reciprocity, redistribution and the market. From here, he poses his category of 'the base or foundation' and takes 'hints' from Polanyi, Sahllins, and Mauss, as follows:

[...] reciprocity may not constitute the foundation of economy and society
[...] reciprocity is an expression of community, and a way of exceeding it [...] but community itself [...] and the commons it holds [...] together with the allotment rules it maintains are the absent elements in anthropological discourse. (Gudeman, 2001: 86)

The four value domains in Gudeman's model are an integration of community as the foundation of economy, and distinguish it from reciprocity and gift economy. This distinction is crucial to understand the importance of Gudeman's model and its contribution to the anthropology of economy. Therefore, the first value domain, 'the base or foundation', is 'community shared interests' including resources, knowledge and cultural agreements that give structure to all the domains (ibid: 7). To maintain their base, people trade with members of other communities through barter (Base \leftrightarrow Base') or via money (Base \leftrightarrow Money \leftrightarrow Base'). The community and trade realms are different, but objects and persons change value as their realms shift (ibid: 122).

What is of particular interest here is that Gudeman unites subjects and objects (or makes objects subjective) into the commons as the shape of the community— i.e. as neither an 'open-access' (or the 'public goods', as commonly understood) nor as a 'common-pool' (ibid: 27). I will return to this point soon. It is also important to remark that the understanding of community in Gudeman is not the *communitas*-like, horizontal ideal behind communitarian positions. Instead, it is that of actual communities as anthropologist usually observes them in contemporary ordinary life. In his words, communities are 'hierarchically arranged, embedded, and overlapping' (ibid: 25).

The second domain of value he distinguishes is the 'social relationships and associations'. In this regard, he locates the reciprocity and the gift economy commonly regarded by anthropologists. Here, 'valued communal connections [are] maintained as ends themselves' (ibid: 8). That base is 'created, allotted, and apportioned to people in community' through these relationships (ibid). The third domain of 'goods and services traded' includes impersonal trade and 'values expressed in varying exchange rates'. The

use of currency aid the exchange, but when community and trust are lacking, the exchange may also take the form of barter (ibid). The last realm of value is that of 'appropriation and accumulation of wealth'. This domain consists of 'collecting value': '[a]ccumulated value includes resources, relationships, goods, and money capital, all of which may become components of the other domains' (ibid). These four domains connect the 'community realm of economy', where relationships are for their own sake, self-fulfilled, self-contained and have no referent outside themselves to the 'market realm of economy'. In the latter, relationships are for 'the sake of', point outward, are object oriented and entail means-to-ends action (Gudeman, 2001).

Before ending with this approach to Gudeman's model, it is of particular interest to this research to focus on his understanding of the commons, the inalienable possessions, the role of the gift and the role of innovation. In order to capture the importance of Gudeman's the particular use of these concepts in his model, it is necessary to somewhat expand the context of our focus. 'Inalienable possessions' is a term proposed by Anette Weiner. In his analysis of value, Graeber (2001) criticises one of the most influential works in anthropology regarding value; he focuses on Appadurai's 'Commodities and the Politics of Value' (Appadurai, 1986) and compares it to Weiner's work.

In the introductory chapter of the *The Social Life of Things*, Appadurai focuses on the 'politics of value' in order to regard the 'circulation of commodities in social life' (Appadurai, 1986: 3). Appadurai also addresses the importance of the phase of exchange between production and consumption and makes exchange the only source of value, although in connection with the context in which exchange takes place. For him, commodities are things intended for exchange; therefore, gifts are one specific form of commodities. He also differentiates other forms of exchange such as barter and exchange aided by money. Here, 'gifts links things to persons and embed the flow of things in the flow of social relations' (ibid: 11). However, as Bourdieu shows, this is not a 'non calculative' form of exchange. Commodities are also defined in Appadurai's model by the 'point in their social life', i.e. the phase in which they are able to become 'commoditi[s]ed'. Different 'regimes of values' will set the particular value of the commoditised object, depending on each situation and each object. Is important to note that these 'regimes' do not imply 'cultural sharing or assumptions' (ibid: 15). As for Appadurai, transaction, whether across different cultural boundaries or in 'intra-cultural exchange', does not have a common agreement on values at its base. This is because the 'intra-cultural exchange' is 'based on deeply divergent perceptions of the value of the objects being exchanged' (ibid: 14), but in the case of a different cultural

context, this mutual understanding is simply non-existent. Appadurai's model makes values relative to the context of exchange, where standards may be shared but may be missing. This signals Appadurai's understanding of culturally rooted values (nor relative but incommensurable values) only in the case of embedded situations. His views on 'enclaved zones' that restrict commodification and his references to art, sacra, fashion and luxury goods are good examples of this stance.

Enclaved zones are zones of activities and production that produce objects of value that cannot be commercialised. These are objects that make only 'one journey' and 'are never permitted to reenter the commodity state' (ibid: 23). For Appadurai, '[w]hat makes them thus de-commoditized is a complex understanding of value (in which the aesthetic, the ritual, and the social come together), and a specific ritual biography' (ibid). For Appadurai, objects like 'aesthetic elaboration' and those that 'serve as sacra' are usually set away from the commodity state. Similar is the case of fashion, which although is seemingly based on open circulation, Appadurai notes that it is also based on the restriction of taste. These restrictions are for Appadurai a counterbalance of the effect of commodities, which by 'virtue of their exchange destinies and mutual commensurability, tend to dissolve the links between persons and things' (ibid: 24). Therefore, the 'aesthetics of decontextualization' he regards is an enhancement of value in art and fashion markets through 'placing objects and things in unlikely contexts' (ibid: 28). This stance holds particular difficulties. As it is clear, Appadurai's posture has several points of divergence with the model I have been drawing in this chapter. However, we shall first briefly focus on Graeber's criticism.

Graeber criticises Appadurai regarding on value as the 'measure of someone else's desire' (Graeber, 2001: 32) and the regarding of exchange as something that, in the end, appears separated as 'making, maintaining, or serving social relationships' (ibid). We may add to this criticism, in regard to only the points exposed above, that Appadurai's overemphasis on the context of exchange in the process of valuation, which leads to a negation of cultural factors in exchange and therefore in valuation, is rooted in a regarding of culture as embedded in context. This explains Appadurai's focus on the importance of enclaved zones aside from commoditisation and his explanation on the restrictions over distribution. If the focus on disembedded meaning I have been drawing in the section of culture may be subject to theoretical criticism, in my opinion, the studies on collectivities related to particular cultural consumption placed in different cultural and social context pose empirical difficulties for Appadurai's model. The cultural industry is one of these cases. As such, we may regard the importance of the 'inalienable possessions' posed by Winer, precisely because, as Graeber notes, it

takes an 'opposite direction' from Appadurai's model.

As Graeber explains, Weiner's thesis is based on Mauss' theory of gifts. The 'inalienable' quality is based on the property of the gift that ties it to the giver even when it was exchanged. That is, in contrast to Appadurai, the value of the object is tied to its 'capacity to accumulate history' (Graeber, 2001: 34). It is an element that a focus on context and exchange makes disappear in Appadurai's model. Moreover, Weiner focuses on a 'transcendent' or 'absolute value' in the object. The 'Crown Jewels' of England is a commonly quoted example that is easy to understand (Graeber, 2001; Gudeman, 2001). Similar to the sacred objects in Appadurai's observations, these objects are usually kept aside from circulation. However, this is not because their value is tied to their context. In fact, their value is preserved as they are 'inalienable'. What remains in this emphasis is what Appadurai denies when he affirms that commensurability in exchange 'dissolves the link between persons and things'. In contrast, it can be determined that the link between objects and persons is maintained in the incommensurability of the objects in exchange. Gudeman's focus on commons, similar to Weiner's 'inalienable possessions', builds upon this understanding of objects and persons.

As Gudeman makes clear in an endnote, Weiner's "inalienable possessions" correspond closely to what I term the commons, the patrimony or the core of the commons' (Gudeman, 2001: 49). For him, the commons or the inalienable possessions cannot be sold because the 'community itself cannot be sold'. At the base, it is not a public good or a common-pool but the very foundation of commonality. At the core of the base, Gudeman regards the 'sacra' of the community. Here we can find symbols of identity, expressions of values and sources of material resources. These can also be used for 'market purposes' but, in any case, have a 'superordinate value' (ibid: 29). These are 'the building blocks of the community' (ibid: 30) in the form of sacred symbols of the community. A 'central myth', 'religious icons', 'a constitution', 'The Crown Jewels' and 'the Stone of Scone' are some of the examples he gives. Society, economy and beliefs are combined in these objects. They have a value of 'their own sake', which rests on their incommensurability.

Gudeman regards the base as also being connected with the subjective nature of objects. The 'base' dissolves 'the body's borders and constitu[tes] individuals in relation to their base' (Gudeman, 2001: 39). Accordingly, he focuses on the role of the body and explores a kind of 'reason-in-action' he calls 'situated reason'. As he writes, 'The concept of situated reason dissolves the borders between mind and body, person and surroundings, individual and community.' (ibid: 40). This is a 'basic reason', which is

different from the rational choice because it does not suppose maximisation, and that is a common measure of 'all goods and preferences' (ibid). Thereafter, when he focuses on gift exchanges, he regards the incommensurability of the object and the 'social history' it entails. As he notes, 'The gift extends the commons to someone outside the community [...] Reciprocity is never contained inside a community' (ibid: 86). The role of innovation and not labour in the creation of value is part of the foundation for bringing new values to a rather closed system. The open and closed nature of the communities in networks sustains this dialectic between commensurable and incommensurable values. As we will observe in the following chapter, this dialectic shapes the dynamics of value within the aesthetic-rhetoric field constituted in the particular example of the interinstitutional system object of this research.

5.4 Imaginary Worlds in the Japanese Dōjin Cultures' Interinstitutional Fields

5.4.1 Imaginaries of reality: The subculture and the otaku categories, genesis and transformation

In this section, I will give a brief introduction of the imaginaries surrounding the social category of otaku in Japan, in relation to the following axes: 1) the historical development of narratives in relation to the concepts of personhood, history and reality in Japan; 2) the explanatory evolutionary models of the development and change of media culture and subculture from the beginning of the post-war era until the so-called 'decade zero'. These two axes merge in the relationship between the idea of reality (history, society and the self), media communication and the body and social interaction. In addition to the following section on character theories, the brief account I will give of these issues has the aim of contextualising and supporting the central issue of the following chapter, i.e. the analysis of the dynamics of value among the actors on the aesthetic-rhetoric field built on such imaginaries. An introduction to these issues in a way that does justice to the extension and depth of each of these topics is, however, beyond the direct aim of this research and my actual competence on those topics. Therefore, I shall confine myself to an approach mostly based on a few representative authors on the issue: Ōtsuka Eiji (大塚 & 大澤, 2005; 大塚, 2001, 2004, 2014), Miyadai Shinji (宮台 et al., 2007), Azuma Hiroki (東, 2001, 2007) and Ozawa (大沢, 2008).

The evolutionary models that explains the development of the otaku culture, its media or its way of social interaction can be understood in general by following a broad historical pattern of development, going from a modernist industrialisation, towards

differentiation, fragmentation and re-organisation. However, the actual perspective of each approach I will present here differs in the meaning and characteristics of these developments, applying to different categorisations of the otaku culture' and the subculture. I will regard these differences in perspective as rooted in different emphases towards different elements and stages of this culture. I will also keep in mind that the evolutionary model they provide unfolds in a very narrow historical period—from the end of the Pacific War until now. The particular period of interest is that beginning in late 1970s and 1980s until now. This means that the generation encompassed by the changing period described by the evolutionary models are, rather than succeeding each other, aggregating themselves and constituting a complex field wherein different characteristics coexist. This feature is central to the approach developed in this research. Therefore, is important to keep in mind that, as I have explained, my perspective is focused on the institutions and not on each of the different generations of actors that enact them.

The first of these models that I will address is Miyadai Shinji's 'four stages of youth media' (宮台 et al., 2007). The core of this model was built between 1992 and 1993, after Ōtsuka's first formulations on consumption of narratives and media consumption. The model was republished in a collection with a condensed explanation from a more recent perspective in 2007; after Azuma's postmodernist approach was published, it gave new force to the 1980's postmodernist boom.

Miyadai's analysis focuses on communication towards media contents, and distances itself from the 1980's modern-postmodern boom and its problematisation of reality. As Miyadai points out, the problem of the 'reality of the city' in a semiotic, symbolic or spatial way was in tune with the poststructuralist theories that spread in the 1980s in Japan (Miyoshi & Harootunian, 1989; 宮台 et al., 2007). Miyadai observes what he regards as a flood of 'communication lacking of context': a disregarding of the space and the symbols where communication unfolds. Miyadai focuses in particular on 'words of incitation' ('aori no kotoba') and 'words of comfort' ('iyashi no kotoba') that were in the media at the end of the bubble economy, characterising the spirit of the late 80s and early 90s in Japan.

The 'instigating words', defined by Miyadai as invigorating, energising and based on a logic of distinction, were rooted in the style and taste centred on what have been referred to in Japan as 'the new humanity' generation (shin jinrui). By the end of the 1980s, the ideologies of the former generation were transformed into those 'instigating words' in what we can regard following Miyadai as the ethos of the 'new humanity.' It was an ethos that, in a few words, cast a cynical 'cool' gaze on the world and social

relationships (e.g., 宇野, 2011; 加野瀬 & ぼるぼら, 2005; 宮台, 2005). However, the fast increment of options in media consumption and the increasing complexity of the media environment gave rise to what Miyadai calls a ‘collapsed gaze’ at the back of such ‘instigating words’ (宮台 et al., 2007: 21). That was the gaze of those ‘left behind’ the ethos of the new humanity. Questions such as ‘Where am I?’ and ‘Who am I?’ are representative of this ‘collapsed gaze’, raised towards the lack of context in which communication of late 80s unfolded. Here, as Miyadai explains, in correspondence with the perplexity towards a fragmentary world, its opacity and a feel of ‘not touching’ reality, a focus on ‘temporality’ or ‘big narratives’ was used as a tool for cocooning— i.e. as a ‘substitution for reality.’

For Miyadai, the focus on temporality of such a collapsed gaze’, was ‘too simple’ to call it ‘history’ but had the function of ‘words of comfort’ (ibid: 22). This is the construction of a stable world in order to bring to an end a complicated ‘context of communication’ (ibid). This collapsed gaze on the world and its words of comfort had resonance in the rise of otaku style media and new religious groups, where the Aum sect is a telling example.

Consequently, Miyadai describes the instigating words and the comforting words as the two mutually complementary sides of the communication without context that flooded this period. The former are based on a semiology-like thinking that is focused on special signification, entails an energising gaze and is focused on a logic of reality distinction through graphic design. Contrarily, the ‘comforting words’ are based on ‘genesis-body-like’ things, are focused on temporality significations, entail a collapsed gaze and are focused on a logic of cocooning substitution of reality (ibid: 22). The 1980s is commonly regarded as the decade when the imaginary behind the so-called otaku culture and the social categories behind Japanese discourses on subculture were consolidated. Ōtsuka focuses on the role of narratives in the 1980’s consumerism and Miyadai’s contraposition of the new humanity and the otaku categories, the ‘spatial’ versus the ‘temporal’ and the ‘invigorating gaze’ versus the ‘collapsed’ gaze, which established to a large extent the way in which the otaku and subculture in Japan was approached thereafter. Miyadai’s evolutionary model of the transformation of media consumption and the development of such culture departs from this distinction.

The model that Miyadai proposed has fourth stages built in a logical and systematically complementary way and in concordance with big scale transformations in Japanese society. However, if in the case of Ōtsuka the self-understanding within the world is a major drive to characterise the impact and role of the media, Miyadai’s model holds in communication, and more specifically, in the sexuality in communication, a

principal component. The model focuses on four historical phases; 1) from the end of era Meiji to the 1950s, 2) from the 1950s to the 1970s, 3) from 1973 until now and 4) from 1983 until now. It also describes a circular movement through the fourth axis shaped from two oppositions: temporality versus spatiality and normativity versus cognitivity.

Therefore, the first period shares an emphasis on temporality and normativity. In this period, narratives focused on the type of hero who goes after his goal: to restore the order which has been disrupted by some alien force. Here, there is no youth culture, as the youth expectations fulfil adults ones. This normativity is backed by a strong impulse towards modernity, industrialisation and urbanization, with a stable 'modern family' as the background. The order was a continuity of the house, the world and the empire. In this period, from the end of the Meiji and Taisho era, the 'mass culture' was established that lasted until after the first years of the post-war period. Therefore, after the war, the 'order' passed only from the empire to the democracy (ibid: 26-7). For instance, science fiction, which is of great interest to our research as we have already seen, formed before the war period and has, for Ōtsuka, a special importance in Japanese fascist imaginary towards the machine and the body (大塚, 2014). In science fiction narratives, Miyadai also sees a stress on normativity and the restoration of order. In short, in this period, normativity and temporality were combined in the media and the narratives focused on the cathartic restoration of the order outbreak (宮台 et al., 2007: 28).

The second period, which occurred from the 1950s to the 1970s, shifted its focus from temporality to spatiality but maintained the stress on normativity. Here, youth culture was established in opposition to the adults' culture, with opposite ideals but ultimately sharing the normative commitment towards ideals. The focus of the media was no longer in the vicarious experiences provided by the temporal dimension and its focus on narratives. Instead, it was based on 'a model of relationships' provided by the spatial dimension of the 'interpretation of the world' (ibid). Miyadai focuses on the popularity of media like the *Shonen Manga* or *Shonen Sunday* magazines and on the use of the Gekiga drawing style, which realism and the tendency to commit to social and political issues has made a representative element in counter-cultural, political and socially committed student movements in Japan (Kinsella, 2000; 吉本, 2009). The Japan Airlines flight hijacking incident in 1970, where the hijackers said, 'We are "ashita no Joe"' is a symbolic incident. At this point, Miyadai's interpretation of temporality is not as a pre-established harmony, like in the former period, but as the posing of normativity, as in the case of the problem of self-identification with an ideal of the 'way of life' itself.

Here, Miyadai points out that the mainstream culture maintains the society and the household as a legitimate ideal, against which youth will pose new 'heretic' values. The relationship model based on 'love' and 'sex' as the foundation for marriage brings freedom to sexual communication and opposes the patriarchal Japanese house system. The subject of this relationship model is, however, youth as plural, which commits with the new left symbols like Mao, Castro or Guevara. Women are also recognised as equal, and the notion of 'kawaii' [cute] appears as the new ideal. For Miyadai, in this period, kawaii appears in concordance with the liberation of sexuality and the opposition to adulthood. Therefore, 'kawaii', as a subculture, is the pronunciation of 'becoming sexual while still being child' (宮台 et al., 2007: 30).

The third period spans from 1973 until now. It is marked by the defeat of the students' movements and the end of a complementarity contradiction: 'youth vs. adults'. Likewise, rather than 'we', the focus has shifted to 'I' and the search for uniqueness. Here, the emphasis of temporality and the relationship model is maintained, but normativity leaves its place to cognitivism. For instance, Miyadai focuses on girls' media as pioneering the emphasis on the search of the 'true me', or the affirmation of the 'me' 'as it is'. This affirmation of a cognitive and non-normative 'me' is in relation to sexual freedom in communication and the increasing complexity of the relationship model. Now Miyadai observes the incorporation of sexuality through the kawaii in response to an insecure background. This makes possible the birth of manga genres for girls with romantic stories of young girls 'otome-like', bringing comfort based on a 'pre-established harmony', which will be of importance in the next period. Regarding males' manga media, the counter cultural movement fades and re-defines the political commitments in a purely dramatic way. The protagonist is no longer alienated from society and the world. Here, *Jump* magazine established the still mainstream narrative of 'friendship-cooperation-victory'. The end of normativity has also brought about the rise of parody genres of 'self-realization' and 'fulfil-the-task' narratives. However, these parodies are focused on describing reality as a 'non-sense world' and are different from the YAOI fragmentary parody in girls' manga that comes in the next decade.

The last period is from 1983 until now. This period is characterised by the continuity of the cognitive and non-normative emphasis. However, the spatiality and its focus on social relationships shift towards a return to an emphasis on temporality, searching for security in a 'pre-established harmony'. This brings an increase of what Miyadai calls 'otaku-like' media, in animations like *Yamato*. Miyadai emphasises that even though there was 'otaku-like' media and parodies before this period, the temporality depicted in such media was different. For example, the paradigm of the 'new type' in the *Gundam*

series maintained a temporality open to the future. However, after 1983, this changed. Narratives like in animations such as *Macross*, *Urusei Yatsura*, *Akira* or *Patlabor* depict a future that does not change. These are, for Miyadai, symbols of ‘the endless everyday life’ of a ‘world that has already ended’ (ibid: 36). Here, Miyadai focuses on the abstract eschatology lying under the otaku-like media, and there is a conception of time as reiteration or circularity. This mood of the time was reflected in the intellectual scene as a focus on ‘self-referentiality’, indetermination and the rise of the ‘end of history’. Here, otaku-like media connotes ‘retention’ and functions as a substitution for spatiality and world interpretation.

We have now reached the situation of opposition between the ‘new humanity’ and the ‘otaku’ from which Miyadai initiated his analysis. Therefore, he describes this new conception of time in the ‘collapsed look’ as providing a religious taming for approaching the ‘world-me’ relation. New religious movements appear to cope with the inevitability of contingency by providing a protective cocooning. ‘Otaku-like’ media and religious movements have this same conception of temporality in common (ibid: 37).

In what follows, after this schematic introduction to Miyadai’s evolutionary model, I will address the basic posture of Azuma Hiroki and Ohsawa Masachi before continuing on to Miyadai’s later considerations on more recent generations.

If Miyadai take a step away from Japanese ‘new academism’, Azuma Hiroki resurrects the postmodernist approach, though now not from the perspective from the peak of the bubble economy, when postmodernism in Japan was regarded as a kind of defeat of occident modernism (Miyoshi & Harootunian, 1989) Rather, it is from the middle of the ‘Lost Two Decades’. For Azuma, postmodernism was not the narcissistic declaration of Japan at the forefront of the world ‘after modernity’ but rather the denunciation of a lack of a real modernisation. It was also a step backwards to an ‘animalizing’ culture focused on the selfish satisfactions of owns needs, i.e. the otaku culture.

Furthermore, Azuma (東, 2001) comments that the image of Japan that the otaku culture has created and narcissistically regards as *purely* Japanese is a fake imitation made from US ingredients. This reveals, from Azuma’s perspective, a crisis based on a complete loss of national identity after the defeat in World War II, and the attachment to elements of traditional culture in ‘otaku contents’ only represents the lack of identity and its substitution for imitations. In comparison to Miyadai’s perspective, Azuma regards the emphasis on narratives in the otaku culture not as a resulting from problems of communication but as stemming from a complete lack of national identity. Consequently, he regards this culture as a far broader signal of Japanese society’s

character. The critical perspective posed by Azuma is in the context of the growing popularity of Japanese animation and games overseas. In the otaku culture, he sees a continuity of the same narcissistic and postmodernist perspective that existed in the 1980s.

Azuma proposes three generations of otaku. The first generation was born around the decade of 1960 and watched the TV animations *Yamato* and *Gundam* as teenagers. It is a generation focused on SF and 'second-rate films'. The second generation was born ten years after, around the 1970s, and they have enjoyed the culture that the first generation produced and fragmented as teenagers. The last generation, born in the 1980s, were in high school at the time of the *Evangelion* boom. They are more interested in mystery and computer games and have enjoyed the internet since their late teen years. All of these generations share an interest in comics, animation and computers.

Azuma focuses on the role of fiction in otaku culture in relation to the decline of grand narratives as suggested by Lyotard. For Azuma, the otaku chooses fantasy instead of social reality because the value model that they receive from fantasy is more relevant in their human relations than the model they may have from social reality. They confine themselves to closed hobby communities not because they reject sociality but rather because the value models that society provides are not functional. The substitution of the value models from society for those based on fiction is regarded as the postmodernist decline of grand narratives and their substitution for multiple small narratives. The role that narratives have in Azuma's model is also different depending on each generation. Generally, the orientation of the first otaku generation towards narratives was similar to that on the New Left movements towards ideology. In other words, the meta-narrative structure of the big narratives was still functional.

The second generation is in the middle of the movement towards the decline of Grand Narratives and still have the need to find a kind of reality in fiction. However, for the third generation, there is no longer a need for fantasy in fiction. They do not try to find reality in narratives, and they lose any transcendental depth. Therefore, consumption is not focused on narratives but on aesthetic elements that are centred on characters and the emotive commitment to them. Here, there is no transcendent deep meta-narrative behind the media consumed, but there is a database—an accumulation of information that constitutes a 'grand non-narrative'. This is the general perspective in Azuma's model. He builds this model in contraposition to Ōtsuka's 'narrative consumption' model, which, in general terms, emphasises the importance of narratives in consumption (大塚, 2001) and in self-interpretation (大塚, 2004).

I will focus on both Azuma and Ōtsuka's models when approaching the theories on fictional characters. Before that, though, I will address Oshawa's (2008) temporalisation. Azuma's model of transition from a focus on ideologies to fiction is, among other authors, also based on Ohsawa's works. After the publication of Azuma's *Animalizing database* (2002) and *Game-like reality* (2007), Oshawa also refers to Azuma's and Ōtsuka's work on otaku and introduces their approaches to a larger model. In this model, however, he regards the 'database consumption' in Azuma as an extension of narrative consumption in the form of a meta-narrative and, more importantly, defines the 'animalizing postmodernism' phase in Azuma as encompassed within a phase that pursues an 'escape to reality', which is marked by a radical desire towards narratives. This position holds some important similitudes to Uno's views on 'survival games' (宇野, 2011) and leads us to the actual complex cultural panorama of Japan where our institutions unfold.

Ohsawa departs from Mita Munetsuke's division of Japanese post-war periods in three different eras of 'not reality': an era of ideals (1945-1969), an era of dreams (1960-1975) and an era of fiction (1975-1990) (大沢, 2008). However, as Ohsawa points out, while ideals suppose a reality to pursue and fiction lacks that reality, dreams are made of both. As such, his analysis regards the period of dreams as a transition between ideals and fiction. The main claim of Ohsawa's book is that, after the era of fiction reached its climax around 1995, it began a rapid decline that led to an actual new era characterised by a desire to 'escape to reality' from fiction. The year 1995 is iconic and marked by the cult Aum Shnrikyo's sarin attack on the Tokyo subway and the Great Hanshin earthquake. For Ohsawa, the escape to reality is, in fact, a search for 'a reality inside reality'; a reality that is 'extremely violent and intense'. This desire for 'the ultimate reality' is marked at the same time for a 'radical fictionalization'; i.e. for Ohsawa, the 'reality inside reality' is the 'greatest fiction' and 'the greatest conceal of reality' (ibid: 163-4). The double desire described by Ohsawa towards reality is apparent in the contradictory desire for the elimination of risk and violence, and at the same time feeling the intensity of reality. This contradictory desire cannot appear directly in front of recognition or practice. Therefore, this contradiction appears as something 'impossible' that escapes from recognition and practice but still gives order to contemporary reality. Consequently, for Ohsawa, the contemporary phase should be enigmatically called the 'era of the impossibility'. The true form of this 'impossible reality' that drives the desire in this phase is a desire for the 'other' (大沢, 2008: 192).

Ohsawa refers to the anthropologists Yanagida Kunio and Orikuchi Shinobu, who observed Japan's traditional culture after the war. For Ohsawa, after the defeat, Japan

lost a 'transcendent gaze' (ibid: 21). However, the first years after the defeat did not reflect the 'psychological disorder' that such a loss represents. That marks continuity between the pre-war period and the after war period, which, for Ohsawa, Yanagida and Orikuchi, the Japanese tried to rebuild in the Japanese tradition that lost transcendence. Therefore, Yanagida focuses on the tradition of the household and ancestor soul worshipping and Orikuchi, after cleaning up the historical pats, tried to innovatively rebuild a 'pure transcendence' (ibid: 22). However, the traditional house system fades, and Orikuchi's attempt fails. For Ohsawa, the continuity and stability was possible thanks to the symbol of the emperor as a 'transcendental order' or as a 'third instance', which was rapidly succeeded by the thrust in the United States. In general, Ohsawa's argument unfolds around this absent and transcendent 'third instance' and its recovery. The 'time of ideals' is born based on the trust towards the after-war democracy and the United States as a substitute for a 'third instance' (ibid: 29). The rapid economic growth and fast industrialisation also give the role of the 'transcendent other' to capital and consumption (ibid: 41).

Additionally, it is interesting to note the role of science and the marked interest in science-fiction. Ohsawa focuses on the 1970 Japan World Exposition held in Osaka as a turning point between an 'era of ideals' and an 'era of fiction'. The topic of the exposition was 'the progress and harmony of human kind', and science was the key to an ideal future (ibid: 12). It is important keep in mind here that, as Ōtsuka has remarked, the faith in science and technique in the pre-war period is behind an aesthetic based on machines and mechanical bodies (大塚, 2014). We can observe the continuity and impact of this imaginary on the machine-body in the practices described in the first section, in, for example, the role of fictional characters, as I will approach in the following section. Before the World Exposition, Ohsawa regards the Japan-United States Security Treaty amended as a 'fracture' in the trust towards the United States among the intellectuals, and the Vietnam War, the Nixon scandal and the 1973 oil crisis bring the end of the structure on which the era of ideals was built (大沢, 2008).

The 'era of fiction' brings a reality fragmented into symbols and language, structured by fiction and characterised by its relative status in relation to other fictions. This is the epoch when the new humanity we saw with Miyadai is born. Similar to Miyadai, Ohsawa characterises this generation by its 'light mood', lack of commitment to social movements and 'cold' distance. However, in contrast to Miyadai, Ohsawa regards the otaku as an extension of this 'new humanity' (ibid: 68). In this new period, consumer society plays a fundamental role. Here, in a typical post-structuralism perspective, Ohsawa regards 'reality' through consumption as losing its 'use-value' and being reduced

to the mere function of distinction. Following Zizek, Ohsawa focuses on a tendency to use fiction as the desire for pleasure, excluding all risks. That is the case of decaffeinated coffee (coffee without caffeine), and by extension, any kind of its variants. For example, the 'sex without sex' in pornographic video games is important to the otaku's search for pleasure in fiction (ibid: 82). In step, this kind of fiction underlines the next period of 'escape to reality'. Here, Ohsawa focuses on the 'ironical' stance of 'faith without faith', following the examples of the religious sect Aum and the otaku.

Before focusing briefly on the characterisation of the otaku by Ohsawa, I will introduce the principal features of the 'era of impossibility'. As we have seen, for Ohsawa, the focus on the desire towards reality in this last era ultimately leads to a desire for the 'other.' Here, the authenticity of social relationships, namely the family relationships, becomes one of Ohsawa's leading arguments. For him, the relativism posed by the era of fiction makes the familiar bond not 'necessary' but 'accidental' (ibid: 177). The focus on romantic love as a 'real' bond, the search for a 'past live friend' or the commitment to friendship on the internet is backed by the need to find 'a more real connection.' The paradox for Ohsawa (and the reason to call this the era of 'impossibility') is that the desire for the other is, in this case, a desire of 'another without *the other*'.

This can be observed in the changes in home architecture, where the living spaces are individualised. These spaces are directly connected with the external world without the mediation of the family. Internet and mediated communication from a closed room follows the same logic of direct connection (ibid: 188). However, this desire for the encounter with others is 'as long as they are others' [others as being external and distant]. As the relation with others is indirect and normative, this relation reaffirms the difference, i.e. the position of 'the own universe' in contrast to the difference. Consequently, this relation to others 'without the other' represents 'an absolute difference identified to a higher hierarchy which is not relativized' (ibid: 189). This desire looks to restore in the 'other' a transcendent third person. This kind of relationships makes it possible to find a 'real self' or a 'real relationship' (one that is not fortuitous or relative) through mediated communication.

For Ohsawa, the anxiety towards the current 'risk society' and instability where it is imperative to form decisions and make choices with no previous knowledge or reference, is a major force pushing forward the need to find in others a 'third instance' on which to rely. This situation is also connected to the 'ironical' 'multiculturalism' described by Ohsawa in a way that resembles Bauman's 'cosmopolitans' in the sense that it builds an open world based on the negation of alterity. What interests us here is that we can

observe in Ohsawa such negation or concealment of reality in the desire for an 'ultimate reality' and the return of the 'third instance' that turns the causality into necessity. As Ohsawa explains, this is manifested in a radical frustration and dissatisfaction towards narratives (ibid: 222).

The 'database animals' described by Azuma are categorised by Ohsawa in this last stage of 'impossibility.' They entail the contradiction that brings the desire for fiction to the desire for reality. I will now briefly discuss some of the characteristics Ohsawa mentioned that are of particular interest for the present research. Ohsawa follows the metaphor of a 'closed room' in analogy to a small world or a self-contained reality to describe several features in the otaku as well as in the Aum faithful. The tendency to prefer small, closed spaces is appreciable, as Morikawa has observed, in the architectonic characteristic of Akihabara. Ohsawa considers this characteristic in relation to otaku preferences, such as an extreme focus on 'meaningless' things; the interest in railways in the first generation of otaku and the affinity for the internet in new generations; and the interest in historicity. The common characteristic of these tendencies in Ohsawa's descriptions again corresponds with what he describes as the search for 'universality in the particular'.

The interest in 'meaningless things' is defined by Ohsawa as 'the imbalance between the weight of the meaning and the amount of information' (ibid: 87). For Ohsawa, meaning (a meaningful something) is based on the premise of a broad context. In other words, something meaningful should exceed its immediate context and be in some way comprehensive. In contrast, otaku focus on large amounts of information with a lack to reference to external contexts. Otaku cannot explain the meaning of such information outside the immediate context. In other words, their knowledge is tied constantly to the particular and immediate. This tendency is related to the popularity of railroads among otaku. As Ohsawa notes, when modernity was in its dawn, the railroads freed people from their homelands. However, after people began to become aware that they formed society as individuals and that a civil society could emerge, there was also a need to find a means to feel the reality of society in a palpable, material way. The reality of the Nation as a territory can be approached by the railways. The romanticism behind 'railways maniacs' is to see the image of the 'the public social space' and the 'totality of a universal world' in the network of the railroads (ibid: 93). From this perspective, for Ohsawa, the focus on the extremely particular in otaku is a way to find in a fragmentary world a 'compressed and universal world' (ibid). Consciously, they are only interested in a particular animation, idol or genre. However, for Ohsawa, this fragmented reality only can generate such a desire if having internalised a universal

world.

Following this logic, Ohsawa focuses on Ōtsuka's narrative consumption and Azuma's database consumption models and concludes that the database regarded as a meta-narrative, a totality of an enclosed world, is the extension of Ōtsuka's model. However, this is a 'narrative that has lost its narrative linkage'; 'it has lost its appearance as narrative' (ibid: 98). Consequently, the focus on the character, regarded by Azuma as the decline of narratives, is for Ohsawa the expression of a desire for 'a repository of universal narratives' (ibid: 99). Likewise, otaku's tendency towards historicity is derived from the same logic. The small, closed room for the otaku is the image of 'the universal world' in the closed and local particular.

This tendency towards fiction in otaku and their ironical attitude, as well as the attitude that will drive their desire towards reality, is not to be regarded as confusion or as a blurring between reality and fiction. Ohsawa emphasizes that it is precisely the clear differentiation between both what is at work when they prefer to choose fiction over reality. This is a relativism where they regard the world as many possible realities. For Ohsawa, the 'era of fiction' is clearly depicted by the otaku as a strong tendency towards universalism. Here 'the values and norms that measure each of those particular worlds are relativized inside a comprehensive universal area' (ibid: 103). This poses the relativist distance from the world and the 'cold' attitude that Oshawa calls 'ironic,' which corresponds with a complete invisibility of 'the third instance,' i.e. 'a transcendental other that guarantee[s] the norms and validities,' which, nevertheless, has not disappeared. From here appears the paradox in which Oshawa follows the birth of the contradictory desire for 'reality without reality.' This concept pertains to the 'belief without belief' and to being 'relativistic' in conscience but 'to act as a believer' (ibid: 223).

For Ohsawa, relativism, in addition to multiculturalism and libertarianism, can exist because when the norms of each possible world have an equal value, there is a standpoint which is posited from a 'third instance position.' Aum faithful and otaku know the world they have chosen is fiction, but they act as if it is real. The loss of sight of the transcendent 'third instance only makes it more powerful; moreover, it makes the ironical more vulnerable to contingency. In Ohsawa's view, a real faithful do not fear reality because they 'know' there is a God in which to find an explanation for contingency, but for the ironical relativistic, the encounter with contingent reality is more destructive. Therefore, the only place to escape from that reality is their own fiction (ibid: 105). Is important here to note that the reality to escape from is contingency, and the reality to escape into is causality. The desire for reality, the body or

the bodily experiences relays in the desire for a reality ‘more real than reality’ and for the ‘greatest fiction’ in which the ‘transcendental third instance’ can be found again, and that is for Ohsawa in the shape of the ‘impossibility’ of reaching the ‘other’, or the desire of ‘an “Other” without ‘the other”’.

5.4.2 Imaginaries of the self: Fictional characters and narratives

Fictional characters are central elements on the imaginaries of this aesthetic-rhetoric interinstitutional field. As we saw in Chapter Two, the media-mix industry has developed and given a particular weight to fictional characters. In Chapter Three we addressed the central role of characters in what we have called ‘dōjin productivity’ as well as in the ‘character as a third person and belonging,’ as observed in cosplay practices. In Chapter Four, we examined how the strong iconic image of a single character has become the central ‘hub’ of a complete ‘movement’ that can be regarded as the networking of dōjin productivity. In any case, fictional characters have been a key element.

Likewise, much of the discourse regarding the contents developed around the social category of the otaku has in its central place the figure of the fictional character. However, the concept of a fictional character and its relation to narratives, fiction and social actors have often been disputed. As we have seen in the last section, fiction and narratives have mostly been the focus of the particularities of the otaku or the contents or historical periods associated with them. Within those categorisations, Ōtsuka Eiji and Azuma Hiroki may be regarded as representative figures of different ways for understanding the place and relation of fictional characters to narratives and fictional worlds, as well as their relation to the personalities or ‘self-identity’ of individuals attached to the consumption of cultural goods that depict them.

In this section, I will refer to these perspectives, including their point of contact and their differences, by applying some of the most representative discourses on fictional characters within the context of this research. I will focus on the main perspective of Ōtsuka Eiji, his ‘narrative consumption’ theory, and will touch upon the criticism that Azuma Hiroki proposes for Ōtsuka's model in his ‘database consumption model.’

Ōtsuka's model of ‘narrative consumption’, which was first published in 1989 and follows his experience in the manga editorial world, is regarded from the perspective of his studies in cultural anthropology. As Ōtsuka (2004) later explains, the poststructuralist theory that supports his model corresponded with a general spread trend on the focus of symbols and the loss of use-value in advertisement agencies, as

well as the postmodernist ‘new academicism’ trend in the Japanese intellectual world. Following this perspective, Ōtsuka departs from Baudrillard’s theory and regards the symbolic value in consumer society over the use value (2001[1989]). This ‘symbolic’ value was meant for Ōtsuka to regard the merchandises as a medium for narratives (2001[1998], 2004).

The paradigmatic example in the Ōtsuka model is the ‘Bikkuriman chocolate’ made by Lotte, which included a sticker depicting characters borrowed from the world’s mythologies. Generally, this sticker depicted an illustration and a small explanation of the fragment of a mythological world that becomes clear in its totality while boys collect an increasing number of stickers and connect the fragmented information in them. Ōtsuka’s model regards the mythological world behind the fragmentary and ‘small narratives’ in the stickers as the real drive for consumption, and the chocolates’ edible ‘use value’ is substituted by the symbolic value of the stickers (2001[1989]). However, in contrast to the poststructuralist fashion of the time, Ōtsuka’s background in cultural anthropology leads him to place emphasis on narratives that are strongly rooted in Russian formalist narrative theory (2004), also with references to Japanese folklore, focusing in particular on the work of Yanagida Kunio. While analysing merchandising consumption, Ōtsuka makes a distinction between ‘small narratives’ and ‘big narratives’ in a way that is similar to the usual distinctions in narrative theory between ‘the diegetic world’ and the actual discourse or plot (Pimentel, 1998; Stam, 1992/2005), or a fusion in the ‘narrative world’ between the levels of ‘functions’ and ‘actions’ against the actual ‘narration’ or ‘discourse’ in Barthes’ schema (Barthes & Duisit, 1966/1975). This distinction is also operative in its main features with Ricoeur’s model we already analysed, which distinguishes between the ‘work’s world’ and the ‘actual discourse’ (Ricoeur, 1973, 1981).

Therefore, it is important to note that when the Ōtsuka model is centred on narrative as structure (2004: 12), as Ohsawa notes, it is not in Lyotard’s ‘grand narrative’ (meta-narrative) sense (Lyotard, 1979/1984; 大沢, 2008: 95). However, when Ōtsuka approaches history in relation to narratives and ‘the substitution of ideologies for narratives’ (2004), his position nears the ‘meta-narrative’ function that Ohsawa regards in fiction. This topic is beyond the scope of the actual research and requires far more substantial consideration that cannot occur here. From a narrower perspective, I have addressed the relationship between the formal structure and meta-structure in anime discourse in the operative relation to ideology and fans’ activities in an early work (Hernandez, 2012).

Ōtsuka's model in general, focuses on the consumption of a larger fictional world—a 'big narrative,' through the consumption of several fragments of this larger diegetic world. The important element here is that the consumer who connects all the fragmentary 'small narratives' and imaginarily re-builds the narrative world (Ōtsuka 2001[1998]). In other words, the form of the actual discourse is left in consumers' hands. This leads to two important consequences. One is a relentless desire towards consumption derived from the desire to reach the big narrative at the end of all fragments. The other is that more than one actual plot or discourse is possible and as long as the consumer has reached the 'world' beyond the fragments, he or she is able to produce its own plots. This second characteristic is regarded by Ōtsuka as the ground for the 'secondary creations', parodies or derivative works that characterise one of the main features of the otaku activities, which became the focus of attention by the 1980s. As we have seen, these activities can be regarded as 'textual productivity.' For Ōtsuka, both characteristics—the desire for consumption backed by a fictional world and the production of the plot in the hands of the consumers—are the main pillars under the media-mix system and its management in particular, as developed by Kadokawa and the actual Kadokawa-Dwango ecosystem (大塚, 2001, 2004, 2014). One of the examples that Ōtsuka gives is the introduction of role-playing games in Japan, such as the game Dungeons & Dragons.

On the basis of this narrative consumption model, Ōtsuka has addressed in several works a theory of character in narratives in many kinds of media discourses, such as literature, games or manga, and its place in contemporary consumption. From his extensive literature, I will focus on only some of his works (大塚 & 大澤, 2005; 大塚, 2001, 2004, 2014) to focus on the principal features in his character theory in relation to its relevance to the present research. From these elements, I primarily focus on his approach to the relation of self and character.

Ōtsuka's description of the relation of 'self' to history, modernity and narratives seems to set the problems that lead Oshawa to pose his 'scape to reality' and search for an absent transcendent 'third instance' in the 'era of impossibilities'. This is natural if we consider that their work, including that of Azuma and Miyadai, among others, shape a kind of dialogue among them. As we will see, Ōtsuka's view also reflects many elements present in main trends in social theory, some of them we have regarded in the last chapter. For example, self-narratives with multiple similitudes to, for instance, Giddens' and Ricoeur's narrative self; community and modernity theories as in Maffesoli or Bahuman; or information culture theories as in Terranova. The direction of his arguments seems to look for a place to approach the paradox of a postmodern-like

reality posed by the emphasis on information and the loss of a transcendent 'self', within a modern anxiety concerning that loss. This leads him to focus not on postmodernism but on a pre-modern struggle for fix the 'self' as a proper entity in historical time and geographical space and to find in the first person of the 'I literature' from Japan's early modernity, the mechanisms that produced a modern self. Consequently, he comments in the actual context on the pressing necessity of a literature that protects a 'defenceless' 'half-modern' 'I' behind the flood of fictional characters that the subculture provides. As we saw, Ohsawa finds the role of this substitutive literature in a contradictory desire for an 'ultimate reality'.

Ōtsuka's introduction to his approach of the self (I) as character is paved by several considerations of the narrative work, authorship and creative work that lead to the relation of self and history. After focusing on the textual productivity prompted by the 'narrative consumption', Ōtsuka draws attention to the increment of services and systems that aids the creative work. In addition to the gradual improvement of the media-mix system, he regards these changes from the 1980s to the 1990s as the institutionalisation and systematisation of creative work as a service for consumption.

At the time he wrote these words, the CGM as we regarded in Section One was still non-existent, yet his description of the systematisation of the creative work is extremely accurate for characterising actual conditions and what in the Vocaloid scene is commonly regarded as the 'platforms for creativity' and 'the transformation of consumers into users'. This is not surprising considering Ōtsuka's close relation to the industry and actual involvement in its development. But, more importantly, it is not surprising. As he remarks, what this system is constructing is a system of consumption and management of production of narratives, which is not only behind the commercial practice of narrative production like in Hollywood or in TV series screenplay production but also it is rooted in traditional storytelling techniques (2004). As it is widely known, behind these creative works, there is a complete systematisation of the narrative form based on narrative theory (McKee, 2010; Stam, 1992/2005). What is interesting about this remark is that as this institutionalisation of the narrative form is similar to pre-modern narratives, it supposes a crisis for the modernist 'I' that ensures a modernist sense of 'reality'. This leads him to link the desire for narratives in contemporary Japanese consumerism with a loss of a sense of 'history' that affirms the self in a modern way.

Ōtsuka focuses on Japan's 'I literature' from the last decade of the nineteenth century as a way in which Japanese coped with the radical transformation of time and space that modernity supposed. This paradigm shift has in its centre an evolutionist

conception of reality that made history a process of internal causality excluding an internal instance like God. This shift is in opposition to the a-historical temporality of narratives in the oral tradition and shifts the narrator role from the community to the 'I' as an author. The weight on authorship in naturalist literature and the stress it puts on the first person is the response of a modernist stress on the proper self as the agent of history and designer of society. This proper self is the 'I' that ties up time as history and space as geography in one single particularity. Ōtsuka exemplifies this fixation of the 'I' in history and geography in early Japanese modernity in the transformation of communal oral tradition into an author-based literature. Sōseki Natsume's (1887-1916) 'Ten nights of dreams' (1908) is, for Ōtsuka, an example of introducing historicity in narrative time (大塚, 2004: 107).

One of the differences between narratives in oral tradition and modern literature is that in the former, the community is the author and administrator of narratives, which are in the place of history and are similar to gossip in the sense that they have multiple narrators. Here, history and the interpretation of reality are inside the causality of narration and go back to the community (ibid: 111). Modern narratives eliminate the plurality of narrative voices and present the author as 'one single experience' (ibid: 114) which becomes responsible for the causality. This kind of narrative is the condition for a modern sense of 'reality'. Here, Ōtsuka draws attention to the movement in Japanese called 'genbun icchi', which pushed to unify written words and oral speech in the first person narrative. Ōtsuka regards Tayama Katai's (1872-1930) 'Futon' (1907) as the affirmation of the authority of the author's voice in narration. The author is represented in the character of Takenaka Tokio's character, who is in love with his pupil Yokoyama Yoshiko. Yokoyama's character appears in first person narration using ordinary language (genbun icchi style). However, due to love affairs, Takenaka fights with Yokoyama, who was living with him in the city, and sends her back to the countryside. Hereafter, Yokoyama's voice appears in the novel using only writing impersonal style (ibid: 118-21). For Ōtsuka, Yokoyama's voice in first person style in the novel is an 'I', which is different from the author's 'I' represented by the protagonist Takenaka. For Ōtsuka, the fact that she loses this personal style suggests the affirmation of only one narrative voice in the novel. The fact that Yokoyama's 'I' appears in the city and in the 'artificial' speaking style of the city girls is also important. First, for Ōtsuka, the shift of speech styles used by Yokoyama suggests that the 'I' is not a 'real I' but ultimately only a 'substitutable character' and, second, that this 'I' is only possible in the artificial space built by modernity: the city (ibid: 121). Likewise, the artificial place of the narrative is where the 'I' is more vivid. For Ōtsuka, this suggests the problem that the 'I' only can be

realised in a virtual space, like the city or the narrative, and the 'I' here appears as a character. Henceforward, Ōtsuka will regard the multiplicity of 'I' in contemporary Japan in relation to this virtuality.

The internet and its focus on information rather than meaning will be the focus of Ōtsuka concerning the status of the contemporary 'self' as a character without background modern narratives. The shifting focus towards information is apparent in the regarding of characters as an accumulation of 'attributes' like sex, age or hairstyle. This perspective contrasts with the notion of the 'character set up', which for Ōtsuka suggests a connection to a totality (ibid: 132). Although he does not refer to Azuma's work at this point, it is quite possible he had in mind the 'moe-elements' (see below) in Azuma's database model and partially writes in response to his theory, as there are several references to Azuma throughout this book.

One signal of the regarding of 'I' as information is the particular strong sensitivity in new generations towards the 'personal information' and the tendency to hide the 'I' behind handle-names on the internet. This, for Ōtsuka, signals an 'I' defined by the density of information, determined by the positioning of oneself by the others beyond the network. An example is the evaluation of the 'I' on the internet by the others through the valuation of one's 'character' represented in the avatar used on internet (ibid). This example holds particular relevance to the system we observed in Nico Nico Dōga and YouTube and analysed by Hamano (濱野, 2008) as the 'objectivizing of subjectivity'. Is also the same mechanism Ohsawa regards in the search for the 'other without the other' beyond the internet network (大沢, 2008). For Ōtsuka, here the 'I' is not defined by the axis of time and space but by the accumulation of hundreds of axes. This shapes a system of mutual valuation which is the basis of sociality on the internet (大塚, 2004:140). However, though this does not generate a surpassing of the modern 'I' substituted by disposable multiple characters, it produces anxiety towards a 'half-modern' 'I' that finds a person defenceless beyond the information network. For Ōtsuka, this is a contemporary anxiety in youth stems from not understanding their connection to society. Additionally, for Ōtsuka, this same anxiety was present in early modernity writers like Mizuno Yōshū (1883-1974) and Sasaki Kizen (1886-1933) who depicted a 'floating self', a feeling of losing contact with reality and a dream-like 'I' (ibid: 142-3).

Ōtsuka then turns his attention to the 'sense of reality' which he describes as the sense of stability that emerges from the connecting of the 'I' to time and space. Here, is important to note that, as Ōtsuka remarks, the concept of God was not completely abandoned with modernity. For Ōtsuka, the 'evolutionist paradigm of reality' holds the

'I' as the 'one God' who designs society in history (ibid: 148). This transcendent 'I' is the necessary condition beyond public society (ibid: 153) and is the affirmation of the author in modern literature. However, Ōtsuka focuses on the gossipy nature of internet creations such as that in the '2channel' massive billboard system or open-source software development. Here, as many have observed, the plurality of authors makes it impossible to discern one single author or establish a hierarchy as in a cinematographic film. What many authors celebrate as the 'internet democracy' or 'collective intelligence' (see Chapter Five) is for Ōtsuka the derogation of the modern author which turns causality back to the community as in the pre-modern oral tradition and turns impossible 'public society'.

Consequently, Ōtsuka regards the internet as similar to the virtual reality that appears between the shift from pre-modernity to modernity. As in the case of modernity, the possibility of posing the 'I' as a character was under the condition of the existence of a transcendent 'real I'. Literature and philosophy gave the 'I' a 'protective shell' (ibid: 156), which produced the margin to enjoy a virtual 'I'. However, the loss of the security in the 'I' results in anxiety and a tendency to search for 'transcendence'. For Ōtsuka, this is the signal that the subculture has lost its capacity to present a 'place to escape' as a sort of third place between reality and the self, as it is generally regarded in the function of 'transitional objects'. Therefore, in the context of the 'end of modern literature' Ōtsuka acknowledges the need to 'rebuild literature as risk management' (ibid: 164) for subcultures, as materials for easy consumption created in large quantity by capitalist consumerism are not enough to take on that role (ibid: 166). As we have seen, for Ohsawa, the escape to reality was the answer to the loss of modern literature.

Azuma's 'database consumption' (東, 2001) theory follows, in contrast, Lyotard's 'end of grand narratives' and a post-structuralist perspective on connection with narrative works but without focusing on narrative theory. He bases his theory on Ōtsuka's model and proposes that the grand narrative beyond all the small fragments of narratives has lost its structural features and has become a system of stored information, i.e. a database (東, 2001). Here, if for Ōtsuka the central element that leads to consumption is the desire for narratives, in Azuma's model the fictional character, more precisely the 'moe-Kyara' is at the centre of the desire. This shift means that there is a significant shift in consumption, culture and ultimately in the concept of humans in Azuma's postmodernism. Therefore, he moves beyond Ohsawa's 'era of fiction' and poses an 'era of animals' (ibid: 125). As we have seen, Ohsawa regards this era as part of an 'escape to reality'. Before exploring the principal features in Azuma's 'animal-like' consumption, it is valuable to consider his database model and his concept of fictional characters.

In Azuma's database model, the importance of the depth disappears and only the surface of the message or the works as 'symbols' remain. He focuses on the internet and video games' structure as a paradigm. Here, there is certainly a double structure of 'surface and depth,' but the 'database' at the depth has lost its meaning and stands only as information that can be used to construct any possible new work at the surface. The blur between original and copy regarded by Ōtsuka is regarded by Azuma as the complete absence of original, making each work a 'simulacra' or a copy without an original. Azuma's model regards the fictional character 'kyara' and the aesthetic parts he calls 'moe-elements' as the best example of this surface without depth. The emotive attachment to characters without any concern about the narrative to which they belong, as expressed in the emphasis on 'crying' and in the sexual reaction expressed as 'moe', is described by Azuma as an animalistic desire of bodily satisfaction resembling the addiction to psychotropic drugs (ibid: 139).

However, this over-emphasis on surface in Azuma's theory does not mean a focus solely on the strictly discursive aspect. The 'database' or 'big not-narrative' has a normative weight in Azuma's theory. Therefore, each work is not consumed in itself, as a closed universe, but its superiority is determined in relation to the database (ibid: 53). This aspect in Azuma's theory is concerned with the value of the work in relation to the concept of original. Azuma recognised that, if any piece of work, including the 'secondary creations' made by enthusiasts holds the same status of 'simulacra', markets cannot be established. He refers to Benjamin's aura and observes how in the postmodern aesthetics there is no connection to any aura and symbols float without roots. For Azuma, a general transformation towards simulacra relativises all values and neutralises the notion of author as 'God' in the 1990's otaku culture. However, as Azuma recognises, some simulacra are better than others. For example, he regards the works of Murakami Takashi as lacking the ability of feeling the moe elements intuitively and as focused only on the surface of the otaku culture without reaching the database. That is because, for Azuma, instead the author, 'what have become Gods are the moe elements' (ibid: 89). In Azuma's model, the notion of 'God' that determines the difference of value that is able to stand independently from a radical relativisation is an aesthetic element. Although the word 'God' is surely a metaphor, it is easy to understand why Ohsawa regards Azuma's database as a kind of meta-narrative. This is an important point to keep in mind for our research. The other is the attention that Azuma brings to the aesthetic nature of otaku-related media and the emotive response that is associated with it, coded under the concept of moe. With the background of the database consumption, Azuma's character theory is centred on the moe elements.

5.5 Conclusions: The Interinstitutional System and the Japanese Subculture

So far, I have touched upon the principal elements in order to build the theoretical framework necessary for the analysis of the dynamics of value in the interinstitutional field. I have drawn attention to some theoretical details that allow us to understand the autonomy and non-determination of culture in this research. This feature is important in order to understand how the cultural texts can play a key role in the shaping of social action and collectivities. However, it is important to note again that this emphasis is not because a 'cultural side' is more important or central in this research than a socio-economic or psychological side.

Rather, the reason for this emphasis on culture and, in particular, on the role of cultural texts, is precisely because the important purpose that the cultural dimension has in linking the psychological dimension with the socio-economic dimension that constitutes the area of studies on popular culture and media consumption. In the case of this particular research, the psychological dimension is represented by the subjective attachment that the actors hold towards specific cultural texts, and what we can regard as an enclosed orientation towards texts' meanings as 'absolute values'. The 'cocooning role' (see, for example, Miyadai) of the Japanese subculture and its focus on the figure of the fictional characters in relation to the 'self-understanding' or the 'protection of the I' (see, for example, Ōtsuka or Saitō) also represent the importance of subjective meanings in the present research. As such, the socio-economic dimension is represented in the focus and efforts that actors direct towards the economy of activities and participation based on their textual productivity. In turn, this aspect has a close relationship with the productive structure of the industries related to the production and management of cultural texts and the detectable emphasis that the *dōjin* cultures place on issues of intellectual property and commodification.

However, the collapse of the distinction of the cultural dimension into the psychological or the socio-economic aspect of the popular culture or media consumption is a common characteristic of this field of research. This feature, inherited from the tradition of cultural studies where the Marxist paradigm is particularly strong, is present in many representative studies on popular or fan cultures. Fiske's theories of popular culture find in resistance and social distinction the principal drive for textual productivity or cultural appropriation. Likewise, Jenkins, following the paradigm of the 'textual poachers' described by de Certeau, depicted the participatory culture and fan culture by focussing on the central role of the textual narratives in the constitution of fan practices and fan communities. However, this perspective on appropriation is

one-sided and oriented towards the socio-economical aspect of appropriation, focusing on texts as raw materials and, as Hills (2002) has noted, on drawing a picture of fans as mainly focusing the side of rational action.

The emphasis on the role of institutions and cultural texts, as well as their synthesis that is deployed in the field of social action driven by different values and different orientations towards them, is a way to approach the dynamic fields composed of several actors, places and logics of orientation referred to in Section One. We can regard this field as constituted by the interplay of several institutions defined by their particular orientations and, in this case, towards the cultural texts. The institutions we have regarded in this research are those institutions oriented towards cultural commodities, as it is the case of the content and 'platform' industries, those institutions oriented toward action, based on textual appropriation and productivity, and those institutions oriented towards participation, based on the linkage of several practices with different orientations, some of which are of a closed nature within a relatively open network. Regarded from an overall perspective, these institutions are part of a systemic linkage of several institutions. Therefore, in this research I refer to them as an interinstitutional system.

In Chapter Five, we find the elements necessary to build a theoretical framework that enable an understanding of this interinstitutional system and the different logics of orientation that shape its field of social action. Here, we find a tense relationship, such as that between market and community orientations, or open and closed orientations towards social interaction. But, above all, we find the overlapping and interdependence of these conflicting elements in a dynamic that mixes several actors, activities and orientations in practice.

The following chapter shows from an empirical and mainly narrative way this dynamic interplay between institutions defined by their particular orientations as it unfolds in a particular field of interaction. This field is shaped in the particular sociohistorical context of the subculture in Japan. The development and nature of the Japanese subculture we saw in Chapter 5.4 is the backdrop against which the general elements presented in the first three sections take a particular shape and configure the field that we will regard as the Vocaloid scene.

Chapter Six. The Voices from the Vocaloid Scene: Activities and Participation in the Aesthetic-Rhetoric Field

6.1 Analysing the Interviews from the Vocaloid Field

In this section, I will introduce some parts of the interviews I carried out among 21 key actors in the Vocaloid scene and will highlight the most representative aspects of my analysis and findings. The material I present, although a very small portion of the total interviews transcribed and the topics I analysed, is representative of the main subjects that characterise the scene and the data I gathered. The tables in the Appendix show the totality of the material that composes the research and the interviews. As I have argued in Section One, the Vocaloid scene encompasses a complex network of a plurality of activities and participants that includes many topics and actors who can be regarded as representatives from the different institutional fields I addressed in that section. There are different actors involved, such as representatives of industrial actors, representatives of the *dōjin* cultures and its plurality of activities and institutions, as well as points of view that reflect the particular network nature. The tables in the Appendix show the names and structural positions of the actors interviewed.

6.1.1 Research methodology

I initiated my research on the Vocaloid scene at the time I was concluding the fieldwork referent to the research on cosplay activities. In fact, this research was at its beginning, a continuation of the cosplay research. The basic methodology and the theoretical framework was the same I used for the *dōjin* events research and cosplay research. The framework mainly based on the works of previous studies on fan cultures and Japanese sources on otaku and subculture (like Ōtsuka, Azuma, Miyadai or empirical research), with references to anthropological theory, semiology, media studies, fan studies and sociology. After spending approximately eight months reviewing the basic bibliography regarding the Vocaloid Scene at hand, I initiated an approach based on interviews rather than questionnaires for two reasons. The first reason concerned the research on cosplay (including questionnaires and interviews) that showed that the meanings of each variable in the questionnaire were relative to the interviewee position, and the only way to understand the data was through a qualitative research. The second principal reason stemmed from the plurality of the scene and the extreme difficulty of conducting questionnaire research capable of capturing the plurality of

actors and postures that compose the field. As the research was mainly explorative and each actor's position made him or her more suitable to provide information on some topics more than others, all the interviews were semi-structured and attempted to cover the following main topics:

1. The background of the interviewee.
2. The reason why the interviewee became associated with the Vocaloid scene and his or her particular involvement in the scene.
3. The opinions the interviewee may have concerning the nature of the texts produced and distributed in the field.
4. The characteristics of the interviewee's activities or his or her opinions on the characteristics of the field he represents.
5. Relevant topics in the scene in connection with the interviewee's personal experience and interests.

I met each interviewee while doing field research in places like events or thanks to former interviewees who introduced me to new people. In a few cases, I contacted them directly because of their role or experience regarding a particular topic. In all the cases, the interviews were conducted after an initial meeting (usually face-to-face) with the interviewees or after obtaining their explicit agreement to be interviewed for the present research. In each case, I asked for two hours of interview time, although in some cases it was shorter or much longer than that (see details in the Appendix). The topics of focus and interest also changed as I received more information, learned of new interests and revised questions based on former research.

After collecting most of the interviews and finishing nearly half of the complete textual transcription, I began to classify the data and search for an adequate analysis framework. For the analysis, I based most of the methodology on the grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014). Although the theoretical frameworks I used in former research and the background and former research on the topic had a substantial influence on delimiting the principal theoretical problems and questions, I followed the grounded theory methodology as much as I could while coding. The aim was to leave open a place for new research questions, new perspectives and new hints from what is an already well-rationalised topic of research.

I performed two codifications of all the collected material. In the first one, all the codes were empirical. In the second one, I reorganised and categorised the first coding and added some few theoretical codes. The details of the second codification are in the tables of the Appendix. As the coding focused on empirical details, the total number of codes was, for the last codification, a total of 353 different codes. I used the software

NVivo 11.0 to aid in the organisation and management of the codes, although all the coding was performed manually on the total transcriptions of the recorded material. As I also completed all the transcriptions, I had a comprehensive understanding of all the material collected and its details by the end of the analysis. Therefore, the analysis was primarily based on the results that the coding work was proposing as it unfolded and the queries on the data aided by the analysis software. This was particularly helpful to compare some elements or coded material and to focus on a specific code, notion or word. All the interviews, transcriptions and coding were in Japanese and were carried out by the author. In the translated material, I tried to preserve the nuance of the original content as much as possible.

The theoretical framework I outlined in Chapter Five was formed after the first coding and was oriented to answer the questions the analysis was posing. Those questions, however, were comprised of numerous small questions of empirical detail (e.g. why certain companies or organizations were regarded in a particular perspective by some specific interviewees and in another light by others). I sought to link those questions to 'big' theoretical long-standing questions, with relevance to the discourses concerning the Japanese 'subcultural' studies (e.g. the role of the characters and narratives) or in the field of fan, participatory and media cultures studies (e.g. the role of intellectual property in relation to textual appropriation and textual productivity). On many occasions, interviewees proposed their interpretation and explanation of the scene. This was particularly the case with actors whose activities entailed a kind of reflection or research on the Vocaloid scene, such as representatives of the industry or persons related to some media (journalists, editors or radio broadcasters). However, in all the cases, I searched for the hints in the details of the activities carried out by the participants and the way they described them to me. A great part of the interview time, as well as the codification detail, was centred on those activities. However, because of the empirical nature of that part of the analysis and its amount, I excluded most of the details from the material I present in this chapter. It is interesting to point out that, in the most of the cases, the actors revealed a different rationality depending on the topic at issue or the stance from which they regarded it.

However, one identifiable weakness of this analysis is clearly in the heavy reliance on actors' elaborations. The interviews were encompassed by fieldwork on the scene, including first-hand observation at different events and scenes (see Appendix), but the details of the activities of each participant exceeded the context of each of those places and events observed.

The theoretical framework of Chapter Five reflects a meta-theoretical elaboration on each of the issues posed from the empirical and theoretical perspectives described above. The main guideline behind the theoretical framework is theoretical. However, the election of the particular path that leads it and topics on which it is focused were decided in close relation to the concrete questions raised by the research and the broader scope that integrates the different contexts that composed the field.

The issues I will focus on this chapter are only one small proportion, though a representative one, of the issues I considered relevant in the analysis. The topics I selected for illustrative purposes in the present chapter are more comprehensive than others. However, the selection of topics as well as the selection of the material I present does not escape certain arbitrariness. For this reason, I tried to achieve more objectivity in the process of selection of the material quoted by taking into account the number of sources coded under a certain topic. This is, however, a fallible standard as the coding varies depending on the point of view of the researcher and certain topics, notwithstanding that their relevance was mentioned only a few times. A complete table of the codes with the number of references and sources appears in the Appendix.

The material I present here is of two different kinds: narrative and analytic. The narrative material shows relatively long quotations with the aim of capturing the essence and the context of a certain topic as it unfolded in the conversation. The long quotation is important here, as it was important in the analysis, to observe the way in which different perspectives and voices mixed. This element is directly related to the thesis's focus on the dynamics of value that sustain the present research. The analytic presentation of the material presents the main uses of a certain word with particular relevance in a certain context, or the general content of the code representative of the issue analysed.

6.1.2 Different orientations to values and understandings of the subject

It is important to note that none of the actors and their opinions may be regarded as representative of one single perspective. In almost all the interviews, each actor's position changed depending on the topic at issue and his or her particular relation to it. Some actors (e.g. Kenmochi Hideki, developer of the Vocaloid software) made explicit the differences between their personal opinions and the institutional stances they represented. This aspect brings a plurality of stances and voices, even within a single actor.

Therefore, the field of analysis that is reflected in the interviews and material I show in this section is complex and is composed of several actors, which have several different motivations, interests and opinions. Thus, it represents a strong example of the dynamics of the interinstitutional fields I have been outlining in Section Two. The reduction of such plurality to a few basic logical lines of analysis certainly entails a degree of reductionism. My approach from the perspective of interinstitutional fields of interaction in this research is an attempt to link all those different realms connected in practice to a common ground in the theoretical level while trying to preserve its original complexity and dynamism. Therefore, rather than 'resolve' the empirical variations of postures or contradictory opinions on a theoretical level, I aim to find in those irregularities the principle of dynamism that moves the action in the field. As we have seen, the institutional theory of interinstitutional fields builds upon the assumption of a plural field of action where a focus on a single actor is not a warranty of concordance. This perspective leads to a differentiation of levels of analysis in the theoretical ground. Therefore, while institutions and the process of institutionalisation also mean the integration and reduction of plurality in order to shape collective action, the recognition of different institutional logics and fields of interaction outlined in Chapter Five allows space for a disembedded agency within different social structures.

In the following analysis, I will look to find these different logics that prompt and give sense to individuals' actions in their fields by focusing on the values those actions represent to them. By focusing on several examples, I will observe how these values follow different logics that can be observed as differences of the level or institutional logic in which they unfold. Therefore, the notion of values in dynamic interaction and the aesthetic-cultural field as the ground in which that interaction is possible is, from my perspective, the simplest way to understand the collective action that actually shapes the ordinary engagement of the actors in enacting the field.

As I will show and suggest, at the most abstract level, the narratives and imaginary I collected in the interviews reflect in many different ways the same radical imaginary. This is the contradictive and productive relationship between an orientation towards absolute values and an orientation towards relative values. Both orientations are positively and negatively evaluated and represent contrasting attitudes towards the relation of the actors towards the texts, crystallising their actions within the field. These contrasting attitudes are at the base of the different sets of oppositions that characterise the movement: a community orientation opposed to a network orientation, a closed nature opposed to freedom and heterogeneity, characters regarded as an idol opposed to characters regarded as tools and the emphasis on truthfulness and purity of

emotions opposed to a cynical, 'twisted' and detached attitude. Action and integration in the field of the Vocaloid scene are based on a mixture of these contrasting attitudes towards values.

In concordance with the dynamics between the orientations towards absolute and relative values, it is also possible to identify three different ways in which the subject is understood in the field:

The subject understood through the body: In this case, the subject is understood through immediate experiences, with low reliance on cultural categories. This understanding of the subject is the basis for a 'true experience' and the emotive linkage between the subject and the text.

The subject understood as a 'third person': In this case, the subject is understood as belonging to a category which is similar to a role. However, rather than being related to function, the subject is related to meaning. By ascribing herself or himself to one of these categories, the subject appears as impersonal and obtains a place within a narrative that is relevant for the field of interaction. Therefore, this category becomes a means for participation in the field. This category can be understood as external and not equivalent to the subject and therefore appears as an 'other' or as a third person.

The subject understood as self-identity: In this case, the subject is understood as a modern self. This self is related to individual ownership, creativity and authorship. These distinctions have particular connections with the two basic orientations towards the values outlined above. Hence, the subject understood through the body is linked with the aesthetic experience and an orientation towards absolute values. On the contrary pole, the subject as self-identity can be linked with an orientation towards relative values. Between these two poles, the subject as a third person or belonging is closely related to collective action. However, as it can be observed in the passages quoted in this chapter, as the different understandings of the subject overlap in the same individual, it is not pertinent to draw any clear distinction between them or to fix associations to particular values, activities or social categories.

Table 6.1 is an orientation to read some of the main characteristics of the Vocaloid scene analysed in this chapter, in relation to its radical imaginary. This table presents a condensation of some of the relevant issues analysed in this chapter in relation to the theoretical distinction between absolute and relative values and their interplay. However, as the meanings of the words depend on their context and usually entail different nuances, Table 6.1 is only a guideline, and the elements that it summarises must be regarded within their specific context. Moreover, clear positive and negative evaluations were regarded in both orientations towards values, and usually by the same

informant.

Therefore, rather than emphasise the opposition or present as antagonist the relation between both orientations towards value, here my aim is to point out that the distinction between ‘absolute and relative values’ is useful as a way to regard what is instead a realm in between the two abstractions. In this analysis, ‘absolute values’ is a way to approach the emphasis that use-values directs towards incommensurability. Likewise, the expression ‘relative values’ is associated with the commensurability of value presupposed in the abstract ‘exchange-value’. The aim of drawing these distinctions and regarding their interplay is therefore to emphasise that the orientations of ‘absolute’ and ‘relative’ are the poles that encompass the realm of values that exist between both. Furthermore, this realm of values and the dynamic relation that it maintains are difficult to approach when the relative autonomy of the category of culture is ignored.

Table 6.1: Elements analysed in the Vocaloid scene

Radical imaginary:	Values as absolute	Values as relative	Tensions (apparent paradoxes)
Positive evaluation:	Truthfulness	Freedom	The field’s ethos: ‘Do your will and let the others do them’ [katte ni suru-saseru]
Negative evaluation:	Closed-orientation; Loss of freedom	Instrumentality- (self-oriented action);Lack of truthfulness	
Texts-characters:	Idol	Tool	True emotions in a robot; Idol worship and iconoclasm
	My own interpretation	Many possible interpretations	Private and collective; Ownership of the fictional characters
	Aesthetic commitment to narratives Narratives as works	Narratives as instantiation for interaction Narratives as discourses	Sympathising with fictional worlds as collective experience
Places for Interaction:	Object-focused group interaction	Networks through hubs and platforms	Closed-open worlds
Industrial relationships:	Amateurs ‘Us who are not the mass’	Close relation and orientation towards the industry and the markets	A massive niche market/ dependence and independence
Creative relationships:	Communal ownership	Authorship and innovation	Collaboration without formal communication
	Aesthetic truthfulness	Radical relativism	Communication without mutual understanding
Property and Appropriation:	My texts	Our texts	Inalienable possessions

In the Vocaloid scene, the dynamic of this realm that unfolds between both orientations towards values is expressed in the table as ‘apparent paradoxes’. I regard these paradoxes as apparent because they are not real contradictions; rather, they are the very substance of the movement. However, the perception as contradictions or tensions animates the social dynamics and the radical imaginary behind the scene. In other words, this approach does not attempt to solve the apparent contradictions. Instead, it seeks to understand how these different values shape different postures and guide different actors in the field. The following quotations and analysis were written from this perspective.

6.2 Communities: The Starting and Ending Point

Once there was a community called ‘Nyappon’

When I inquired whether a community existed in the Vocaloid scene, many participants recalled that ‘there was a community, but this was dispersed and disappeared’. I will begin the analysis by approaching the sense of community in the Vocaloid scene. In the interview with Kobayashi Onikis, the author of the famous song ‘Saihate’ (‘The Farthest End’), I asked, ‘Is there something that serves as the centre of the Vocaloid scene?’ He replied, ‘If you mean a community, there was [one some] time ago. There used to be [a centre], but now it has been dispersed and it is no longer there’. After mentioning some activities, such as fans who liked to edit a ranked list of songs in Nico Nico Dōga or who created groups to discuss Vocaloid songs in ‘2channel’ he stated the following:

[...] and also there was a fan that created a social network. Everyone gathered there, but that also ended. It was called ‘Nyappon.’ It was a social network created for some fans who completely voluntarily prepared a server in a computer, secured the space and, without asking for money, left it open. I also was there, and I participated. There were people who produced [songs] and people who only listened, with everyone interacting with no barriers...

I then asked, ‘What kind of interaction?’ He gave this response:

Normal, really normal. It was a system similar to ‘Mixi’ when it was popular [...], but rather than writing a diary or saying something about the creative works, it was only an everyday life talk’ [he says laughing] like a discharge; it was interaction in that sense.

As Kobayashi Onikis recalls, keeping an eye on that place was enough to maintain an understanding of ‘what was going on in the scene’:

It was also because it was not so big, so it was visible; you could recognise the names of the fans because you would see them very often [in the SNS].

But, as he notes, that time has passed:

It was something like that, but it changed after Twitter appeared. When Twitter appeared, everyone left that [Nyappon] social network and went there and began to talk there [in Twitter], and that place, that was easy to understand, which you can see in its totality, came to its end. (Kobayashi Onikis, 2014, Interview with the author)

In almost all the interviews pertaining to Vocaloid, this was a recurrent topic. There was an original unity when there was a limited quantity of participants and texts, like songs or movies. But, this original place disappeared when the networks expanded and the quantity of texts increased. It then became ‘impossible to be able to grasp the whole scene’.

Satoru, an active collaborator in the internet encyclopaedia ‘Nico Hyakkaten’ and in several other media platforms, also has a similar recollection:

[...] there was a community in Vocaloid until 2009, I guess. [Then] there was a condition that can be called a community. It was this site called ‘Nyappon’ where it was easy to create and maintain a community. There were almost 10,000 people using the site, so it really was a community. After that, everyone went to Twitter and, at the same time, Vocaloid itself was becoming bigger. The number of ‘Vocalo p’ and fans increased. So if you ask if there is now a community, I guess there is a community but it has become thin [...]; after all, as you can imagine, the way of interacting was intimate in proportion to the small quantity of people. And the ‘Vocalo p’ were not a big presence. Now, some of them are really famous, but, at that time, they were participating in drinking parties with everybody and drinking together. So, we all had a strong feeling of a community. But, now it is different and, contrarily, there are ‘Vocalo p’ who do not go to the events anymore. So, the community has become thin and, in that situation, more and more people have entered. That is the way now: the interaction is no longer intimate. [...] I was there from its beginning until its end.

(Satoru, 2014, interview with the author)

Notably, not all of the opinions towards Nyappon were favourable. Masaki, the creator and representative of the Vocaloid fan organisation ‘Mirai no neiro’ regards it from a different perspective:

There was a community called 'Nyappon'. It was a place of interaction for [Vocaloid] creators [of] music or videos. It was a site managed by an amateur, so at a certain time it began to restrict the [public's] entrance. It became an invitation-only system, like 'Mixi'. It became so big that it was difficult to manage, so I think that was the problem. The level of freedom disappeared with that [restriction]. It built a barrier so new people could not enter, or the entrance became [more] difficult. But, at that time, Nico Nico Dōga was still in good health, so everyone went there. [...] but after all, I feel that the disconnection of Nyappon is for some distant reason of the actual [bad] situation [of the Vocaloid scene]. [Then, he adds, while laughing,] I also could not enter Nyappon.

Then, after talking about other topics, he returned to the topic:

Nyappon became like a closed world inside Nyappon, so it seemed that at the end, nobody moved inside. It was as if the people inside were dead, and there was no more movement at the very end. It closed inside a disconnected world. If there is no 'new blood', there are no other options besides death. In addition, the people who later entered took a stance similar to watching a 'joyful festival', so rather than trying to make it by themselves, they acted mainly as spectators, so the mood stagnated and died, don't you think? It seems like that to me. [...] [Now] Nico Nico Dōga also has become subdivided and, in a certain way, a closed world. So, in short, they don't go out from inside themselves. There is no occasion for that. It is just like seeing only what they want to see. [...] So it [the movement] doesn't expand. It is only like a small community where [people] only gather around things they like, but there are no ways to connect with the neighbours. So, I feel like the end, as a result, was like a natural death [he says while laughing.] (Masaki, 2014, interview with the author)

These narratives of the 'lost community' I exposed above are to be understood in the context of other 'still present' communities. Nevertheless, as we will see, communities, when present, tend to be neglected and referred as 'others communities'. This is the case of the internet radio programme, 'Kiki-sen Radio'.

Kiki-sen Radio: A listener's haunt

'Kiki-sen Radio' is an internet radio programme focused on Vocaloid contents that has regularly broadcast every Saturday night, around eleven o'clock, since its first transmission in October 2009. The length of the programme is approximately two hours. However, some programmes are shorter, such as one and a half hours or shorter, while

others are longer, extending to three hours or more. It is a peculiar programme wherein its contents often seem to flow without any clear direction. For instance, a conversation about nothing in particular can sometimes continue for 30 minutes or more before introducing some Vocaloid songs or talking about something related to Vocaloid. However, after listening to the programme for one or two months, it is easy to understand its attraction. It becomes a familiar place to spend some time. The regularity that it has achieved for over five years has designated it as a comfortable, common place within the Vocaloid scene.

‘NezMozz,’ one of the main voices that speaks on the radio, and the one that usually seems to lead the direction of the conversation, offered the following explanation shortly after we met for the interview:

[...] Now, you know? Radio is not [a part of] the mainstream, is it? Now, it is also easy to broadcast using videos in ‘Nico Nama.’ But, nevertheless, we [preferred to] do a voice-only radio programme on purpose [...]. Nico Nama has frame limitations, right? It has a break each 30 minutes. That is... we hate that. Something like preparing a framework, making preparations in advance [...] to decide on a framework; that is the most bothersome to us. We want time to do it endlessly [...] and, also, if there are images, your attention will go there, won't it? So you can't [be there] while doing something else. Like, for example, when focusing on drawing or writing, it becomes difficult to listen while doing something else. And, in Nico Nico, there are also comments, correct? So, your attention will go to reading those. That is the good part of Nico Nico, but we purposely removed that. Listening endlessly to something while doing something else—I think that is radio. [...] Wouldn't you agree? It is something you listen while doing something else, something you look forward to every week. [...] We wanted to play at making a radio [programme] [...]; we wanted to do it radio-like.

After she spoke about the technical advantages of the internet radio, I asked how they were initiated.

As in how we started concretely? But, you know, everything is only like that. As I was saying, listeners are only listeners, so we wanted a space to talk about the [Vocaloid] songs among listeners. Really, that was [the] only [reason]. So, we were not trying to make a place to interact [with somebody else]. It was only something like ‘if there are there other people interested, it will be fine if they can join’. So, if you ask for a reason ... well, ‘B-SAKATOU’, he asked me, so I said ‘OK, I will speak; I will do it’. Only that. So ‘if we will do it, it looks fun to do it as

a radio programme', we said. We can't sing; we can't make songs; we can't draw. The only thing we can do is speak, play a song and speak. [...] So it is only that. [...] The first time I met B-SAKATOU was at a GUMI's Vocaloid club event, I guess. But rather than that, he already had a certain reputation in Twitter or, before that, in Nyappon. But, it was not like, 'let's do something together'. He was the same [as me], only a listener who speaks about new songs and introduce them to others. [...] So, it was very soon after we met. In the 'Vomas' (Vocaloid Master), there is an 'air Vomas' each time. It is a gathering of people who couldn't go to the [real] Vomas and [instead] gather on internet and become excited, pretending they went to the event. Is like a joke on the internet. [...] So, we thought, we want to do something like that—a version of that only with listeners [...] There was no 'project' or something like that, only a 'let's try.' So, it was also easy because, since the beginning, we were only listeners. For example, if is the case of a Vocalo p who also produces his songs, it will have the effect of interacting with many people, making many friends and getting publicity, isn't it? If you have many acquaintances, perhaps many people will listen to your songs, so it will become impossible to have a pure interaction. Your interaction will be connected with the valuation of your songs. [...] But, between listeners is different. We talk about a song, but that does not have any relation to us. [...] So, if you do this [kind of radio] among creators..., it becomes artificial [deliberate], I guess. But, thinking now from this perspective, I really don't care. [She says, laughing,] so if you ask for the purpose or the meaning of this Kiki-sen Radio, well, there is no such thing! Now it has continued for five years, but I really wonder, why does it continue?

In the interview with NezMozz, she repeatedly emphasised the lack of a particular reason, meaning, plan or format on the radio show they produced. As she said, she never thought it would continue for as long as it has. It is important to note the linkage she presents between 'pure relationships' with the lack of any clear purpose and the way she opposes that kind of relationships to 'artificial' relationships and the promotional activities.

Then, I asked, 'Why do you think it continued'? She responded, 'Well, because it is very simple [...] the way we broadcast, the way we stream, our motivation is very simple, I guess'. After talking near one hour about other details, she defined the 'characteristics of Kiki-sen radio' as being 'a salon or a bar'. As she explained, 'It is that kind of place; it is just a place. And, well, it seems there is the awareness that we are there every Saturday at this time'.

When I ask her about the audience, she said that she assumed most of the listeners were 35 or older, or are as old as 45. They know this because of the reactions they have when they talk about generational subjects like the early internet days. She also feels that it has become difficult for new listeners to join.

It seems Kiki-sen Radio has become... an authority? Or, it's become important? It is like, 'Wow great! Kiki-sen radio!' and I [now] feel like it has been placed at the same level as normal television or radio. When it becomes like that, the high school students don't give to us their reactions; they listen but don't use the hashtag in Twitter.

As she explains, usually the listeners use the Twitter hashtag so they can share a conversation on the internet while listening to the programme. Therefore, as she remarks, it has become easy to identify the regular members and see the usual faces among the listeners. Still, as she says, sometimes at an event they met new people who say to her, 'I listen to Kiki-sen radio', and she is surprised and says to them, 'Please write if you are listening' and 'When you listen, please say "hello, I am listening"'. The radio has also become important when a Vocaloid p wants to introduce a new song or when someone wants to announce an event. She commented that, regrettably, this has also become a reason that perhaps makes it difficult for others to do a similar radio programme.

In addition, the importance and recognition that the radio programme has achieved has also defined the place that its members have in the Vocaloid scene, as NezMozz comments:

I think it has become important in the case of having communication with others. Like one's title or profession. Like Nakamura from *Vocaloid Critique*, or like in the cases of an 'e-shi' (illustrator) or a Vocaloid p who is identified by his famous songs.

Additionally, when she explained her position in the Vocaloid scene, she referred to the benefit of being in contact with many different actors and different 'communities'. In fact, that is the only time she used the word 'community' in the two hours of the interview. Interesting, it was used to describe other 'communities':

As you see, I have no work [to do] here! Like drawing or making songs. So, I can be involved in many places as an observer from a relatively *flat* [furatto] position. For example, on the technical side or the sociological side, I have access, for example, to the characters' fan communities and the academic communities. That is a very fortunate thing for me. Kiki-sen Radio itself doesn't have the purpose of doing any exchanges or producing a community, [but] I feel it has

become a hub for those [communities]. It is a haunt without a clear purpose; I think it is a place like that (NezMozz, 2014, interview with the author).

NezMozz explicitly states that the place they have created does not have the purpose of prompting interaction or creating connections. Moreover, she implies that the interaction and connections it does actually propitiate are due to a lack of orientation. That is the freedom, simplicity and what we can regard as a lack of instrumentality of their orientations. In terms of the characteristics of Kiki-sen Radio, as she describes the place, it resembles the features usually linked to the idea of community in the case of Nyappon. Even encompassing its 'bad' features as a closed nature and a loss of dynamism (e.g. participants becoming audiences). I will present an analysis of these characteristics at the end of this section. However, before examining those characteristics, I shall present two more examples. The first one shows the ambivalence of the meaning of 'community' and a shift of stance from 'there is no community in Vocaloid' to 'there is a community in Vocaloid after all'. This is an example similar to Kiki-sen Radio in which communities exist as a lived experience. The second example shows the narrative of 'the end of the Vocaloid scene and the return to community'. This narrative is similar to the perception of a community at the beginning of the movement, in the sense that the community is not present in either. The absence of a community shows an ideal picture of the concept as we will see below.

The ambivalence of 'community'

The following interview involved Nakamura (N) and Hisayuki (H). Both are editors of the dōjin magazines *Vocalo Critique* (2009-2014) and *Vocalo Hihyō* (2014 until now). These magazines have focused on the scene of the Vocaloid movement and have presented many different articles written by central figures in the scene or by enthusiasts they have met at their activities. As Nakamura and Hisayuki explained, the magazines were initiated by Yaoki, another member whom I interviewed on a different occasion. All three had no former experience in the dōjin scene. However, Hisayuki describes herself as 'Fujoshi' ('rotten girls', a word used to refer to female otaku or fans of female-oriented dōjin) and Nakamura as a 'train otaku'. They explained to me they were not interested in Vocaloid as it seemed to them to only be about the character, and they held no particular interest in the 'character culture'. However, when they listened to the songs, their opinion about the movement changed. That led them to become interested and eventually to create the magazine. This narrative is similar to that of NezMozz and some other participants that began their

activities mainly as listeners rather than as creators or Vocaloid p.

Then, while talking about the differences between the events, the topic of 'community' came up with any prompting:

N: [...] it is weird, but the people that hold events and the people that participate in them are different. They are constantly in different positions. [Then Hisayuki and Nakamura talk about a particular person who is 'between both stances'.]

H: He is also [staff] in 'Mina no UTAU'; there is a good atmosphere there. [They explain to me that he is also participating as staff in the event 'Vocaloid Master' and is a person who 'understands' the 'Vocaloid culture very well'. They then explain that, for them, even when Vocaloid Master is the biggest event in Vocaloid, the organisers are in a different stance than the participants and] 'do not understand very well Vocaloid culture'.

N: They only provide the place. I don't feel like they are interested in animating the Vocaloid scene.

H: It is more like they provided this place because it seemed that it will get bigger.

N: They only provide the place, and that's all. They are not interested in making any improvements. [...] But, it is not for commercial ends.

H: Yes, but, well, their attitude is like doing business; it is... dry.

N: It is merely that they like to do events; they are that kind of person.

H: Like a festival.

N: Like 'hurrah for the staff'!

H: So, they are doing something out of place...

N: Well, well, that is OK. Rather, that posture is easier for us. [...] we can interact freely at our convenience. So, I have participated in 'Vomas' many times, but I guess it was the first two times? I went alone. I didn't talk to anybody; I only bought the CD I wanted and left the place alone.

H: Right. I was the same. I was there for only ten minutes!

N: Yes, so there is nothing like a community. There are a lot of people who have no interest at all in participating in a community.

H: If you see the Vocaloid genre and other genres, I think it is easy to understand. There are a lot of people participating as circles who learned what a *dōjin* magazine is for the first time through Vocaloid. Contrarily, there is a lot of interaction at the events of, for example, the so-called 'fujoshi'. They interact between circles and between the people that come [to the event]. A lot! But in

comparison, Vocaloid does not have anything like that. They are not habituated to doing that. Neither the persons of the circle nor the persons who come to buy [the CDs] had that experience [before], so I think they do not have a clear idea of how to interact. In the world of dōjin, [this sort of interaction] is a kind of agreement, but in a world where there is no such [agreement], they only come to buy and then leave.

N: [So, in the events] there, you can't find a sense of community. The good thing about the events is that people that know each other on the internet can connect. They can know each other's faces there. And then, when the event wraps up, they think, 'What about having lunch together?' and then little by little it becomes stronger. Or, there are persons wandering around the perimeters of the events that come and say 'Hello!' and 'Hey! Let me introduce you to this guy'. A lot of people introduce themselves at the events.

H: And [they] exchange name cards...

N: Oh, yes! Sometimes there are people with name cards, but you will not see that in another kind of dōjin event. I wonder why. But, there was a person who [began] to do that. I forgot his name, but it was at the time when Nyappon existed. It was during an 'off meeting' [a meeting offline] of Nyappon where that [practice] began. When they planned the event, they decided to go [there] with name cards.

H: But, also in the music scene, the 'band girls' have the habit of exchanging name cards [...]

N: So [in the Vocaloid scene,] there is not the premise of building a community. The central [interest] is the first [hand] production [the original]. Really, it is only about the relation between the persons who produce and the person who listen to that work. And, the other otaku communities are different; [they are based] on secondary creations. They want to talk to each other about that [the original work], so they gather. They want to talk about the anime or character they like, and about more topics if they are in a circle, such as producing their dōjin magazines. The people with similar preferences get together, so, there is, of course, many things that only they can talk about, so they want to interact, I guess, when they are in that place. [...] But, as I said, in Vocaloid, the persons who produce and the persons who receive are separated, so that is the reason there are not a lot of people who participate for the purpose of talking about something.

Then, after discussing several other topics, such as the relationship between creators and the industry, the differences between several events, and their dislike of the tendency to regard Vocaloid solely as a movement centred on the character of Hatsune Miku, they returned to their focus on community.

H: So, the problem then is, why there are still events? That is, I guess, because it is like the ‘handshaking’ meetings of [idols like the] AKB48, isn’t it? [...] With the AKB, if you buy the CD, you can listen to the music, or you can see them on television. But, if there are ‘hands-shaking’ sessions, it is because there are people who want to meet the real people. I think that is now the most similar example: to meet the person who produced that song. So, more than desiring to interact, [the aim] is simply to meet them. To shake hands.

N: It depends on the person, but there are still people who want to interact with the creators, even if it is only for a short while. So, if you [go and] meet that person, the impression [about their work] is different. So, ultimately, no matter [what we can say about] this or that, there is still ... something different when you go to the event and talk [directly with the author] rather than through Twitter or on the internet. So, yes, the impression is different. Then, at the end, a community ... or, rather, communication, at the end, improves if you directly meet, eat and drink together. So, ultimately, everyone meets at the events for that. They find the chance at the events to know each other’s faces and get closer. [...] But, at a commercial event, or with a professional creator, regardless of what you do, a wall is there, isn’t it? Listeners and creators are separated. [...] and are separated more and more [...] [positioned at] the top and the bottom of the pyramid. But, even with that, [here in Vocaloid, the distance] is still close. If you go [to the event], you can meet them. Unlike the world of the professionals, [the contact] does not only end with handshaking. You can exchange your name card [with others]! (laughs) So, it is fantastic that there are still real events. And if Vomax disappears, we will really be in trouble, I guess. We will lose that chance. [...]

H: Really, if Vomax disappears, the only event in Kanto is Comiket.

N: At Comiket ... that is... there is no time to interact there! There are too many people!

H: It is a battlefield! [...]

N: So, in the end, the community is still functioning. One part of it is changing, and, how can I explain it? It is not something that you can express in in words to easily understand, but, nevertheless, the horizontal relationships

[connections] are still out there. In short, it is not only about the creator and the listener, is it? It is also about the creator and other creators, and listeners and [other] listeners. So, once understanding that point, I think it has a really important meaning. So, if the companies come in and set down a table separating the creator and the buyer as in the handshaking events ... well, certainly there are also tables at the dōjin events, but, in the [area in] between, the wall is very low. So, if you think about that, the chance of communication is very high. [...] And, that is not the only point of mutual contact. There is also Twitter and the internet to say 'Oh! That is great, this is a good song'. [...] If you like the same song, then you becomes friends, right? [...] So, at the end, if one takes into account the horizontal ties that are still considered important, and are important, then at the end, it is still functioning [the community]. [...] It is taking the shape of a pyramid, but it is not yet spoiled. There are still persons who are trying to connect.

(Nakamura and Hisayuki, 2014, interview with the author)

Nakamura and Hisayuki expressed opposition to the 'pyramid form' while preferring the 'horizontal community', and they identified the 'character culture and Hatsune Miku' as the principal reason for building that pyramid form. Therefore, they harshly criticised the 'worshiping of characters' in Vocaloid and in mass culture in general. We may regard their opinions as departing from two different stances in the field: one is as 'listeners' in the Vocaloid scene, and the other is as a 'dōjin circle', which also participates in close interactions with other actors within the same field.

Everything is going back to the beginning

After explaining his opinion regarding certain difficulties in the Vocaloid scene, Masaki, the creator and representative of the fan group 'Mirai no Neuro', expressed concern.

To tell you the truth, now the fire of the candle is about to be consumed [he laughs with sadness]. It is about to be extinguished with a single whooshing [sound]. [...] When the impetus in overseas [markets] extinguishes, I think that will be the end of Hatsune Miku. Well, not the end, but it will vanish completely as a major genre. It will remain only as a genre of obsession only for people who love it and produce [music] little by little. (Masaki, 2014)

With some exceptions, many conveyed similar worries in the interviews. Masaki stated that only those who love the genre will left. The context of this quote from

Masaki's interview pertained to the problems of commercialisation. Kobayashi Onikis expressed a similar opinion and clearly articulated the reasons for his concern.

I am not worried about the competition [regarding] the quality of the music, so... you know, Vocaloid and the internet music culture originated in the union of the gaps of the music business that the persons in the already established music industry with money and capital were trying to do. So, in that space, within it, for example, Twitter or the low-cost music streaming services, all those kinds of things are actually because there is capital [supporting them] [laughs]. So, the issue is, then, to get deep into that or not [laughs]. So, with Vocaloid, or, for example, the CGM culture that expanded in Japan, I think all of those things were a [kind of] 'counter' against the stance with no money [laughs]. Don't you think? The Vocaloid music being pushed into the 'LINE MUSIC'—there may be that kind of thing. And, when it turns into something like that, is like it has been until now. Some Vocaloid-P signing contracts with big companies and signing over their works with them. So, when it turns out like that, well... it becomes the 'right answer' in the methodology for the success in music, or does it not? So, I mean, if you want that many people to listen to your music, then you should go to 'that' recording company and sign a contract. Then [you may] have your 'major debut' [laughs]. That becomes the only way you can have many people listening to your music, as all the other 'how to' [ways] will disappear. This is the way it used to be [until now], right? Is it not going back to there? I cannot say that I am not worried about that. But, my hope, or what makes me feel that there is a 'luminous future', is that Vocaloid and Hatsune Miku were known. That there are not only major artists but there are also a lot of amateurs who can make great works all around the world! The normal listeners knew and learned that, and I think that is a really important thing.

(Kobayashi Onikis, 2014, interview with the author)

For Kobayashi Onikis, the end of the movement is the return of the Vocaloid music to the commercial world. However, the end of the intermediate world that Toffler called 'prosumers', which was prompted by the amateur movement of Vocaloid, is regarded in a different light by Mienohito. Mienohito is a video producer and 'v-j' author of the well-known video of the equally well-known song 'Senbonzakura' ('Thousand Cherry Trees') (Kurousa P). This 'end' means, for him, a return to the original shape of Vocaloid.

A: How is it going now?

M: Well, it seems to be very profitable, right? [He says this in an ironic tone]. But, to tell you the truth, well, 'Kurousa P', the creator of 'Senbonzakura', has

the same opinion as me, so, to put things bluntly, it is returning to the shape it should have. To be frank, it was too much impetus. It was because there was too much impetus that many companies got involved, and, well, out of necessity, those companies came and invested money, and when it became commercial, well, as a cycle, is it not approaching its end? It is an obsolete fashion. So, at the end, if you ask, 'What will happen with all of this'? Only the people who liked it will remain. And it is like that. That was what Vocaloid was about in its origin. It is only people doing what they like and getting enthusiastic among themselves. Well, I don't think it will disappear, but.... [Those people who say] 'It is a crisis!' 'It is a crisis!' well, it is [certainly] a crisis for the commercial development, so I have the impression that it is only going back to being a niche; it is going back to the shape it must originally have. (Mienohito, 2015, interview with the author)

These quotes are examples of how the narrative of the decline of the Vocaloid scene is regarded. The position of Masaki, Kobayashi Onikis and Mienohito is slightly different, but they express similar difficulties that shape a common narrative. In other words, they regard Vocaloid as a movement that expanded from a small community into a shape in which it lost its community form. It became fragmented, and its unity became difficult to maintain. This expansion is, however, part of the spirit of the movement wherein the driving force was connected to those people and communities that were disconnected. This element is explicit and evident in many other parts I will quote below. The point I want to draw attention to here is that the community is seen as lost when the meaning of that loss is the loss of a non-instrumental orientation. That is, the loss is regarded when profit becomes the main drive in participation.

An absent-present community: freedom and truthfulness

The word 'community', when it was used in the interviews, was commonly associated with two key words: 'connection' [tsunagari] and 'exchange' or 'interaction' [kōryū]. Moreover, when the interviewees talked about 'community', they usually also mentioned particular places, persons, situations and stages in the development of the Vocaloid scene. The word had positive and negative uses, and when the conversation was not focusing on the topic of community, it usually alluded 'others groups' different than the group of people, activities or sets of text related to which the speaker is implicitly or explicitly related. In my view, the overall characteristics of community, as was imagined by the interviewees, may be classified as following three axes: time, space and relationships.

Time: There is a community that has dissolved, but the community will remain as the base when the movement fades. The community is in the past and in the future of the movement.

Space: There are some specific places and events where a community is perceived. For example, there are some dōjin events like 'Mina no UTAU', which is small subgenre parallel to Vocaloid. Live Crypton's official concerts featuring Hatsune Miku by SEGA are another example. In these concerts, the visual elements of the character of Hatsune Miku used in the concert and the songs she sings were selected from the contents generated by the users. Therefore, many times, they described the concert as the 'conjunction of all the fragmented images of Hatsune Miku and its creators in a one single image'. A third example includes the stages of the internet and groups of interaction like the 'Nyappon' community or before that, the 'MIDI movement' which 'was destroyed by JASRAC', Nico Nico Dōga before its 'fragmentation' due a great number of contents and people and the BBS like 2channel before Nico Nico Dōga. These places also used to be regarded as closed.

Relationships: This axis entails two evaluative poles: a positive one and a negative one. The positive pole was focused on relationships characterised by truthfulness, horizontality, the thickness, commonality or co-ownership and engagement. The negative pole was characterised by a lack of freedom, a closed nature, uniformity, standardisation and a lack of dynamism.

The word 'community' was usually opposed to an emphasis on 'freedom. The word 'freedom', however, had several different nuances depending on the topic of discussion. For example, it may be regarded as freedom of expression, as freedom of the use of the songs or videos as resources and as freedom regarding the use of the fictional character. Nevertheless, in general, the meaning of freedom in the Vocaloid scene can be summarised in the expression, 'Do your will and let the others do their will' [katte ni suru, katte ni saseru]. We have regarded a similar orientation in Chapter Three, when focusing on the 'self-servant manner' [katte ni] in which the activities of the dōjin culture are carried out. This same emphasis on freedom observed in the interviews above shares many characteristics with the network-like social relations, but it is also regarded as the base for building a non-instrumental social relationship. Therefore, depending on the stance, the concepts of networks and communities overlap. For example, the stress on horizontality is a characteristic regarded in both communities and networks.

Consequently, if the dōjin culture focused on the *activities* stressed the 'self-serving motivation', the Vocaloid scene's orientation to *participation* adds to this 'free of will' an

element of reciprocity. As we will see, the ethos of the Vocaloid scene, entails the relation between 'freedom' and 'truthfulness'.

The difficulties that impede the drawing of a sharp contrast between communities and networks are clear if we focus on the positive and negative evaluative conceptualisation of the word 'community' in the field. Here, I want to focus on two recurrent elements: communities as others and communities as in the past and in the future. Communities as others may usually be regarded as the 'present communities' or the 'lived and experienced communities'. On the other hand, the community as a positive ideal remains in the past and in the future. In other words, the negative experience of community, i.e. its closed nature and homogeneity, is represented by a rejection of idolatry and is usually regarded in the others, such as in the case of main stream culture or the mass society. This characteristic is sometimes recognised as the 'bad side' in present actual communities.

Thus, the core of the activities in the Vocaloid scene, as it will become clear through the following quotes and analysis, remains as a kind of 'oral tradition' deeply rooted in collective values and resources. This tension is embodied in what I believe is the core of the ethos in the Vocaloid scene referenced above, i.e. the conjunction of an open and relativistic orientation towards values in the idea of freedom, as well as the closed and self-contained essentialist orientation towards absolute and incommensurable values in the idea of 'truthfulness'.

In order to understand this complex relation, I will make three crucial distinctions. First, I will distinguish between the idea of community and the real and lived communities. As the word 'community' also entails theoretical difficulties, as we saw in Chapter Five, I will reserve the use of 'communities' to designate the narrative of a community and the word 'small group' for the actual lived community which is usually regarded as 'others'. Second, small groups, as we saw in Chapter Three, are also shaped by networks. Third, what differentiates the small groups from pure networks is the lack of a particular orientation. In other words, what characterises the small group is the presence of an object of orientation, while the social relations (networks) are always present.

Later in this section, I will focus on three elements that constitute the dynamics of values that the ethos or radical imaginary behind the Vocaloid scene entails. These elements are the action in the aesthetic-rhetoric field, the texts that encompass both orientations of value and the ethos and the imaginaries of the self that shape the different stances from which actors participate and engage.

6.3 Asobi-ba and Participation: Action in the Aesthetic-Rhetoric Field

I regard the interaction of physical and informational places as an aesthetic-rhetoric field, though not only because of its nature as a field of interaction that occurs in each interinstitutional system. The reason is also in the aesthetic and rhetoric coherence of these fields of interaction that allows one to understand them as a particular field. This coherence is addressed by the users in the common distinction by genres of participation, such as *dōjin* events and *Vocalo* events. In a more general way, they usually address them using the expression, 'place to play' [asobi-ba]. The coherence I regard in such places is not only the coherence of orientations and roles that any institution entails but also the coherence of its radical and actual imaginary. As I stated, I regard the radical imaginary of these interinstitutional fields in the relation between absolute and relative values.

The actual imaginary that unfolds in the field can be described as the collective discourse of the raise and the fall of the *Vocaloid* scene. It is the story of the struggle of an amateur scene to change the rules of the established music industry, the excitement in capturing the spirit of participation and engagement and the endless participant narratives (small narratives) and their integration into the collective discourse of the *Vocaloid* movement. Those narratives were characterised as being shaped by the search or the finding of an absolute and truth value in the scene (e.g. in the music, in the character, in the social ties) and, in some cases, the bitterness of losing it all to the commercialisation or the massification. These are narratives with concrete actors, names, dates, places and a clear history. Therefore, the coherence that makes this a specific 'aesthetic-rhetoric' field is a narrative coherence. The field itself and its imaginary represent a collective work. As Kobayashi Onikis, the author of 'Sai-hate', one of the iconic songs at the beginning of the *Vocaloid* movement, stated, the *Vocaloid* movement is a story conveyed by each of its participants. Action in the field is related to the texts in this fundamental way. Texts are, at the same time, the closed works of distanciation from the individual textual production, as well as the substance of the collective and actual discourse. This duality animates the conflictive dynamism between authorship and participation and the plurality of different meanings of appropriation in the field.

The 'asobi-ba' as an aesthetic-rhetoric field has this important characteristic. It is an instance of discourse. Texts regarded from this perspective are a means of action and participation in the discourse. This discourse takes shape in the social interaction in the field. However, in contrast to the interaction that is structured as a dialogue, the

collective discourse is structured as a narrative. Therefore, it has the narrative coherence of causality. The causality of the narrative world in the field of interaction is a strong element that confers a sense of truthfulness to the ties that are produced within the field. This strong feeling was detectable in each of the interviews I analysed, no matter the different positions the interviewees held, such as representatives of companies, engineers or developers, enthusiasts or producers of any kind of text related to the Vocaloid scene. All of these stances had the common element of *being part* of the movement of Vocaloid. Consequently, the word ‘participation’ becomes the key to understanding the borderlines of what composes the aesthetic-rhetoric field of the Vocaloid scene, which is distinct from the broader interinstitutional field of interaction.

The following three sub-sections show representative elements that characterise the aesthetic-rhetoric field of the Vocaloid scene as it appeared in the interviews. One subsection include topics related to the nature of the places of interaction, whether physical or informational. Here, I address the characteristics I grouped under the code ‘5. Environment of participation’. The second subsection includes topics related to the activities that unfold in those places as well as their values. Here, I focus on the principal characteristics I grouped under the code ‘2. Activities’ as well as some of the relevant topics of those grouped under the code ‘4. Industry and polices’. The third subsection pertains to the central issue of participation, authorship and property. I regard this as an example of the interplay of what Gudeman defines as the ‘core’, and as including public goods or common-pool resources, understood as separated elements. As we will see, the category of ‘authorship’ arises in the transformation of the inalienable values of the community into resources. This movement is vital in order to expand the borders of the community and generate new values, by binding creativity to the individual, i.e. the author, and by bringing heterogeneity to the field. However, from the perspective of the actors, this value must go back to the community. Below, I will introduce two interviews, one with the Vocalo p EHAMIC which will appear at the end of this section, and the other with the Vocalo p Kobayashi Onikis, which will be presented at the end of the analysis of this chapter. Both illustrate these tensions between the community and the author.

Hence, the narrative posed by the Vocaloid movement, namely of its rise and fall, is connected to the tensions among authorship, creativity and commonality. As we will see at the end of the analysis, some Vocalo p reject the label ‘creators’ and correlate the category of ‘author’ to an instrumental orientation towards value. This ‘maximising’ orientation breaks down the original community and betrays the truthfulness that, following the ethos of the movement, should be the drive of the action in the field. After

all, we can regard this story as the *defeat of the author* who must become an individual in order to bring new values and new life to the community. However, by doing this, he or she risks falling into the instrumental realm of the market and therefore renounces individuality and gives up his or her authorship. This is, nevertheless, a narrative built upon the basis of an actual inseparable relationship between both realms, community and market, and orientations towards absolute and relative values.

6.3.1 Physical places and informational networks

As we saw in the extracts of the former section, the relation between mediated social relations and immediate relations is important. The quoted sources, in addition to almost all the sources in the research, identified as central the relation of places in informational networks as well as places for physical interaction. In the general sense, the significance of the informational networks was regarded in relation to the connection among formerly isolated individuals, groups and texts-genres. The connections that the Vocaloid scene represented for many different activities and groups have mainly been described as a fundamental openness where people and topics of interest mixed. Here, Vocaloid was described several times as only a pretext to know new people or be introduced to new hobbies. This was a feature particularly focused on the connections that the scene represented or the enthusiasts of technology, music and the character culture.

The iconic symbol of Hatsune Miku was repeatedly described as the superposition of these three different main topics of interest (technology, characters and music), and the mixture that this generated was highly regarded as the main reason behind the creativity and productivity of the Vocaloid scene. This mixture symbolised by the Vocaloid scene was the concrete result of the networking of the institutions of textual production and appropriation rooted in the *dōjin* culture by the internet and the community-oriented architecture of Nico Nico Dōga. As evident in the personal experiences of the interviewees, the expansion and connection that the informational networks produced boosted the activities ‘offline’ and promoted face-to-face interaction. As the conversation with Nakamura and Hisayuki shows, the ‘offline gatherings’ served as the places where the people connected by the networks could meet and affirm their social bond.

This mutual relation between ‘online’ and ‘offline’ places of interaction is related to the distinction between ‘communities’ and ‘networks.’ As I showed in Chapter Three and in Chapter Four in Section One, the *dōjin* activities are usually linked to particular

events. Based on the observations and research on the actual institutions in the dōjin, cosplay and Vocaloid field I introduced in Section One, we can regard the interaction between informational spaces of interaction and physical spaces of interaction that shape the 'asobi-ba' as the interconnection of networks of small groups. The field is therefore composed of close face-to-face interaction and distant interaction through the informational networks. Each one has different characteristics that can be summarised as follows:

1) Small groups of face-to-face interaction should be regarded as networks within networks. Small groups may be classified according to the genre of activity in relation to a particular object. The actual activities in the field may be realised by the actors under those categories that become the basic framework to shape the group. Usually, the smallest unit is an impersonal or not individual category, as with the 'circle' in the dōjin culture, but this unit is mostly used only for participants in face-to-face events, excluding the staff and the general assistants. Some genres shape more sizable frameworks than others. For example, dōjin magazines of a certain character shape a category where only particular activities focused on in a dōjin magazine circles may be classified. Likewise, cosplay activities as a genre focused on a particular character may shape several small groups of interaction. However, genres of activities like organising events or participating as staff of events focused on a particular character as its object of orientation will shape a larger group of participants that gathers, which differs from small groups focused on different activities. For example, dōjin and cosplay activities focusing the same character. This framework shapes a small network of groups.

My interest here is not to make a typology of genres, activities and groups. Rather, it is to emphasise that any small group within the field is a kind of network (i.e. a network of circles, a network of activities, a network of different objects of orientation and so forth) and that the unit of that network is an impersonal category as opposed to an individual. This element is a crucial point to understand the dynamic relations of value between what may be generally regarded as 'closed communities' and 'open networks'. The first difference here between networks and what is usually regarded as 'other people's communities' is the object of orientation. In the quotes regarding communities that we saw above, as well as in many other quotes we will see below, the distinction between a clear object of orientation was linked to a rather closed social tie. In contrast, the emphasis on openness was in the context of allowing diversity, such as with a diversity of genres, texts or persons regarded as representatives of genres and texts.

As we will see below, the differences between the use of the words 'activities' and 'participation' have a concordance with a difference of the orientation that each word

denotes. Here, activities are focused on the object of orientation while participation represents a focus on the act as interaction.

The 'small group' may be open to many different participants when the object becomes less restricted. However, when the small group lacks its object of orientation, the dynamic that remains is that of the network. The example of the activity of 'staff at a dōjin event' [see in Chapter Three, Section 3.2.3] is interesting as the object of orientation is the event which is a network itself. All of these small groups are different from abstract groups, which lack face-to-face interaction. In other words, such groups are understood according to the object of orientation at their core. In these small and face-to-face groups, interaction occurs between concrete individuals. It is often personal and develops a degree of stable ties, although those individuals may be understood rather as representatives of their activity, role or genre in the group, or as mediated by it. Here, it is important to note that the interaction between these individuals that is mediated by broader categories shapes a model of communication where communication appears, rather than as a mutual understanding between individuals, as the shared understanding of the particular category that enables the interaction in the field.

2) 'Big groups', which focus on the object of orientation, lack concrete interaction and are the extensive imagined framework composed by all of those potential members of the group. The interaction that takes place through the internet may be regarded as the materialisation of these imagined groups, making possible the interaction with the groups themselves without the category of the individual. The interaction 'one-to-all' in the informational networks is a level of 'mediated semi-interaction', similar to the way Thompson has described it (1995). Here, it is interesting to note the particular importance that the interviewees gave to Twitter. The role of Nico Nico Dōga as a 'space' or 'asobi-ba' has been widely focused on, but the role of Twitter, as it appeared in several interviews, was somewhat different. The role of Twitter, as described in the interviews, was to enable direct communication, 'one-to-one', through the universally open network of 'whispers'. In many cases, when I asked the interviewees how they met each other, their answer was Twitter. The architecture of Twitter allows users to identify with individuals and to commit to their ideas, interest or hobbies. As it was described by the interviewees, it allowed focused interaction, 'one-to-all', as well as unfocused or individual interaction, 'one-to-one.'

This shapes a bridge between the 'one-to-all' and the 'one-to-one' interaction types on the internet that becomes an important element of motivation towards face-to-face interaction. At the very least, most of the members of particular groups of activities I encountered told me they had initially met through Twitter. This characteristic is

noteworthy if we keep in mind that most of the social relations in the dōjin field tend to be external to the dōjin network (see Chapter Three).

The event 'Hatsune Miku exercise-dance', which is organised by the amateur dancer Nurupon, is an example of this connection between internet networks and the formation of face-to-face interaction groups. The event was carried out in Osaka and promoted in Twitter by Nurupon. She contacted some members directly and also opened it to new members by promoting on Twitter. I went to the event that brought together about 20 participants. Nearly half of them were meeting each other for the first time but shared some interest in Nurupon's usual topics of conversation in Twitter, identifiable by the key words 'Hatsune Miku', 'exercise' or 'dance'. After the event, some of the participants went out to eat and drink together, and most of them became connected to each other on Twitter. This way of 'making new friends' is very common on the internet regarding any kind of topic of interest, such as food, sports and so on.

As we saw in Chapter Five, the 'conciseness of communities' regarded by Blackshaw (2010) that we addressed in Chapter 5.3.1 alongside the 'cool', detached attitude described by Bauman (2001) in contemporary communitarianism and the sceptical gaze that the Japanese subculture gives to the mass society represented in the mass media consumption, all point in a similar direction. This is the exaltation of personal taste or hobbies as an ethos, which becomes the base for shaping a community of the 'like-minded'. The interplay of universally open networks of communication and closed groups of face-to-face interaction, as in the example of Nurupon's event, has as a condition the existence of a linking element mutually recognised as valuable based on a subjective judgement.

Therefore, the 'emotional communities' based on aesthetics sensibly depicted by Maffesoli (2000/2004) appear as the base of this kind of groups of interaction, but also encompasses an attitude of mistrust towards the social tie itself. This makes the presence of the hobby or object of interaction, as an external element of commitment, indispensable.

Hence, all these groups in the informational networks are closed in the sense that they are focused on a particular object. However, individuals often have many different topics of interest, which leads them to participate in different groups or to shape new groups in a relatively open way.

3) The networks without a particular object of focus are the open structure ones that encompass various small groups defined by their objects. The important point I want to focus on here is that notwithstanding that networks are universally open in principle, the object of orientation, the key element in defining the activities of the users and the

groups of interaction in which users participate shape a rather ‘closed-open’ structure. This structure is relatively open in the way that it allows the integration and connection of several objects of focus, activities and actors. Yet, they are closed to the degree that, with the help of informational architectures, they exclude, avoid or ignore the existence of objects of focus and activities or actors that may be regarded as having no connection to the core or the cores of the particular network. This kind of selective openness and a relatively closed nature is on the base of shaping a field easily impacted by trends and rumours. I present one example of this in the interview with Mienohito and Kato, in Section 6.5.

The often regarded interaction between ‘platforms’ and ‘hubs’ in the Vocaloid scene, partially describes the classification presented above. As we saw in Chapter Four, the distinction between platform and contents industries is a key aspect of the Vocaloid scene. Here, platforms are regarded as the means for action that the industrial actors provide to the consumer regarded as a user. Therefore, the key component is the user’s activities [katsudō]. In contrast, the contents industry’s approach is based on the focus on the consumer as the audience member and on the sharp distinction between professionals and amateurs. In addition to this distinction, the word ‘hub’ has also been used to describe the Vocaloid scene. This word implies the creation of new connections and has had a different use than the concept of a platform.

In the interview with Satoru and Yaoki, Satoru called attention to this difference while discussing the role of Hatsune Miku in the Vocaloid movement. For them, the character can be regarded as a hub, as a platform or as an idol. The perspective that regards the character as a hub or as a platform is the stance of the creators or users of the software. In contrast, the perspective that regards the character as an idol was defined as the stance of the listeners or fans. From the perspective of the creators, the focus on the fictional character as a platform represents the focus on the activity of production, understanding the software only as the means for creating a song. In other words, Hatsune Miku is regarded as a singing software or tool. However, this orientation does not by itself entail any orientation for creating social relationships. In contrast, the role of the hub is the connection of several works, creators and fans through the use of the image of Hatsune Miku. This characteristic can be analysed as the emphasis of the use of Hatsune Miku not only as a material resource but also as a symbolic one. She is a resource in which value has been collectively created. Finally, in addition to the platform and the hub, there is the role of Hatsune Miku as an idol. In this case, Yaoki referred to Hatsune Miku as an idol in correspondence with the role she plays in the integration of several fragmented and particular or individual images of

Hatsune Miku, composed of several different creations, into a single symbol. We can analyse the characteristic of this idol as an empty symbol composed of multiple subjective values, with each one holding a particular value for the participants of the Vocaloid scene. The integration of all these individual values in a single symbol, without losing its subjective nature and therefore its heterogeneity, is what we can call a process of value generalisation as the condition for intersubjective interaction. It is ‘feeling a community’ on the base of an individual commitment towards an external object.

My interest in making these distinctions is in understand the connection between the modes of *action* and *participation* in relation to the small groups, the big groups and the open-closed networks. The focus in the platforms is related to the material means supporting the activities, while the focus on the hubs was on the symbolic integration of such activities to the imagined or actual group. This distinction is important for understanding the differences in the use of the words ‘activities’ [katsudō] and ‘participation’ [sanka] that most of the interviewees used as common language. An ‘activity’-oriented focus is closer to the dōjin culture’s ethos (i.e. ‘do your will’). The orientation towards ‘participation’ is a focus closer to many forms of internet communitarianism, and it entails an emphasis on free access to symbolic or material resources, where the premise of ‘let the others do they will’ is essential for allowing participation.

6.3.2 Activities and the values of participation

Based on the above general characterisation of the relation of places for activities and participation in the Vocaloid scene, we can regard both (activities and participation) as a dynamic relation constituted of different orientations within an ‘open’ and ‘closed’ world. In what follows, I will focus on and exemplify some important elements that shape this dynamism.

The amateur ethos and the place of freedom

Nurupon is an amateur dancer with considerable experience in the scene of ‘odotte-mita’ (I tried to dance), who began her activities before Vocaloid became popular in 2007. When discussing amateur works, she expressed the following:

Well, the J-pop or the famous things are, after all, produced by professionals, and obviously the technique of the music or the videos is great. But, in Vocaloid, you know, [...] it is a gathering of amateurs, so obviously if you compare it with

professional music videos or songs, it is inferior. But, [in participating in Vocaloid] there is also freedom in the same proportion. For example, in a club or at a dance party, even if you are in a place where you can dance freely, if there are only professionals dancing in the hall, doesn't it become very constrained? [Laughs]. So, the people who can't dance and the people who can't sing, it does not matter if they are awkward or whatever, ... I think, the fun of a club is in dancing, so in the same way, the songs of Vocaloid can have bad lyrics and bad music. It is OK. The dancing may also be awkward. The important thing is to have the possibility of putting that on the internet. Put it on the internet and it will possibly be seen by many people. I think that is something very good of this. [...] (Nurupon, 2014, interview with the author)

Masaki also focuses on the importance of freedom, but with a different emphasis:

Well, Vocaloid music had very low restrictions. For example, the music for commercial use is subject to complaints about the lyrics. You cannot include something like, 'I want to [commit] suicide' [laughs] or some [other] kind of negative lyrics. Also, if the content is too extreme, it could become a social problem, so it will be stopped. But, here [...] there are no such kinds of things. You can do any kind of song, and it can have the length you want [...] there are no restrictions. And Miku sings when you ask her to [laughs]. So, those young boys made me listen to a kind of free music I have never heard before [...]

Then, I asked him why he prefers the status of being a 'fan organisation' rather than a 'formal organisation'. I asked this in particular because the activities of *Mirai no neiro*, the group he represents, focus on expanding and promoting the Vocaloid culture in other countries. As such, support from companies or formal organisations may be useful for them. Again, he focused on the importance of freedom:

Well, you know, the reason that we can do so many things is because we are free. [For example], in the case of Crypton, they are the owners of the character, so [their activities] get related to the property rights of the company that they have to protect. And, now it seems they are trying to make a system for synchronising the fans and the creators' [activities] [...]. It has become strong in many ways, so it is now a 'character business', right? This image becomes strong, and then [Miku] is no longer ours. It has become the property of the company. Those people who were our enemies until now, those big recording companies have called the creators to belong to them, and now [they sell their CDs]. [...] They [the Vocaloid creators] were saying that they will 'make a revolution' [in

the music scene], but they have been absorbed. They supported the idea of ‘turning everything upside down’, but before they knew it, they had been already absorbed. [...] So, in the end, is it the money [laughs] or not? It has become a part of that world. And from there [that stance], it is difficult to produce something new and fresh, I think. That is the actual situation [...], so now it is about how to produce a song that receives many reproductions so you can have money from Nico Nico. [...] It has become only about money, I think. [...] The artistic side has been lost. It seems that they only draw to sell. Then, there is no freedom anymore. Right? [...] PIXIV and also Dwango are the same. [...]

When analysing the use of the word ‘freedom’ in the interviews, it becomes apparent that there is a clear association between amateurs’ activities while the nuances of participation sometimes entailed a kind of subordination of such freedom to the ‘common good’ of the movement. The conflict between the profit and professionalisation of the activities in the scene jeopardises the scene in its entirety as the commercialisation transforms the scene from a ‘place to play’ [asobi-ba] into a place to generate profit. However, as it is also clear in much of the material I am quoting in this chapter, this conflict is not against the ‘commercial practices’ as such. Rather, it is against the loss of freedom and a non-instrumental orientation. Therefore, the property restrictions that ensure the monetary profit are the primary concern. The opinions of the actors towards this issue differ in degree and position. In regard to the quotes above, some of interviewees clearly opposed commercialisation, while others held a positive view of commercialisation and profit as long as these elements do not endanger the free use of resources by other participants in the scene. However, it was more evident, such as in the case of the interview with Mienohito and Kato that, in most cases, the activities mentioned entailed a kind of productive relation to some degree of commercialisation. Examples include the sales of amateur Vocaloid records in commercial networks (e.g. Amazon), published books, videos, sales of a particular voice library and the general ‘success of the Vocaloid scene’ in the commercial scene as the symbol of the ‘recognition of the creativity of the amateur scene’.

In addition, the bad characterisation of the industry was also related to the loss of freedom in the content of the works—in particular, in regard to the lyrics of the songs and the filters of distribution from the records industry. The restriction of formats was also a common topic among the creators I interviewed, such as Peperon-P, Kobayashi Onikis, EHAMIC, and Mienohito, as in the case of the broadcasting activities of NezMozz.

This link with professionalism and the loss of freedom have been described as a recent change of the attitude towards the activities in the Vocaloid scene by the ‘newcomers’. Following our previous distinction, this new attitude was less oriented to the meaning of participation. This was the case of the criticisms towards an emerging image of a ‘Vocaloid p’ as ‘something people wish to become’ and not merely as something that ‘you simply do’.

I would like to become a ‘Vocalo p’

Hisayuki describes a change she perceives in the attitude towards the Vocaloid activities among new Vocaloid fans in the following way:

H: So, now it seems the listeners have the conscience that people that want to become professionals or that will become professionals are creating the songs. So, there is now a mood in which they demand quality, I guess. [...] Recently, [Vocaloid] has become famous, and there are a lot of kids that come here because of the game *DIVA*. So, they don’t have the conscience of ‘we can also produce it’ [...] [Rather], they take the stance of ‘listening’, and then they decide, ‘I want to become a Vocalo p!’ [...] So, now it seems that there are also schools to become a Vocalo p! It has become that kind of world. From the perspective of those who have been [in the scene] since the beginning, everyone with the software is a Vocalo p. But now, they take on the role of the listener. (Hisayuki, 2014, interview with the author)

Nurupon expressed a similar opinion regarding the scene of amateur dancers:

[Recently], there are a lot of people on Twitter that put in their self-introduction ‘I want to become an ‘odori-te’ [dancer]’. Eh? ‘I want to become an ‘odori-te’ [dancer]? What is that?! I think. I wonder if ‘odori-te’ is something you want to become... [...] to be an ‘odori-te’ is only the ‘odotte-mita’ [trying to dance]; even if your dance is awkward or whatever, the only thing you need to do is put that on the internet and that’s it: you are an ‘odori-te’ [laughs]. So [an expression like] ‘I want to become an ‘odori-te’!, [makes no sense to me] [...] I guess it seems like now the mood is that ‘you have to be good in order to call yourself an odori-te’ or ‘only the people with talent should put their videos on the internet’. And, this is not only something that happens in the odotte-mita [I tried to dance] but also in the MMD [...]

The productivity of the 'I-tried' spirit

Amateurism, inclusive of the attitude of 'try' and the freedom that it entails, was a common topic of focus. As in the case of the amateur dancing genre *odotte-mita* which I mentioned above, there are various genres of activities in the Japanese *dōjin* culture related to Nico Nico Dōga that are referred to with the words 'I tried', or in Japanese, adding 'te-mita' to the end of any verb. Therefore, there are activities like 'I tried to sing' [*utatte-mita*], 'I tried to play' [*ensōshite-mita*] or any other verb, which when having achieved popularity, become a specific genre of the amateur Japanese scene.

Hamasaki Masahiro, a senior researcher at the Information Technology Research Institute, National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST), Japan and the leader of the Songrium project, regarded the attitude behind the 'I tried' expression in the following way:

In the world of Nico Dō [*Nico Nico Dōga*], there are a lot of 'I tried to-something' [...] like the 'I tried to sing' [*utatte-mita*] or the 'I tried to dance' [*odotte-mita*]. I think this is also something [that is a] little peculiar. For example, they can say just 'I did- something' [*yarimahsita*] instead of saying 'I tried' [*shite-mita*]. [It is a stance like saying] 'I just tried a little doing this', but 'if there is any problem I will stop, all right?' So, I think it is a stance from very low position [laughs]. But, in some sense, that is also because they lend the material at will [*katte-ni*] and do what they want at will [*katte-ni*]. So, it is like saying, 'if there is perhaps someone who is doing these things 'seriously' and gets angry, I will stop at that moment, and there is no problem'. However, if they can, they will try to bring out [make public] whatever they did [created]. So, I think it is like having the contradictory feeling of wanting to bring out [show] something and hating to be confronted. So, perhaps that is the reason that this soft expression 'I tried' appeared and spread. And, I think that when we think of the 'trial and error', this is a very important concept. I think this is a very Japanese thing [...]. What I mean is that it is usually said in comparison with the 'try and error spirit of the United States' Silicon Valley'; it looks like the Japanese are too afraid of failure [*shippai*] [...] So, by having that culture in the background, the words 'I tried' become an overwhelming protection against failure. [...] In a sense, it is like trying [to create something] within an environment of extreme insecurity. [...] The phrase 'I tried to do it' comes across as a trial with an escape hatch.

Then, nearly an hour later, he returned to the focus on the 'I tried' spirit in regard to the productivity on the internet:

I think that it is an interesting phenomenon. It is because the internet is easy to participate in. For example, in our case, if we put it purely in the terms of 'I tried to sing' or 'I tried to dance', we are participating [in the Vocaloid scene] as 'I tried to research' [kennkyūshite-mita] [laughs, he is joking as his laboratory runs a project based on research concerning creativity and the networks like those of the Vocaloid scene]. [...] Well, as we are doing it in our profession, it is not an 'I tried to do it' but purely a 'we are doing it [researching]! [...] [But] perhaps, well, [what it is present] in a professional division of labour, [is that] each part must reach a certain quality before that [division of labour] becomes possible, so it is important to do it well. However, when it comes to the CGM, where there are a lot of contents, perhaps it is not necessary for everyone to reach its level of perfection. Rather than only making a [perfect work], everyone makes [...] only that [work] which is easy to do for them. Then, there is a chance that something good there gets connected to other [parts]. [In that sense], perhaps the rules of making things are changing [...]. However, if you really think that the user contents are winning against the professional, commercial contents, after all, well, as you know, commercial contents have the highest number of reproductions [...]. The issue is then, I think, where the resources are used [...]. For example, in the case of the MMD [music videos], [there is] the degree of the detail of the skirts' folds. A professional in that case, rather than trying to reach an ideal, is thinking on the basis of a rational economy. From that perspective, the [detail in which the persons of the MMD make their work] seems like a waste [of time]. I think that is very important. So, in that sense, I am very interested in the way the resources flourish and in the passion that flourishes in the 'I tried to sing' [utatte mita], 'I tried to dance' [odotte mita] or the MMD activities. [...]. (Hamasaki Masahiro, 2014, interview with the author.)

Hamasaki's perspective calls attention to the use of resources in a way that a rather structured professional framework regards as a waste of time. The freedom implied in the expression 'I tried to...', which has become the motto of many genres of textual productivity such as those involving performative skills (singing, dancing, playing instruments), enables the use of resources in a way that a profit-oriented structure cannot afford. As Hamasaki commented in the first part I quoted from the interview, the expression 'I tried to...' is also a way to avoid the criticism that a 'serious' engagement in a creative work may entail. Under the 'I tried to...' spirit, participation is as easy as a

game, and experimentation is possible as there is no fear of failure or responsibility. That logic is the same with the ‘Vocaloid p’ and the ‘I do it only for my own will’ [katte ni yaru] characteristic in the productivity of the dōjin culture. As we saw, the emphasis on the original sense of amateurship and the criticism towards these activities as ‘something you want to become’ rather than ‘something anyone can do’, as illustrated with the quotes from Hisayuki and Nurupon, follow the same ethos.

Moreover, the ‘irrational’ engagement in productive labour and the emotional attachment towards the work in amateur productions that Hamasaki observes, as well as the connection he finds between the use of the resources and the differences between that use in the commercial or professionals scenes present themselves as key issues. The tag ‘waste of talent’ is a very popular tag used in the world of Nico Nico Dōga to designate the works that show an extraordinary talent or effort employed in a subject or point generally considered as irrelevant or in disproportion with the amount of energy the author puts towards it. The freedom in production and the ‘flourish of the resources and passion’ that places Hamasaki in the Vocaloid movement is a crucial link between the meaning of amateur activities based on individual orientations and amateur participation as the collective production of values.

Why Vocaloid was popular

In the analysis, the most referred to reasons that the interviewees gave regarding the popularity of Vocaloid scene are listed as different codes in the table ‘Ethos, evaluations and values’ (see Appendix). Most of them may be classified into the following subcategories: 1) activities, 2) attitudes, 3) texts and 4) environments.

1) Activities were mainly secondary creations from the dōjin culture and some activities like amateur singing and dancing or video producing that were boosted by the free-use resources provided by the Vocaloid producers. The impact of the cosplay activities was also regarded in relation to the proliferation of multiple images of the characters. The rise of cosplay in the Vocaloid scene was connected to the increase of amateur illustrators on PIXIV and the popularity of the video game *DIVA* by SEGA. In addition, fans of particular activities were regarded as an important element, such as in the case of fan groups of amateur video producers, ‘dōga-shi’. However, the most referred to rationalisation of the popularity of the Vocaloid scene was the connection of all these activities, which were formerly regarded as completely different and disconnected domains.

2) Attitudes. The most important attitude was freedom in the sense of ‘freedom-of-doing-and-let-the-others-do’ (a sort of detached freedom). This kind of freedom entailed different nuances depending on the context, as freedom in production or distribution, freedom in expression or freedom in participation. Attitudes like the possibility of engagement in activities without stress, or feelings of ‘a not too hard commitment’ are also an expression of the basic value of freedom in relation to the ‘do what you want and let the others do what they want’ ethos in the field.

3) Texts, mainly the plurality of new expressions only possible in the Vocaloid scene, due to technical elements (a not human voice) or due to the nature of the amateur scene. Besides the songs and videos, characters were the other text(s) considered—in particular, the character of Hatsune Miku and its ‘tool, hub, and character-idol’ nature, as we will regard below.

4) The environment. This characteristic referred to the environment that facilitates participation and activities. The environments may be understood as (a) informational spaces for interaction like Nico Nico Dōga or PIXIV; (b) physical spaces for interaction like dōjin events and a particular rendering in live concerts using the official CG design of Hatsune Miku and the popular songs of several amateur creators; (c) software and tools for production, namely Vocaloid and character libraries; (d) the institutionalisation of activities and participation in the form of spoken and unspoken rules. The transformation of the legal framework regarding the use of the intellectual property that Crypton and Nico Nico Dōga promoted is an important element here that underpins the pre-existing structure of activities and participation in dōjin cultures. The environments in relation to activities were primarily regarded alongside the role of the above mentioned environments in aiding the individual immersion of the players in their hobbies, usually in the form of some textual productivity. This topic usually ended with a focus on obtaining resources and tools for such activities. In the case of participation, the environments had the role of providing a feeling of engagement and connection to a collective meaning. This is the case with the narrative of the Vocaloid movement or the Vocaloid scene, and with Hatsune Miku as a symbol of the totality of the movement, as well as the activities of ‘collaboration’ or ‘collective production’ as a way of connecting to a common work.

Drawing from these elements, the opinions and reasons that the interviewees expressed when addressing the popularity of the Vocaloid movement shape a general image of what ‘Vocaloid’ is to them. In a condensed form, this is the connection of different domains of activities, on the base of the ethos of ‘detached freedom’ and the structures that make possible that connection and ensure that ethos. Here, the texts

may be regarded as belonging to the following four dimensions: resources (plurality), works (distanciation), objects of attachment (a subjective driving force) and the representation of the totality of the collectivity (commons). The always present opposition between commercialism (means to ends) and 'not-commercialism', such play and the 'I tried' spirit (free will and irrationality), shape the poles of this multidimensional status that texts hold in the Vocaloid networks.

The following passages are a good example of an attitude towards commercialisation which comes not from a 'contradiction' between the 'consumers' and the 'industry' but rather from the opposition of free will and means-to-ends orientations.

Vocaloid is profitable

The topic of commercial profit was the object of different stances, in particular due to the mix of market and non-market orientations in the field. Nurupon expressed her feelings about commercialisation and profit in the following way:

Now, well, you know, after all, Hatsune Miku has become famous, and many Vocalo-P have become able to produce songs and movies of a very high quality. So, the level and the technical side of, for example, the singing or the dancing, are also rising, and I honestly feel very happy about that. In the beginning, it was, well, only like a game. Each one of us was having fun, and that was great. However, now, when I see on Nico Nico Dōga, as you can imagine, that the videos with a high level of technique or songs or dance are in the top. ... I think that that is great as it is, but, on the other side, I feel that perhaps it is becoming difficult for those guys who are thinking of starting to dance from now, or who are trying to do their own MMD videos. [It is becoming difficult] for them to put a video on the internet. 'What is the reason for an awkward person like me to put a video on the internet?' I think the mood is becoming like that. [...] I recently read something very disturbing; it was a column called, 'Vocaloid is profitable'. In fact, it is profitable. It has attracted a lot of attention, and if the companies get involved, it will surely be profitable to some degree. But, for someone like me who likes Vocaloid, I don't want people to think like that! (laughs) I understand the reasons, but nevertheless... (Nurupon, 2014, interview with the author.)

The opinion here from Nurupon is similar to the opinions of Kobayashi Onikis and Mienohito about the commercialisation of the Vocaloid scene. The view is that this commercialisation is a barrier for activities and participation. Masaki, from Mirai no neiro, regards this problem in a way that also involves the confrontation between the

mass culture and the niche culture rooted in the Japanese subculture. In particular, Masaki focuses on the feeling of losing the character of Hatsune Miku to the mass media.

We don't need to protect her anymore

This portion of the conversation with Masaki started when I asked about a 'rumour I had heard that Google was banning the word 'Hatsune Miku' from searches on the internet'. Masaki was not sure if the rumour was real, but he acknowledged that it was a widespread rumour among the people committed to the Vocaloid scene from its beginnings, and confirmed a general bad feeling towards Google in the scene in those days. He then talked about the song 'Tell your world', which written and composed by the Vocaloid Kz and appeared in a Japanese Google Chrome commercial featuring Hatsune Miku.

[...] [In fact], Google had until now a very strong posture against Hatsune Miku. So, when that commercial appeared, it was like a quick change of attitude, and I think there were many people who felt angry about that. And, what it is strange, in fact, is that when Hatsune Miku appeared, there was a lot of excitement on Nico Nico Dōga at that time, and a television station made a special programme about Hatsune Miku. In that programme, they mocked the Japanese otaku. It was the TBS. So, the TBS produced a programme that ruthlessly mocked Hatsune Miku and the otaku. So, at that time, I think most of the fans were of the opinion that it was better for big media and the television to not make any reference to Hatsune Miku because they [the media] cannot do it correctly. But, then there was a programme in the NHK and some other programmes on the radio, and the mood began to change. There was 'Asa p' [the journalist Tanji, who was also interviewed for this research] from Asahi Shimbun, [...] so the thing is, [in the beginning] there was an image of Hatsune Miku [as a defenceless girl] being misunderstood or bullied, and it was necessary to save her from that. When Hatsune Miku appeared, there was also the idea to make an anime. A big production [...] something like 'let's make Hatsune Miku into something profitable'. Hatsune Miku was an innocent and helpless existence. So, we had to protect her from the big companies. In other words, the people of the 2channel or the underground had to protect that culture. It was supposed to be like that. But, now [laughs] she has come to the surface, and she is being promoted on the surface [the mass or big media], so I think it has

changed. [...] So, she is no longer an existence we have to protect. Now, she is singing with Lady Gaga! (laughs) Masaki, 2014, interview with the author.

6.3.3 Oral tradition in the network economy: Participation, property and authorship

For you, where is the greatest value of the Vocaloid scene?

Towards the end of the interview, I asked for Kobayashi Onikis to tell me, based on his experience, what has been the greatest aspect of the Vocaloid scene for him. He responded with the following:

[...] The existence of Vocaloid, for me, was the last part I needed to be complete, I guess. That is the song. The singing voice was the only part that I couldn't complete by myself, and Vocaloid filled that part for me. And, having that, I was able to connect with many people regardless of the genre of their activities and [was able] to cross any borders. So, if someone asks me what is the biggest wealth [zaisan] I got from my experience within the Vocaloid culture, I think it is that. To let me complete something and give me the possibility of making it open to anybody [...] my creations were unable to be completed without Vocaloid. Before Vocaloid, they were incomplete, so the joy of completing my work, and being able to transmit that to somebody and then the joy of receiving emotions or the responses from the people who listened to that. I think that the Vocaloid scene is the accumulation of all of that [the experiences], which is becoming bigger and bigger. (Kobayashi Onikis, 2014, interview with the author)

The way in which Kobayashi Onikis regards the meaning of Vocaloid can be characterised by two poles: 1) creations tied to the idea of authorship and self-fulfilment and 2) the bond and connection to others through the emotion-driven feedback. As he concludes, the Vocaloid scene is the accumulation of all of those experiences, namely the creation and connection. Kobayashi Onikis' stance exemplifies the relation of the activities to authorship and participating in a 'collective meaning' built through creator's works. As we will observe, this entails two fundamentally different postures from the point of view of the creator. One is 'me' as the creator (orientation towards the activity) and the other is 'my work' as a resource for building connections (orientation towards participation). The struggles between authorship and common property in the Vocaloid scene are guided by these two different postures. The tensions between

professionalism and amateurship are part of this same conflictive relationship. As we will see, this tension is rather productive, but, in the end, the communitarian orientation prevails as a strong tendency towards authorship limits the freedom of others regarding the use of the work. This conflictive relationship, in addition to the ‘amateur-professional’ contradiction, comprise the basic narrative of the Vocaloid movement: the rise and fall of the Vocaloid scene and the drama of the rise and fall of the author-creator.

This narrative is based on the structure of action and interaction in the Vocaloid scene between the community (open-closed groups) orientation and the activity orientation that can be defined as ‘work-oriented’. Both orientations entail a different kind of understanding of property and appropriation. In order to understand these differences, the general perspective of the Vocaloid scene that describes Tanji ‘Asa-P,’ the journalist of Asahi Shinbun, provides the essential background in a condensed way.

Intellectual property and oral tradition: The meaning of transmitting

In interview with Tanji, better known as ‘Asa p’, the journalist from Asahi Shinbun who has been reporting on the Vocaloid scene since its beginning, he emphasised the role of music in the Vocaloid scene as the central element able to connect different kinds of activities. However, I had a question: ‘If music was always there, why did Vocaloid became so popular?’ He gave the following response:

That is because, until today, it was not possible to use the music freely. In other words, there is [always] a feeling of using music to do something, or is there not? If you take, for example, the song ‘Let it go’ from *Frozen* by Disney. It is very popular, and there are a lot of people who want to sing using that song. And, of course, a lot of people who would like to do some videos using it. But, they can’t do it freely. With Hatsune Miku, you can do it freely. That is because Crypton Future Media, as well as with other Vocaloid makers, it is the same... they have established lineaments and rules for letting people use it freely. If you are within a certain range, you can use it freely. However, in the case of the existing music, they will erase the contents from the internet if you upload that, for example, in YouTube. Now, there is an agreement concerning supervision with JASRAC, and it is possible to produce music, but you cannot use the original sound from the recordings. [...] After all, the right of the original sound belongs to the recording company, and the basic stance is that you cannot use

that. Now, there are a lot of contents that are being erased because [they are] using the original sounds. By the way, for JASRAC, it is OK to use the melody of the music [...], but in the case of Miku, it is OK to use [the sound] as well. It has created a culture of 'OK, you can use it'. No videos have been erased for using the original sound. That is completely different from the usual music. It is a problem that concerns the clearing of [copy] rights. [The difference with Crypton is] that Crypton makes that [stance] clear. [...] And, there was, at the same time, the world of Nico Nico with a common unspoken agreement of allowing the free use of the material within that area [laughs]. [...] That is completely different from the usual world of music [in which] if you use the sound, it is a crime [...].

I am not sure if the phenomenon of Vocaloid will continue for a long time or not. However, there is one change that this movement brought. That is [...] when a person comes across an extraordinary work, he become to want to produce a new one. And, in fact, is that not the original way of producing works? I feel like that. There is, for example, the case of 'Cinderella' [...]. It seems that there are thousands of different stories of Cinderella around the world. [...] It was disseminated in many countries and cultures. It was transmitted by traveling to many different lands and meeting many different cultures and peoples. And, it was changing as was transmitted. If there is no paper, surely then it changes. [...] there are different feelings of the people who narrate it or the culture of the place in which it was narrated. It will change a lot. The Japanese Cinderella and the French Cinderella are too different! (laughs) [...] I think that, in a certain sense, to transmit means to change. In other words, it is something that will be adapted in according to other persons and cultures.

That is, I think, the original sense of transmitting. But, what transformed that original shape [of transmitting] was the printing. With the printing, you can have an 'original' transmitted for hundreds of years without it changing a bit. Isn't that right? Now, you can read the book of Charles Perrault [...], as the original has become fixed. Before the printing, there were no originals and [works] were transmitted while changing. [...] When transmitting, everyone is giving their own interpretation. [...] Everyone transmitted it in the particular way they feel it. Perhaps it has returned to the original way of transmitting. It returned to the original form. This is the biggest change that the Hatsune Miku movement brought, I think. She made us remember how people

transmitted things before the printing. (Tanji 'Asa p', 2014, interview with the author.)

Tanji's approach is focused on freedom and ownership, and he regards the meaning of the texts (music) as transmission and change. His perspective is that of the oral tradition before the invention of printing and what we have regarded as distancing of the discourse into the work. Tanji's account of the movement clearly explains the central issues that the actors in the Vocaloid scene will face with their double stance as 'participants' and 'creators'.

However, Vocaloid is not merely oral tradition and the eradication of the 'original text'. Texts exist on the internet as disembedded forms in the shape of works produced by their authors. Yet, the architecture of the internet and the practices of appropriation and textual productivity on the internet make it likely that those texts will become raw materials to produce further works, shaping a sort of collective discourse. This singular characteristic of texts on the internet, in addition to the presence of the characters in the singing voice, produce a particularly interesting 'oral tradition' in the age of informational networks. From the side of the internet, it is important to stress the informational nature of the texts, or their non-physical form. Here, I want to emphasise the presence of the texts as inexhaustible resources, in Polanyi's sense (1957). This element, in addition to the presence of the fictional character of Hatsune Miku, give particular character to the text as we will see in the following quotations.

The struggle of the author with the ethos of the scene

The text as a resource for creation or as raw material for participating in the internet 'oral tradition' is an idea that not only conflicts with the concept of intellectual property or the individualisation of the text but also contributes to the concept behind the idea of the author or the creator in a modern sense. As we saw in Chapter 5.4.2 with Ōtsuka's approach to the birth of modern literature in Japan and the construction of the modern 'I' as the only narrative voice, the idea of authorship is tightly tied to the modern understanding of the self as a historical subject. This modern subject is a different category of that of the actors found in the oral tradition of the Vocaloid scene, where multiple voices mix to shape a collective discourse. This narrative voice of the 'I tried' spirit, in most of the cases that are anonymous or hidden behind a handle name, is, rather than modern, closer to the non-political, non-historical and non-individual subject described by Maffesoli.

The following quote from the interview with the 'Vocaloid p' EHAMIC shows the conflict between these two different logics of orientation that shapes the Vocaloid scene. However, EHAMIC understands and acknowledges the ethos of the scene. When I asked EHAMIC how he feels when his works are used in some other way, he expressed the following:

To be honest, at the beginning I hated the idea [laughs]. I hated that [idea] so much at the beginning that I used to think of how I should do it so my works would not be used like that. But, that was very wrong. The most valuable thing is that everyone enjoys the work, isn't it? That is the original scene. But, even now, I feel I have somewhere in me a bad feeling about the idea. But, to say what is what bothers me about that idea [...] I have the idea of the kind of world I want to create [in my works] [...] the thing I hate is that image being destroyed. [...] It becomes a different world [...] at the beginning I hated that [...]. But, now, I recently gave my permission to [use my songs] on the karaoke [boxes]. That is because I realised what does it means that [people] enjoys [with the songs], that the fact that somebody likes your song is something you must be grateful for. I have become able to think like that. So, at the beginning, I was the kind of person who did not want to share his songs. But when I shared [them], I think I have a responsibility [of doing] that. The fact that I showed [the song] means in part that everyone who likes the song can use it freely, [and to grant that freedom] is [my] responsibility. If I really hate that [someone uses my songs freely], I should not share them [with the public] in the first place. (EHAMIC, 2014, interview with the author.)

In the context of the oral tradition of the Vocaloid scene, we can regard this perspective as an author who chooses to side with distancing himself from the role of the 'artist' or the idea of the author to become closer to the community. At the end of Section 6.5, I will return to this topic with a similar example to illustrate the ethos of the Vocaloid movement.

The defeat and fading of the author

If the struggle depicted by EHAMIC illustrates the fading of the author as the single and authoritative voice behind the works produced, the way in which Peperon-p perceives how the creators seem to 'disappear' from the focus of the listeners presents the corresponding perspective from the audiences.

Vocaloid is, well, is singing, but if you ask what about the person [behind]? Well, there is no content [there is nothing inside], and even more, they [listeners] don't know who is making the songs, so it is a mystery; both are mysteries! [...] [The thing which is singing] is not a person, so ... you know, the people who listen are very aware of that. The thing that is singing is not a person, and they don't have a clear idea of who is making the songs [...]; it is a very weird sensation, [...] I think that is that what becomes attractive. [...] But, the young kids recently [...], are they are really aware that there is somebody behind there creating the songs?! I wonder [laughs]. Sometimes there are some who really think something like 'songs just pop out, don't they?' (laughs). Well, not that far, but there are a lot of people who really don't care, I think. [If you ask them] 'Who is making the songs?' [they will answer] 'That's obvious! It is Miku's song!' [...] (Peperon p, 2014, interview with the author.)

Your guitar is my guitar: the character and the inalienable possessions

The relation between Vocaloid texts and the nature of the character introduces a new dimension not only regarding production and authorship but also in terms of the sense of property and, therefore, the meaning of appropriation in the field. The following content from an interview is useful for illustrating this point. There is a peculiar capacity of the texts in their immaterial form to become a deeply individual possession and, at the same time, remain a shared property. This kind of property entails the understanding of text not only as the material means for action or resources for creation but also as symbolic resources capable of accumulating history and meaning. In my conversation with Yaoki and Satoru, after Satoru explained how most people regard the character as either a tool or an instrument, Yaoki added his opinion:

My opinion is almost the same as Satoru's, I guess. Hatsune Miku and Vocaloid itself are nothing more than a tool. Nothing more than a tool for making songs or something like that. I think that the fact that there is a character there [means that] everyone is using the same tool and making songs. As in the case of people who play music, if that [tool] is a guitar, it is like everyone using a guitar. And, there is [also] a character there. For example, if it is Hatsune Miku, I think [that this makes things] a little different. [For example], if you have a Hatsune Miku here, [and] you have a guitar and another guitar [there] [...], [that makes things] a little different, I think. I think this character begins to be felt as a very close thing. I think, for example, that I will not think that the guitar that Satoru

has is very cute, or I will feel that it is mine. For example, even if we have the same guitar, a 'Les Paul' guitar let's say. Even if it is a completely identical Les Paul, and one is the guitar Satoru loves, so this guitar and that guitar are completely different. I think the attachment and the way we hold that guitar will be different. [Then], I think that perhaps by inserting a character there, it becomes possible to hold the feeling of regarding that from the same posture, I believe. And, then, I think that the force that connects horizontality there is very strong. See, I was playing in a band, going to actual houses and seeing other bands playing. But, [that kind of] horizontal connection...for example, 'Hey, you have a cool guitar!' and that is very expensive and 'Oh! It has a very good sound!' We had that kind of conversation but... So, you know, if there is a character, then it is like 'Oh! You like that character, don't you?' I think that [in that case], the force that connects people horizontally is very quick. (Yaoki, 2014, interview with the author.)

Yaoki's observation about the differences between holding the same model of a guitar and using the same character as a tool is very clear. Notwithstanding that the brand name of a guitar may have the same function as the brand name of the music software (Les Paul and Hatsune Miku), the former becomes attached to the particular object. In other words, it makes 'my guitar' from 'your guitar', as well as the emotional attachment towards the object. Paraphrasing Yaoki's words, *I will not feel that your guitar is mine*. However, in the case of the character being different, here, *I may feel that the character is mine*, but, at the same time, it also may be *yours*. The fictional character must stand here, detached from the object (the software), in order to be owned and shared at the same time. The 'force' of the horizontal connections built through the character described by Yaoki are based on this central characteristic of the character that can be described as an inalienable possession. In the following section, I will explore the particular nature of the Vocaloid text in connection with the role of the fictional character, the creators and the listeners.

6.4 Open and Closed Worlds: Vocaloid Texts

In this section, I will present the main characteristics associated with the topics of the Vocaloid texts I recollected in the 21 different interview sessions. Since on several occasions I discussed particular texts and their characteristics, mainly those texts created by the actors I interviewed, I will move beyond those details to focus only on the central topic of the connection among narratives, fictional characters and real actors in

the Vocaloid scene.

In the interviews, some of the references were general while others pertained to particular works. A list of the works referred to during the interviews appears in the Appendix, and it shows the number of references and the referred sources. Here, I will address the most referred to characteristics. The most focused on topic was the role of narratives, particularly SF narratives, and the opposition between ‘human and not nonhuman’ embodied in the figure of the singing characters. This opposition that animates the whole imaginary of the Vocaloid scene, human and not human, is the same opposition between the character as an idol or as a tool and emotions against the lack of emotions. Moreover, it is parallel to the opposition between absolute and incommensurable values and the truthfulness that those values represent, as well as to the relative and commensurate values and the freedom that those values represent.

As the interviews showed, and as some informants like Kobayashi Onikis referred to directly, the Vocaloid scene was developed from the mixture of activities on the internet and from technology enthusiasts, music enthusiasts and character culture enthusiasts. As we saw in Chapter Four, several sources also provide insight into this background. The imaginaries behind the Vocaloid scene and the text are mainly in relation to these three sources, where the topic of science fiction in the expression of electronic music is the perfect combination of these three elements.

6.4.1 Open works and tools for participation

Vocaloid texts: An endless incomplete mix

I spoke with Mio Daisuke, the director of the project for the Vocaloid character library ‘Flower’. After 50 minutes of discussing the project and the Vocaloid Flower, he expressed to me that he regards the whole Vocaloid scene as encompasses many elements, such as those mentioned in several other interviews:

The Vocaloid movement, in my opinion, is very Japanese. I mean, it is in the scene that it has many elements mixed inside. [...] I think that is only possible in Japan, and I guess perhaps regarded from the perspective of a foreigner, it looks very odd. Like something from a different world, I think [laughs]. Even if you see a common live [concert] of Hatsune Miku, even me, as a Japanese, when I see that, there is something that makes me think of a future some light years from now! (laughs). One thing is that the Japanese don’t like a ‘perfect idol’, isn’t that true? ... [We] don’t desire that so much. [...] I think the Japanese don’t like

things that have been perfected. [...] Japanese Shinto shrines also have a part that is not completely constructed. That is the belief that if you built the perfection, decadence begins from there. If it is endlessly incomplete, it will continue forever; I think this is a way of thinking in Shinto. [...] So Japan doesn't like an idol that is perfect, isn't this correct? It is better if it has an unskilful part [laughs]. But, perhaps in the United States that is not accepted. [...] I guess the Japanese like that kind of close presence. [...] If you think about it, that way of thinking has an influence on so many things. [...] That same way of thinking is from long ago in comics, [and] anime or [is] rooted in the genre of *dōjin* magazines. There is a culture from many years ago of producing secondary creations from an original anime or comic. They make a story different from the main plot, like 'if this character and this character do this, it will be more interesting', and produce that by their own will [katte-ni]; they make it public by their own will, without [being] concerned if someone has sympathy for their work or not. Well, it is a world of self-satisfaction. But, thanks to that foundation, when Nico Nico Dōga comes and allows them to produce secondary creations in an official way, and they have Vocaloid at hand, [then] they can produce their own songs at will without somebody singing for them, or also when somebody likes the song, they can sing it. Or, if someone thinks, this dancing fits with this song ... well, everything is like a secondary creation, or is it not? [...] I feel all of that things are something created somehow as the result of the mix of many other things. [But] not something [created] in an obstinate and tense, stressed way but as something that just appeared casually. I think perhaps that was the good point. [...] Well, that is the CGM that is raised by the users, but I think that this [big] market is only in Japan. It is not like the [figure of the] sender [author] who says '[this work] is this kind of thing, so you have to enjoy it in this way' but rather is an 'I feel you can enjoy it in this way, but is there anybody else who thinks similarly?' 'No, no, I think it is better in this other way' [...] is something like that. (Mio, 2014, interview with the author.)

Mio focuses on the Japanese preference for imperfection and incomplete things and refers to the endless productivity of the *dōjin* culture and the substantial impact of the CGM in Japanese markets. As he explains, his professional background is closely related to the world of idol singers (real humans), an area which he believes has this central point in common with the Vocaloid culture. As we have seen, this is part of what can be regarded as an 'oral tradition' where the image of the author fades. In this case, Mio's emphasis on incompleteness calls attention to the nature of the texts on the

internet platform industry as elements of a discourse rather than as the completed and closed works of authors.

Colourlessness and transparency, restraint of emotion and the purity of emotions

‘Transparency’, ‘flat’, ‘reach directly’ and ‘suppress emotion’ are some of the common characteristics in Vocaloid texts expressed by most of the interviewees. These features are closely related to one of the central characteristics of Vocaloid: being sung by a software and, in the imagination, by fictional characters. As we shall see in the following quotes, these characteristics can be regarded as a sign of ‘a true something behind the voice’. That is, for some, the voice of the author (Kenmochi, Peperon, and EHAMIC) but for the listeners in general, it signals what is regarded as a direct transmission of the content of the song.

When I asked to the so-called father of Vocaloid Kenmochi Hideki for the meaning of the word ‘flat’ regarding Vocaloid contents and the characteristics of the software, he explained it in the following way:

From my understanding, that is like saying ‘colourless and transparency’, I guess. I think it [Vocaloid] has the quality of restrained emotions. You can also introduce emotions, but if you only input [the lyrics], it really sounds like singing the notes as if following a textbook. [...] So, there are a lot of cases where the way of singing is like suppressing emotions. So, when it becomes like that, what becomes important then? It is the lyrics! So, in those cases, I think it may be said that a flat way of singing without introducing emotions is also possible. Why? When a human sings, it is inevitable to introduce emotions. [...] But, with a computer, it does not introduce emotions, and I guess that is sometimes what is also a good [side]. The meaning of the poem [its lyrics] is transmitted directly. (Kenmochi, 2014, interview with the author.)

Additionally, when I asked about the expressions of emotion in his Vocaloid songs to the Vocaloid p EHAMIC, he regarded the issue in the following way:

Firstly, the Vocaloid singing skill is poor. So, it cannot sing in a way that overflows with emotion [...]. But, there is also a means of expression that can be obtained with a dispassionate [plain voice], isn't there? [...] But, if a human sings, it will bring perhaps some sadness or joyfulness; [some emotion] will surely enter. It is not possible to completely kill all emotions, is it? There must be something you think if you are alive. So, the interesting thing is that [in

Vocaloid] there is anything like that at all. (EHAMIC, 2014, interview with the author.)

This was a recurring topic in the interviews, such as in the above examples, without a particular regard to characters. However, the purely technical side finally ended, leading to the opposition of ‘human vs. not human’ in Vocaloid expressions and the particular appeal of such songs. The person who most actively described this connection was Masaki:

[T]here are a lot of songs [...], but I think there are many guys who feel sympathy [towards them] that is ... because it is not human. (laughs) [...] Perhaps that is the part to sympathise with. That is, it is not disappointing. If a human sings, then that singer’s or artist’s background will interfere, right? You can’t just cut it all out. But this way of receiving a song purely [...], I think there was not that kind of expression in the song’s history until now. [...] The young guys sympathise a lot with that; it is not [precisely] sympathising, but it is easy to get inside it [hairi-yasui]. It is easy to receive.

Here, it is important to draw attention to two elements in this quotation. One is the characterisation of the non-human part of the song, which is the robotic voice which *does not disappoint you*. In addition, he describes the feeling towards that mechanic voice as ‘getting inside’ rather than as ‘sympathising’ [kyōkan]. Over an hour later, after talking about different topics, he returned to this topic and conveyed the following to me:

It is somewhat embarrassing, but... I am almost 50, but I haven’t ever cried when listening to a song. Ever. An emotive song, or opera; there have been things that made me think, ‘This is marvellous!’ Or, classic music [...], but no matter how sad the song it is [I haven’t cried]. But the time I listened to a certain song of Hatsune Miku, the tears just dropped from my eyes. That time I thought, ‘Ah! It does not need to be a human! [There is no need to be a human!]’ That song touched my heart. At that time, my way of thinking about Hatsune Miku changed [...] I was surprised with myself. No matter what hard people put their soul into singing... well, I am in my 40s, so I have listened to numerous songs [...] it was the lyrics! She is not human, so even when the song was made as [introducing/as if it has] emotions, in reality, there aren’t any. Humans introduce emotions, right? There wasn’t any emotion, what is that? Pureness? I was moved by a pure song!

A: Normally it is not the inverse?

M: By putting more and more emotion... [it becomes more artificial] how can I

say? [...] It is like purely white, transparent, pure! [...] there is nothing, only the song. For example, when a human sings, [he/she] sings introducing an experience like, 'Oh, this was sad', [something like that] right? But when that is heard by a warped person like me, I get really bored. The more they put emotion there, [the more] I regard it as artificial. [...] For example, in this song [he refers to the song playing in the bar while we talk] an idol is singing, right? But the idol songs are for me the most... how to say? It is like saying 'I am the cutest!' Surely it has that feeling attached to it! But, Hatsune Miku's songs lack all of that. It is a really pure song. (Masaki, 2014, interview with the author.)

NezMozz from Kiki-sen Radio expressed a similar opinion.

It is a transparent voice. It allows the separating of the person who made the work from the work. I like the songs created, but when it comes to worshiping the manufacturer [creator] [tsukuri-te]... well [...] Music is something that originally has emotion, so now we also have the option of having it without emotions. The sadness or the happiness of a song is something that until now has been left to the interpretation of the singer; however, in Vocaloid, you have the total control. [...] If the emotion is too strong, it turns so easily into a tragedy. There are the so-called 'songs for crying'. That is the power of the song. Vocaloid is about listening to 'crying songs' without crying. (NezMozz, 2014, interview with the author.)

As NezMozz and Masaki explain in these quotations and during other parts of the interview, they have a cold or sceptical stance towards the figure of the idol, or the worshiping of the author. Their preference is for a 'transparent' robotic voice that lacks emotions, which allows for the separation of the work and the image of the author and enables the avoidance of 'disappointment'. As these examples show, within the context of the Japanese subculture, these elements create an opposition, with humans and emotions on one side, and non-humans (robots, puppets, characters) and a lack of emotions on the other side. The human side of the emotions, represented in the figure of the idol, is regarded with suspicion and as deceptive, while the very lack of emotions becomes the only way to reach a pure and authentic emotion. The truthfulness achieved through the 'transparent surface' of the text appears here as the way to build an emotive attachment in a widespread atmosphere of mistrust towards human emotions and detached cool consumerism.

Following our description of the radical imaginary of the Vocaloid scene as the interplay between absolute and relative values, we can identify the open nature of the

Vocaloid texts as an empty symbol which admits the *introduction* of several meanings or emotions, making all those meanings relative to each other, coexisting in a heterogeneous mix. However, this cool detached stance towards meanings and emotions finds its complement in the individual emotional attachment towards an absolute and ‘true’ value beyond the transparent surface. In this sense, the Vocaloid texts are the open door to the countless closed worlds that shape the Vocaloid scene.

6.4.2 Closed worlds: Characters and narratives

The countless fantasies and the birth of a collective personality

There are those ‘player piano’ or ‘pianola’, you know? [...] Now everyone has become used to them [...] but, if you see that for the first time, I think anyone gets surprised. Perhaps it is a very discomforting sensation, I think. But, if you put, for example, a puppet or a mannequin there, you may feel relieved. I wonder why, but it is like something inside your head gets organised [and you think] ‘I see, this puppet is playing the piano!’ So, it is like there is a human in front of the piano so the sound comes out. [It seems like it is necessary to have] something with a human shape so the sound that comes out [seems] natural. I think it is a situation like that. [...] We also produce voice libraries without characters. Until now, there was no such a thing as a voice without a personality! (laughs) And that voice is singing! (laughs) [But, after all, people feel relieved when there is something like a human] and that evolves even further, and [people] give a story [narrative] to that character. So, we may say it is really getting a personality. And, that personality is not something that someone thought, ‘Is it a personality thought of by everybody?’ That is because the personality is being created through each piece of work, you know? Through the songs that everyone creates, the thing we call personality is created. (Kenmochi, 2014, interview with the author.)

The Vocaloid p Nijihara-Peperon p was in high school at the beginning of the movement (2007) when he began to produce songs. As he remembers, those songs were called ‘character songs’. He describes them in the following way:

When I made my first song, the theme was Hatsune Miku. It was something like ‘here comes the song from the future!’ But, at the beginning, there were a lot of those songs, really! There were a lot of songs that had Hatsune Miku as a theme. Everyone was still searching [for her]. There is no scenario isn’t it? So, it

was like [everyone wondering] ‘what kind of girl is this girl?’ I guess we wanted to express it with our songs. Now, that ‘character songs’ of Hatsune Miku have almost disappeared. I think that we [now] say only all those things we want to say. I think there is only that kind of song now. I am also writing that kind of song [laughs]. But, when Hatsune Miku first appeared, perhaps for a year, it was not the only thing, but there were really a lot of those songs. The kind of songs like [Hatsune Miku singing] ‘I will sing for you’ or ‘I will sing your song’ or ‘I am a machine but I have a heart’. There were a lot of lyrics like that! (Peperon p, 2014, interview with the author.)

Masaki also remembers it in a similar way:

There were a lot of songs with Hatsune Miku as a protagonist. Like a singer who says ‘I am a software but...’, right? Or, ‘I don’t have a soul, but let’s make a song together’—something SF like that. It was a kind of sadness like, ‘I am a machine and cannot become human’. (Masaki, 2014, interview with the author.)

Hisayuki and Nakamura added the following comments:

H: At the beginning, there were a lot of ‘character songs’. A lot. In short, songs with the premise that Hatsune Miku is singing.

N: Something like out there existing is a person called Hatsune Miku, an imaginary person who sings...

H: Well, but is that scenario not still interesting? There is a virtual idol; in reality, it doesn’t exist, but it can sing... well, songs of that style like, ‘in that kind of scenario, isn’t it cute if it sings a song like this?’

(Hisayuki and Nakamura, 2014, interview with the author.)

From the puppet sitting in front of the automatic ‘player piano’ to the collective fantasy of a virtual singer, Hatsune Miku was a ‘mysterious presence’ that everyone was trying to find. That was the beginning of numerous narratives, with an important number of them focused on the topics of SF, death and self-criticism.

Vocaloid stories, school girls’ fantasies and the dreams of middle aged men

The following portions of an interview depict some characteristics that repeatedly appear in other interviews. In the interview with Kenmochi Hideki, the developer of Vocaloid, he articulated certain descriptions of Vocaloid song lyrics, such as ‘innovative’, ‘weird’, ‘experimental’, ‘childish and unrefined’ and ‘shocking lyrics that normally would

not be admitted in the commercial music’.

Likewise, after emphasising the importance of freedom in Vocaloid texts, Masaki described some of the characteristics of the texts:

In Vocaloid, there is... it is not really erotic [laughs]. It does not encourage that feeling. Even if you look for something erotic from Vocaloid, it does not make much sense. So, in the end, it is very popular among junior middle school or high school girls. And, also, there are a lot of things of the kind of inspiration of the sort of ‘*chu-ni byō*. And death. Works regarding death. The *Kagerō Project* is about death isn’t it? [...] People wanting to die. The girls going through puberty, don’t they like to focus on death a lot? Suicide or something like that. [...] And, there are also a lot of works about despair I guess, or darkness. They love that. (Masaki, 2014, interview with the author.)

Furthermore, when Masaki compares the young generations of listeners with his own generation (i.e. those in their 40s), he focuses on the particular meaning of Hatsune Miku and the SF imaginary for them. I will further consider this element in the following section.

When talking about Shiba’s book (2014), specifically when linking Vocaloid culture to hippie culture, Nakamura and Hisayuki discussed the main orientation of contents that they see in the Vocaloid songs’ lyrics:

N: [It is different from hippie culture; the parts of drugs and politics are not in Vocaloid culture] we avoid [evite] political topics, or do we not?

H: Really! [...] well, is because [we] are otaku...!

N: If you talk of politics, there are troubles [disputes]! (laughs)

H: It is forbidden to talk about baseball, religion and politics!

N: But, if you ask for religion, there is the ‘Miku Religion’. (laughs) It is just about [some guys excited, saying that] ‘Miku is an angel!!’ It is not a serious thing. [You know, in Japan, religion is not so serious; it is more like a festival.]

H: But, if you ask about politics, there are a lot of those songs over there, but not in Vocaloid...

N: The Vocaloid community, well, it is also the mood of today’s Japan, but it has no policy.

H: A political policy...

N: There isn’t any. They are all young people without [a political policy]... but rather I think they are really introspective! I mean, they focus on themselves. They want to think of the ‘self’ [jiko]. They want to go deep into the ‘self’. I feel

like that. Everyone is focusing on something philosophical. Everyone seems to be doing something philosophical; there are a lot of songs like that.

H: Right! So, basically rock music is about songs of rebellion against something, but mostly [here] everyone is angry with themselves.

N: Yes, most of the time, it is about having complaints against oneself.

H: Yes, most of the time it is anger against oneself. And, in Vocaloid it is the same. Basically, it is anger towards oneself: ‘Why am I so wrong [dame]?’

N: So, that is a very Japanese thing, I guess [...] Right. I guess now the only one who is rebellious against the world is ‘Nashimoto p’. That guy is very cynical! [...]

H: ... then it is about expressing it in a cynical way ... I guess. (Nakamura and Hisayuki, 2014, interview with the author.)

In a similar sense, some interviewees focused their particular criticisms towards otaku, towards ‘humanity’ or towards cynical criticism. Regarding the kind of contents in the Vocaloid lyrics, is important to note that by the time of the research (2014), the composition of the Vocaloid scene was mostly middle aged (over 40) males and middle or high school girls, as well as the ‘Vocalo p’, who are mainly male creators in their 20s while some are in their 30s. This difference in the composition of the scene is reflected in the different attitudes towards the contents of the lyrics as we will see in some of the following quotations.

The lonely scientist and the robot

A robot was built by a lonely scientist,

When his work was done, it was known as a “miracle”

But something was missing, there was one thing he couldn’t do,

and that was the program called a “heart”

First part of the lyrics of the song ‘Kokoro’ [‘Heart’], by ‘Toraburota p’, fan translation by Kashi-chan²⁵

Science fiction narratives are at the heart of the Vocaloid scene, but as Masaki comments, different generations give different nuances to the meaning of these narratives. The older generation is more focused on science fiction while the younger

²⁵ <https://kashichan.wordpress.com/2008/08/10/kagamine-rin-kokoro-toraboruta/>

generations may regard the character as closely associated to an idol. In both cases, however, the character maintains the feature of being able to be fully owned. In other words, the character can fully reach the fans' expectations through the imaginary appropriation of its icon. I will explore this aspect first from the perspective of Tanji, who belongs to the same generation as Masaki.

As we regarded earlier, Tanji focuses on the importance of the music in the Vocaloid scene. Here, he describes a particular song, 'Kokoro', to make his point:

Music is something that is easy to produce for many people. Do you know the song 'Kokoro' ['Heart']? If you are researching about Vocaloid, this is a song you must investigate. By the way, do you know the software called 'Songrium'? [He then takes his laptop and puts it on the table. He runs the Songrium software and show me how the song 'Kokoro' is in the middle of many secondary creations.] There are a lot of, for example, drawings, video, or this song called 'Kiseki' ['Miracle'], which is the continuation [of *Kokoro*], and there are many works surrounding this song. [He shows me the quantity of secondary works surrounding 'Kokoro'.] [...] There are this many music videos, and, also, each one is an interpretation made by someone. The interpretation of the persons that listened to that song appear in this way. So, an 'interpretation video' similar to these is produced one after another. I think perhaps this is the most stunning thing [about Vocaloid].

Then, Tanji shares the story of the song:

There was a very great scientist who created a robot. That robot was very good created, but he [the scientist] couldn't program a heart, the human heart. And, at the end, that incomplete robot, incomplete as it is, leaves this world. However, at the end, this robot runs that program by itself. It is a song that depicts the emotion that moves [the heart]. That is so much... it was precisely a song that reverberates in the heart. [Hen then showed me many works inspired by the song] In that sense, I think perhaps this 'Kokoro' is the best example. And, it is not only that [song], but this [other] song 'Kiseki' ['Miracle'] that was also created after that. [...] There are so many derivate works [...] This 'Kokoro' is a song that narrates a story, but it is the base for so many secondary creations. They sung it, or they danced to that song. Really, they completely interpreted that video, that story, and made it into a new story, [so it] is that kind of [piece of] work. So, at the end is the music; if there is music, anything can get together. (Tanji, 2014, interview with the author.)

The song 'Kokoro', produced by 'Toraburota p' (music, lyrics and illustrations), was originally sung by the voice library 'Rin' (Crypton). The narrative it depicts is a recurrent topic, not only deeply rooted at the heart of the Vocaloid movement but also a common motive in the Japanese manga and animation culture. As Tanji depicts it, the meaning of its lyrics and the number of secondary texts created by the emotion that moves the song exist as a science fiction metaphor of the Vocaloid movement itself.

The idol for the science fiction generation

Similar to Tanji's perspective, Masaki conveys the importance of science fiction for his generation:

The Japanese fans of Hatsune Miku, at the beginning were junior or high school students and 'ossan' [middle-aged men]. A generation like me. But, the children grow up and become bored. However, the middle-aged old guys are always fans. It is very interesting. There are also girl fans, but the number of middle-aged guy fans is amazing! (laughs). [...] So, why is that? This is my thinking, but originally there were subterranean anime fans, music fans and SF fans. Among the music fans, there are the guys who long ago were doing DTM music. For example, Sakamoto Ryūichi [...]. In the 80s, we were just in junior high school or high school, and the techno-pop was very popular. [...] Also, the SF culture, [movies like] *Blade Runner* or [composers like] Vangelis [...] using synthesisers... there was also, for example, Tomita [Isao]. It was just in our adolescence when all that was popular. It is the generation of old guys [like us]. It is a generation that understands a 'futuristic image' very well. Then, there was precisely the boom of synthesisers and the generation that admired electronic music. It was also the time when personal computers began to appear. [We] are persons who were very attracted to that kind of thing. And then, some decades after, a computer becomes able to sing! So, it really excited us! (laughs) So, here we have Hatsune Miku as an idol, as [gūzō], a diva! If that strikes you in that way, there is no other option than to become a fan. Those are the old guys' fans. The future! It is what we felt. It was the dream of our generation! To have a computer that sings! It was the longing of that generation. I think that nowadays 20-year-old guys really don't understand this. The technology began precisely with this 80s generation. It started with the 'famicom', then the 'super famicom', then PlayStation—we all followed this order. And, also SF and anime, computer music or technology. The generation of those age 40-50 is the one that

admired all those things [laughs]. Hatsune Miku just came there. It is a dream, an SF. (Masaki, 2014, interview with the author)

The importance of narratives

Within this background, the importance of narratives in Vocaloid songs was emphasised in the lyrics. Most of the interviewees focused their attention on those lyrics and narrative worlds, although in different ways. For example, Tanji regarded the role of narratives in the following way:

Then, obviously, a song can also be transformed into a story [narrative]. Now, it is very popular to narrate a story using Vocaloid songs. The ‘Kagerō Days’ is a typical example. There are many novels that have been published using Vocaloid songs as the base, but narrating a story using a song is a really old thing. In the case of Japan, there is, for example, the ‘Heike Monogatari’. It narrates a story using the sound of a Biwa as a base, right? Or, if you say in the Occident, there were bards [...], they were people who narrated a story using songs. So, I think that that side is very strong, to tell a story using music. If you sing, it is easy to remember [...] like the ‘Heike Monogatari’ [...] is easier to remember when following the rhythm. In an era when there was no paper, that was necessary. So, how can it be explained? That is something very musical. It is something very close to the music [...] Half of the stories were transmitted using music. (Tanji, 2014, interview with the author.)

The amateur dancer Nurupon expressed her focus on narratives in the following way.

A: What characterises your videos?

N: Well, I have not thought about that, but my characteristic...? If I say from the side of the dance steps... the lyrics of the song, I really give importance to the lyrics, so I do my best to make a dance that can fully express [shikkari] the lyrics. And, also, when [I am doing] my dancing, [because] I am also doing dancing [steps] for Miku. [In all those cases], I express the lyrics with my body. So, [since the singers do all the effort to express the lyrics by singing], I also want to do that with the body. And then, when I do that, it turns out that the dance and the song really match, it unifies, and that is what I am keeping in mind the most! [...]

A: How do you choose the songs you want to dance to?

N: I base it in the lyrics. I dance while imagining the story [...]

A: Why do you feel a character is close to you?

N: Rather than the character, I think it is more the music, the song that the character is singing is what I can sympathise with. As I said, even when it is Miku, she becomes a very different character depending on the song and the lyrics. It is the same, for example, with Ren and Rin. It is not because ‘they are this character’; they change depending on the song [...], so there is not actually a character that is easier to perform than another or something like that. It is the character what is [that exists] inside the song.

‘Sympathy’ towards narratives: Connecting with nobody, connecting with everybody

In a previous quotation, Vocaloid Peperon reflected on how the figure of the author seems to disappear from the imagination of the Vocaloid listeners. Later on in the interview, he focused on what can be regarded as a particular feeling of ‘sympathy’ that arise towards the song when the author seems to be missing.

I think that when there is a story, it is easier [for it to] reverberate in the heart. [...] I think there are also differences depending on the layers of age in Vocaloid listeners, but I think the importance of lyrics is that you can sympathise, like saying, ‘Oh! Yes, I understand, I understand that!’ I think that feeling is important. However, I feel that young girls and boys are listening to Vocaloid songs with the same sensation as seeing an anime or reading a manga. Is not a feeling like, ‘Yes, I also understand that’. For example, there are songs about [love] like ‘I am sad because I was rejected by my girlfriend!’ right? And, then you listen at that [song] and say, ‘Yes, I also understand that feeling’. I think that that [kind of sympathy] is usually towards the lyrics of the songs, but in Vocaloid it is not like that. It has become a narrative [monogatari]! Really! So, it doesn’t matter if you have not experienced that or if you can’t have a feeling of the kind of ‘I understand that!’. It is just watching that [work] like an anime; for instance, [there is the anime] ‘*Higurashi*’, you know? Nobody has experienced that! (laughs). But, you watch it and it is interesting, or you become thrilled, scared, so it is a sensation like watching a movie. Like a movie, or an anime or a manga [...], it is not sympathy but rather [the fact that] that situation itself is enjoyable. They are watching [the works] with that feeling. [...] It could be described as a narrative [monogatari], but it is everything that they see [in the video]. Everything they see and listen to. The images that appear and the words that appear in the video, the character [...] or even the commentaries in Nico

Nico Dōga. (Peperon p, 2014, interview with the author)

As Peperon p describes it, everything seems to be part of the narrative depicted by the Vocaloid text, including the context of communication, as is the case with Nico Nico Dōga. It is interesting to make note of this ‘sympathy’ for the narrative in the context of the ‘blurring of the author’. As Masaki explained in a previous quotation, rather ‘sympathy’, the feeling can be described as ‘getting inside’ of the work. The ‘transparency’ of Vocaloid texts, where the image of the author and the emotion of the singer have disappeared from the song, leaves a clean symbol where the narrative can build its own world. Behind the text, there is no author and no experience to be shared. There is only a fictional world as the receptor of many possible interpretations. The text is open to the extent that it allows that ‘pure’ interaction with anybody, and it is closed in regard to the ‘purity’ and ‘depth’ of the emotion the listener attaches to it.

6.4.3 Hatsune Miku and the open-closed worlds

The fictional character of Hatsune Miku is the best example of the ‘open and closed worlds’ that flood the Vocaloid scene. When discussing the contents of the songs and how it is better not having a human singer, Yaoki expressed these sentiments:

Y: There are times when I am listening to a song when I feel that the person who is singing is a hindrance. I begin to associate the content of the song with the person who is singing.

S: From the perspective of the persons who make songs, Hatsune Miku does not have a personality, so she can sing any song. She can adapt to any type of lyrics without giving a sense of incongruity.

Y: And, from the perspective of the persons who listen, there are songs that, when a person sings them, you feel annoyed. You begin to hate the song without regarding the music itself. For example, if that singer has a bad temper, it does not matter that the background of the person does not have a connection to the music—it just hinders it. There are a lot of songs that I don’t listen to because I am annoyed by the face [of the singer], but there is no such thing in Vocaloid. The singer will not make any scandal. Nothing [bad] will come to light if you investigate Hatsune Miku.

S: Hatsune Miku is not a person of flesh...

Y: And, in the case of a story, it is better if it is not a human [who sings]. For example, there is a song about a hamster that dies, but if a person sings that [song], I feel sick thinking of the singer who sings while thinking, ‘I am so cool

loving this hamster that has died'. (Yaoki and Satoru, 2014, interview with the author.)

Many interviewees expressed similar opinions. One was that of the anime producer Sakurai Susumu, though he approached the topic from a different stance. He focused on the feeling of security that the figure of the fictional character brings:

There is no place in the world where you can find the 'real person' behind Hatsune Miku, so that raises her femininity, and she also will not have an affair. (laughs) She will not cause any scandal, so, you see, she is a character, so nobody will suddenly find her with drugs [laughs]. So, it is an idol [gūzō] with which you can feel secure, right? It is perhaps a religion, isn't it? (laughs) [He is joking.] [...] So, rather than the creators, fans can feel secure, because, you know, they like her... For instance, when the character of a manga gets married within the story in the manga, everyone gets angry! 'Oh my little-*something!* [nantoka-chan!]' (Sakurai, 2014, interview with the author.)

Character ties and the idol

When I asked to NezMozz from Kiki-sen Radio if she had any prior experience in something related to the dōjin culture, she responded in the following way.

Not at all. I was very 'anti' the so-called dōjin culture or the anime culture, and I still have that feeling now. [The reason for me to get involved] was the music. The Vocaloid culture is 'moe' culture but also music culture. I like music, so it had a very big impact on me as a music culture. It was really different music from the [kind of] music I knew until today, and for that reason [it was] interesting. And, the driving power behind that interesting music was the so-called 'moe culture'. So, I knew that. So, I didn't think the moe culture was good, but my way of thinking about that has changed.

Then, after talking about the kind of music she likes, she returned to the topic of the character.

So, regarding the character, I have that cold perspective about Miku. [...] But while knowing that the thing that is a character may be [as big or as small as you imagine it], I also wanted to become able to like the characters. Even to the degree of screaming 'kyaaa!' to the character. But, I can't scream 'kyaaa' to Miku. I have some twisted feeling towards those things like cute girls. But, when Gakupo was released, I liked its low tone of voice more so. And, it has the character of a normal male, so I decided, 'OK! I also will like Gakupo! I will make

it public that I like it as a character!’ So, after I did that, in fact, I made friends! Those persons who like the same thing [character]. So, until that time, I didn’t have that mutual understanding that those persons who likes Miku share. I didn’t have the ‘connections through character’ [kyarakuta no tsunagari] until I began to say I liked Gakupo. So, after that, I had those connections. ‘Now I see’; it is like that. So, I also understand it. And, as you know, Gakupo has a lot of female fans, so I now have a lot of female friends, cosplayers, illustrators [e-shi] and those kinds of persons [...] (NezMozz, 2014, interview with the author.)

In a previous section of an interview, we observed how Yaoki characterised the ‘force’ of the ‘horizontal character ties’, in a way that also resembles NezMozz’s words. Now, in a similar spirit, he regards the figure of the fictional character as an idol, surpassing its original purpose as a tool.

I think that Hatsune Miku is also an *idol* [aidoru]. That is because she is the image of all [of us], an *idol* [gūzō]. It is a thing in which the image of all of us is gathered. And, when she is singing, well, she sings in live concerts, right? For all those people who are in the hall seeing her, after all, I think Hatsune Miku is different for each one of them. The Hatsune Miku, for me, is different than the Hatsune Miku of Satoru. [...] But when she is singing in a live [concert] as a symbol, in that moment, I think she is the collection of all of us... So, it is the Hatsune Miku of all of us but, at the same time, my own Hatsune Miku. So, that is the reason I think this is really an *idol* [aidoru]. (Yaoki, 2014, interview with the author.)

Idolaters and iconoclast together

As in the previous quotation, Yaoki again emphasises that the character of Hatsune Miku is different for each person. It has a different image for each of its fans. That makes her something deeply particular and individual. But, at the same time, it is the symbol that gathers all those different images into one. Yaoki, as with other interviewees, uses the Japanese word ‘gūzō’ to emphasise this characteristic. ‘Gūzō’ is the Japanese word for ‘idol’, which is mostly reserved for a religious context, while the Japanese borrowing of the English word as ‘aidoru’ is mostly used for popular singers or dancers in the mass media scene.

The tendency to avoid the use of the word ‘aidoru’ by some interviewees when they spoke about Hatsune Miku is linked to their rejection of the massive popular culture icons (like the AKB48), which, in turn, are frequently regarded as artificial or as mass

manipulation. Therefore, within the field of the Japanese subculture, the word ‘idoru’ bears a pejorative sense in a certain degree. Nakamura and Hisayuki’s clear stance ‘against’ idols, identified for them in the icon of Hatsune Miku, is a clear example of this.

H: [The Vocaloid movement] is really complicated and difficult to explain in one word, but when it is complicated like this, the thing that most attracts attention is Hatsune Miku.

N: [Hatsune Miku] It is very symbolic, [...] and is the quickest way [to understand Vocaloid]. [...] Also, in our case, we gradually come to understand what the meaning of Vocaloid is. But, when we try to explain that [laughs], it is very difficult to choose the words and think of the appropriate examples [...] and when we finally come to articulate that in words, then the name of Hatsune Miku becomes very convenient [laughs]. [...] Hatsune Miku has become much too famous, so to take [the Vocaloid scene] from that side is the easiest way. It is easy to understand! And, there are people like us, who stand against that posture! (laughs). ‘OK, enough of Hatsune Miku!’ But, even [when we speak] like that, when somebody asks us to explain, we begin by talking of Hatsune Miku. So, you know, it is so convenient!

H: We want to explain Vocaloid without using the word Hatsune Miku, but we can’t!

N: No, we *can*. It is only that it is much too bothersome! (Nakamura and Hisayuki, 2014, interview with the author)

The robotic voices of the Vocaloid libraries are regarded as a ‘transparent surface’. This approach that rejects the idol is close to the particular aesthetic sensibility that Lash and Urry (1994) associated with an ‘allegorical impulse’. We can associate this tendency towards a transparent surface with ‘entering into the text’ with an ‘iconoclast’ stance. However, the character also has its substance and opacity. The deep emotive attachment towards the character as an idol is also part of its essence. As the interviews I am quoting in this section demonstrate, ‘after all’, Hatsune Miku was also regarded as an idol. This is a ‘romantic’ orientation towards the image of the idol, which now appears not as a transparent, empty symbol but as the thick aggregation of countless individual narratives that shapes, ‘after all’, the inalienable position of the Vocaloid movement. This perception entails what I have been calling the *participation* orientation. The following words from Kobayashi Onikis are in this direction:

So, for me, [in regard to] the reason that all those kinds of contents get spread around the world, I think that, as in the [case of] religions, there is the element of the *idol* [gūzō] and also, perhaps, the lyrics, the music and the stories [narratives], I think [laughs]. So perhaps Hatsune Miku is all of this in one, and under the same name is each one of the different images. That is from the persons who produce [something] and the persons who listen. So, I think that is certainly interesting. So, there are a lot of songs of Vocaloid out there, and there has also been the creation of a lot of characters. [...] But, there is also the [story of] birth of Vocaloid, the birth of Hatsune Miku and how she gets to be known around the world. And, for the people who know that [story], they also regard that as a story [narrative]; it is a common story. So, all of us have that in common, and as it is natural, each one has its particular situation, the particular way they met the Vocaloid, the way they listen to the songs and the way they come to like the Vocaloid songs. So, I think there are also a lot of those personal stories. But, everyone has in common the story of how Hatsune Miku was born. They know about her, that she does not have substance and that she is an imaginary existence. [They] also [know] the details about the technology. [...], so all that background is shared by everyone... it is... well, one story. So, when that is [in the background, I think that it is really as strong as contents [...]] (Kobayashi Onikis, 2014, interview with the author.)

6.5 The Ethos of the Movement: Freedom and Participation

In this last section, I will introduce two passages that illustrate the strength of the ethos that lies at the base of the Vocaloid scene. The first example is more concerned with the meaning of freedom in the context of the Japanese subculture and its rejection of the mass culture. The second one is more concerned with the meaning of participation and the role of the creators in granting the freedom in participation, even if their own freedom as authors is restrained. The above examples show different stances and focus on different issues but together provide a concrete picture of the particular kind of freedom and participation that shape the two variables that can be understood as the ethos of the movement. As the passages address the elements that have already been analysed above, further commentaries have been omitted.

What is the purpose of being here if there is no fun?

Many of the people I interviewed described themselves as ‘twisted’, ‘weird’ or ‘unusual’. The words ‘otaku’ or ‘fujoshi’ (rotten girls) were also used frequently as a self-critical ‘bad’ way to define themselves. However, in most of the cases, a sense of pride was evident behind those pejorative words. This pride was related to an ironic and sarcastic tone directed towards the image of a ‘normal’, ‘real’ and ‘decent society’.

The following excerpt depicts this stance and focuses on the importance of remaining on the side of the subculture in the Vocaloid scene. This is a side opposed to the instrumental ethos of labour, as identified in the figure of the salaried worker or ‘salary man’. The passage focuses on a particular case of conflict in the field which can be analysed as the conflict between the detached ethos of free will of the scene and the industrial logic of commercialisation. This conflict is framed within the environment of communication that provides the internet.

This interview was conducted with Mienohito [M], a Vocaloid p who specialises in producing videos [dōga-shi] and is a VJ, and Katō [K], who is Mienohito’s manager as well as a manager of a ‘major dōjin circle’. After talking for nearly two hours, Katō described the way she viewed the Vocaloid scene:

K: For me, Vocaloid, well, there are people who like the character and become fans [...] a lot of those persons. But, for me [what I think of when I see the Vocaloid-p is] ‘Hey, you surely have no friends!!’ Usually, if you want to make a song, you make something like a band, but in the DTM, there are usually people who can’t play any instrument or even read music. If they have two buttons and the software [...], they can do everything alone! And, without communicating to anybody! [...] They only need one desk and a small room. [...] However, the number of people who wants [to do] that kind of activity has decreased a lot. That robot has its own interesting point. It can sing without breathing! There are many things that a robot can do and a human cannot, right? There were people who were amused about that. But, after all, it lacked the expressiveness of the words. The part of the emotions, no matter what you do, is greater in a human. But, the people who supported that were supporting it because of that. It was a trend among the junior high school boys and girls. It is fashionable, so it is OK! They buy a CD and say, ‘I went to a dōjin event’. It is their status! For the school children. And now, those guys are in their 20s or 30s. [...] And, what are they doing now? They have children [...] and no money to spend on a robot [laughs]. [...] At 16 or 17, it is easy to fall in love with Miku. ‘I would like to have

a girlfriend like her!' they think. But, if they are still doing that kind of thing when they become 20, 'Are you crazy?' 'It is better for you go to the real world and go to university, and have a normal girlfriend!' A decent person is like that, right? A not decent person becomes like him! [And she looks while laughing to Mienohito, who is sitting by her side, smoking quietly.]

M: [laughs] Right! So, as I usually say it, 'I am scum!'

K: I really think that! Scum!

M: I say that frequently in live broadcastings: 'I am a scum!' 'I am wrong in my head! [...]'

A: So, why are you the creator of these things?

M: I don't think of myself as a creator. When people ask me why I do it, I only say, "cause I like it'. It is because it is enjoyable and interesting. If it is not enjoyable, I will surely become a 'salary man'! In that way, I can be stable. I will be able to eat! (laughs). So, why am I doing this precarious life? It is because it is the most enjoyable thing! Or not? [...] If it wasn't, I would have left this way long ago... Well, I have surpassed my limit. I am 31. When I became 30, I considered if I should stop this or continue. [...] The reason [that made me] think that I can continue here is because I made [the video for] 'The End'. When I made that video, [I was thinking that] if we continue in the same way, the creators, those guys who have talent... they are used and dropped so easily! I am the type of person that can't tolerate that! So, I produced that video as a warning. I had the permission from 'Owata p'. He reviewed all the content and said, 'It is right with this!' So, I released the video and waited for my disappearing from the scene. So, I decided, 'if after that, people still come to me bringing work, I will continue' [laughs]. Without caring if I am famous or unknown, if there are still people who like me, who like my work and still turn to look for me, I will continue. [...]

Mienohito is talking about the music video he did for the song 'The End', whose lyrics and music were produced by Owata p. It was uploaded in December of 2012. The critical nature of the lyrics and, in particular, the messages that Mienohito put in the video were the focus of a controversy in the Vocaloid scene. The conflict was focused on a particular set of popular contents within the Vocaloid scene, and the author and the companies in the background. These contents were regarded by some, as in this case, as an 'artificial boom'. Katō and Mienohito described the conflict in the following way.

K: In that time, the Vocalo p' were at their highest point. Before the 'The End' [...], many companies came and made contracts in secret and invested a lot of money. They were beginning to create contents to sell on the internet and in Nico

Nico and make them seem like they are ‘very popular!’ [They were collaborating with Nico Nico to change the numbers of the reproductions of the videos] to [help] some creators sell. [...] And, of course, many people in the same level were aware. And, he [Mie] didn’t like that. But, if he criticises that on Twitter, it will end in nothing, right? So, he inserted many messages in that video [criticising the fake boom and the creator behind it], such as ‘He is only a puppet!’, ‘He is not doing what he wants but what he has to do’ and ‘This is because the money [the companies had] invested’. People from the top were investing money, so the Vocalo p, who is producing this is no more than a puppet. He must do the work he doesn’t want to; he must be in a job he dislikes; the work for the company. But, there were a lot of fans of him! It was the peak of the ‘Vocaloid-P era!’ There were so many fans, so [...] if other Vocalo-P produced something [slightly similar], then it was ‘Hey! You are imitating my Vocalo P!’ [They were] strong enough to go to other’s [people’s] movies and start a fight. So, in response to that, [Mie] put a lot of information [in the video] [...] Well, then that video became a big scandal. The fans got mad, saying, ‘You are making fun of [slandering] our Vocalo p!’ They came to fight, [...] and when the scandal was so big, all those people who used to come and say to him ‘Mie Mie!’ The Vocalo-P [who used to ask him to make a movie for them] and also the companies, right? They used to say ‘Mie-kun, Mie-kun! If we entrust the movie to you, it sells well!’ All those people, well... there is no person who wants to bring work to somebody who has provoked a scandal... Also, those who used to be friends with him [left him], thinking, ‘If I support him perhaps I will also get into trouble’. [...] The people who remained are those who are still his friends and the companies that give him work [...] that is the story. [...]

Earlier in the interview, he explained to me that Mie does not ask for money when he is asked to produce a video for a Vocalo p and that he used to sell his work for very low rates when the work was for a company. Mienohito’s name became famous in the Vocaloid scene in particular after producing the popular video for the popular song ‘Senbonzakura’. However, as he relates, his commitment for making videos was completely based on his personal joy, as he formerly worked on making videos for a video game company in an overwhelming, oppressive and financially precarious environment. Escaping from that company and falling to the level of homelessness made him regard the Vocaloid scene as a place that emphasised enjoyment.

Katō and Mienohito felt disappointment and anger towards the way the companies were changing the essence of the Vocaloid scene. In other words, these companies were

transforming the sense of enjoyment and participation, into cheap labour forces:

K: If we say it clearly, it was a very big boom, and then everything went down. So to tell you the truth, nobody supported an artificial boom. But, the companies [kept pushing]. 'It can go! It can go!' They invested a lot of money, but in the end the contents didn't sell, and they blamed him [the creator]. They made the creator bear all the responsibility. '[Sorry], your boom has ended!' 'It didn't sell'. And, now for him [the creator], I think it is difficult for him to work again openly using his name. I think nobody will help him. [...]

M: Well, it was a warning to him that it 'is not interesting [it is pointless] to do things like this in Nico Nico' [...] I went to talk with the person of the company directly. 'How do we end this problem?' [...] 'Among him, 'Owata p' and me, who should bear all the [responsibility] in order to minimise the consequences?' For example, if he [the creator criticised in the movie] bears responsibility [of this controversy], this entire scene will collapse, right? And 'Owata' has more influential power than me, so who is the one who has less influence among these three? Me. If I take all the responsibility, everything is fixed.

K: [So he said] 'I invented everything' [...] actually everybody thinks that [what they did] was wrong. Nico Nico along with Kadokawa, they will get in trouble if the Vocalo p who are at the base of this 'festival' have dropped out! That is because they have invested a lot of money as companies! [...]

M: Also, the people on internet are like that. When there is a scandal on the internet, the best way to conclude it is making it somebody's fault. It is the smoothest way [...] I knew that [...] and was prepared. [...]

K: [...] and after the scandal, [that boom] actually collapsed. Of course, the same thing [happened] with the novels and the anime.

M: I feel bad, but it was [as I put it] in that video.

K: It was as [Mienohito] warned in that video. As he warned, 'If you do things like that, everything will collapse' [...] All of those fans, teenagers who spent a lot of money and were so committed. All those fans I think now have gone. So, I think even for Nico Nico and Kadokawa, they have mocked [made a fool of] the people of the internet too much [...] Kadokawa and Nico Nico touched a place they shouldn't touch. [...] This 'follow the other' [migi e narae] that until now was shaped with only lies began to collapse. And then there are people who think, 'Isn't this weird?' And when they become aware and say, 'We were manipulated!' Then they get angry and begin to fight and say 'Stop bullshitting me!'

[‘fuzakenna!’ ‘orera wo odoraseagatte!’] [...] So, after one year, even if they relish the novel, [nobody buys it], and the anime [production] was also decided, but [when it is relished], nobody watches it. And, the anime company and the people who make it produce that knowing that nobody will see it. So, you cannot produce an interesting anime in that way, right? [...] And then the people who saw it go to the SNS and say, ‘It was boring’. So [...] those contents become criticised. And when it comes to asking, ‘So who made this?’ Well, you have the name of this guy [the creator]. So, then turns out that ‘this guy’s [works are] boring’ [...] and then again, the ‘follow the other’ culture. [...] And when something new comes, it is again the same, the psychology of the people is washed away from here to there. (Katō and Mienohito, 2015, interview with the author.)

To whom does this song belong?

A: How do you feel about your songs? Do you think of them as ‘character songs’?

Kobayashi Onikis: Vocaloid is the substitution of me, who cannot sing. But... that is the voice of Hatsune Miku, but it is my song, right? So, it is not that I made the song ‘for Hatsune Miku’ but rather that I started to produce the song thinking of producing a song for express myself. However, until then, it was not so generalised [in regard to the song as] sung by a Vocaloid [character.] Then, I thought ‘if a Vocaloid [character] is singing, what could be its reasons?’ [I thought that] if I add that meaning [to my songs], the meaning [of the song] will become deeper. Or, rather than the meaning, I thought that the content of the work will become deeper, so I wrote the lyrics thinking of that. So, that is ‘Saihate’ [The Farthest End], the song which made my name become well known. But, in the lyrics, I haven’t said it officially, but is about a person who dies and describes the moment of incineration. But, if you only listen to the lyrics, it sounds like a common song of farewell [separation], but if you see in detail the video, there are many elements used in Japanese funerals. [...] And then there is the Vocaloid [character, which] is, so to speak, a computer or at least is not a human. So, I thought, perhaps the listeners will feel some deep meaning if Hatsune Miku sings about death. [...]

Kbayashi Onikis then explained the advantages of having a ‘singing machine’, such as the possibility of writing songs that are technically impossible to be sung by a human.

Nevertheless, as he commented, he always tries to maintain a rhythm or a tone in the song that is able to be sung by a human. ‘Why is that?’ I asked.

After all, it is the substitute of my voice; Hatsune Miku. It is my voice ... so, while I am expressing myself in songs or producing songs, I somehow felt that that was the most natural way. [...] Most of the people are doing that kind of song [impossible to be sung by humans], so I just thought, ‘I will not do that; there is no reason for me to do that’.

A: And why not sing by yourself?

Yes, but ... I just felt like that. When I am writing a song, the melody line flows with the voice of a girl. Rather than a male voice, I feel that a female voice fits better to the kind of melody lines I write. But, it is a pity I am a male [laughs]. That is why when I was in a band, we always were looking for a female vocal. [...] But, [if I think about it], the interesting aspect of Hatsune Miku was not only in being a female vocal but also a light voice like those of anime characters. That is why until now, Hatsune Miku is who has been singing most of my songs for me [laughs].

A: How about letting other persons sing your songs?

Yes, I am also doing that. After I made my songs public, you know, there is that ‘I tried to sing’ culture [utatte-mita].

He shared with me how he is also producing some songs jointly with amateur singers of the ‘I tried to sing’ culture. Then, I asked the following:

A: I have heard that the people of the ‘I tried to sing’ and the ‘Vocalo p’ don’t get along very well.

Well, you know... this is a complicated issue [laughs]. But I think that the persons who produce the songs and the persons who sing them are not too concerned with that. But, the fans of the Vocaloid songs [are different]. For those listeners who say that they like Vocaloid, I think that the fact that a Vocaloid is singing is very important to them. It has a very deep meaning to them. [...] So, they tend to add meaning [to the songs], so some of them think like, ‘This song is better sung by a Vocaloid rather than a human!’ [...]. And there is not only the Vocalo fans but also the ‘utatte-mita’ fans. So, I feel that is rather a confrontation between fans [laughs]. Rather, the Vocalo p is feeling like ‘Thanks for singing my song’ and the singer is like ‘Thanks for letting me sing your song’. Many of them used to contact me. ‘I liked your song a lot, so I downloaded the karaoke version and sung it’. They used to contact me, so it is a rather friendly relationship. In any case, if you don’t want them to sing your songs, why in the

first place will you upload the karaoke version?

A: So, do you upload the karaoke version so anyone can sing the song?

Yes, once after exhibiting the song [uploading it to Nico Nico Dōga], I got messages like 'I liked the song; please upload the karaoke version'. So, in the beginning I didn't upload it, but after receiving those messages I thought, 'OK, I agree', and I prepared a version without the vocal and uploaded it as an MP3... You feel glad if someone wants to sing your song! [...] And it also depends on the Vocaloid p. I think there are people who view the song created with Vocaloid as a completed work. They do not look for a human song. And, on the side of the people who sing, there are also people who think that Vocaloid is, after all, a provisional song, something incomplete that is only completed when a human vocal is added. [...] [Sometimes] these two perspectives are in conflict.

A: And for you, do you think of your songs as completed works?

Well, I also upload my songs as completed works, and if after that, the song is used to do many secondary creations, there is no problem for me. 'You can do whatever you want with the song', but 'since you are doing it as a piece of work, then that becomes your responsibility' [laughs]. That is what I think. 'If something goes wrong with the thing you produce, that is not my problem!' (laughs). After all, all of us are in the same place, creating pieces of work and making them public, so it becomes your own responsibility. [...] The first song I did, someone changed the lyrics at will... among those who sing the songs, there are persons like that. Sometimes they ask for permission and sometimes they don't. Just in a self-serving manner [katte ni]. So, among the creators, there are those who hate that their lyrics get changed [...] I think it depends on the stance of the person who creates [the song]. [...] For me, it is OK. Everything is OK. So, it is because they, do what they want [kette ni], that works that I never even imagined are created. Let's get back to speaking about 'Saihate'. As I just told you, the lyrics of the song depicts the moment of a cremation. I wrote the song thinking about that. But, there is a person who read it as the song of a rocket that is launched into the space and drew illustrations with that interpretation. The smoke [depicted in the lyrics] is the smoke of the launch [...] I didn't imagine that, and it was very interesting [to see] that interpretation! (laughs). And it turns out that some people found that interpretation interesting, and they became known as the 'Saihate space faction' [Saihate uchyū-ha]. [...] And then there was another person who saw that and made a story like the old Russian rocket and the dog called Kudryavka [Laika]. Then, it was transformed into the

‘sad song about the farewell between a scientist and his dog’ and there was a person who made an anime based on those drawings and story [laughs]. In that way, more and more, the story advanced in ways I hadn’t imagined, and more and more works were created. I really enjoyed how so many people were having fun [with that song]; it was something that really happened and was very interesting.

A: Then, do you think that the work you created is no longer only yours?

Well, the one who created it was me, but when it spread out like that, I have the feeling that it becomes something that is not only mine. My work was the starting point, but thanks to the people who liked that and transformed that at will [katte ni], my work has been expanded. [...] So, it has that course, and then I have the feeling that all of us have created it. Yes, I feel like that. [...] That kind of thing is something that rests not only on my own strengths. There are a lot of things connected to ‘Saihate’ that were created by everyone, and, in that sense, I feel it becomes separated from my hands. [...]

After talking about the role of Hatsune Miku in his songs and in other Vocalo p songs, I asked about his novel of the same title, *Saihate*, published just two months before the interview.

OK, let’s talk a little about this book. The meaning of the lyrics of ‘Saihate’ may be read as the farewell to a close person who dies, or as the farewell between Hatsune Miku and the Vocalo p who makes her sing. I made it in the way that allows for both interpretations. It was on purpose since the beginning. So the Vocalo p who used the Vocaloid and makes songs for Hatsune Miku dies, and there is Hatsune Miku who cannot understand the [concept of] death or the concept of dying, but sings sadly for the death of the Vocalo p. So, I created that as a farewell song between Hatsune Miku and a Vocalo p’. For that reason, in the song, the voice is not expressing emotions. She doesn’t sing emotively. So, I didn’t edit the voice that much; I only imputed the lyrics and the notes. [...] The idea was that the person who edits that [song] dies, so she can’t sing in that way. (laughs) [...] And then, as I expected, [most of the persons] interpreted the song as the farewell between a Vocalo p and Hatsune Miku. Then, because there were many people that read it in that way, I thought that perhaps it is better to write the novel with different content than Hatsune Miku and the Vocalo p. So, that is because, as expected, there are the interpretations and the [particular] images that every person has towards that song, ‘Saihate’. So, in order to not destroy [crush] those interpretations... If the original creator of the song, which is me,

writes a story with that content, then it will become ‘the official way of interpreting’ [...] So, I thought that that would not be good for someone who has a somewhat different interpretation of the content [of the song]. [...] So, I thought that perhaps it is better to make a completely new story and not use the character of Hatsune Miku in the novel *Saihate*. [But] to tell you the truth... the persons who like the song, they have their own interpretations, so with something like making it a novel... (laughs) well, there is a tendency to hate that [the song] comes out as a single story, you know? So, in that sense, I received opinions [saying that] ‘I was preferring that you didn’t published the novel of *Saihate*’. There were a lot [of those opinions]. But I was prepared; I really understood their feelings. But, nevertheless, I wanted to write that [laughs]. No matter what, I get the feeling of wanting to leave that as a work [laughs]. ‘I am very sorry, but please, allow me to write [this book]’—that was my feeling.

6.6 Conclusions: Participation in the Movement

In this final chapter, I introduced some parts of the interviews I carried out in the field of the Vocaloid scene, following the narratives of the rise and fall of the Vocaloid scene and the defeat of the author. The narrative of the rise of the Vocaloid scene was present in a relatively clear shape in all the interviews, where the story about the ‘fall’ was not always regarded in the same way. Nevertheless, whether regarded as a fall or as the end of one stage of the movement, there was a particular ‘history line’ as a persistent element in all the interviews. In this chapter, when focusing on these elements, I sought to capture the general mood I perceived from the interviewees when I conducted the fieldwork between 2014 and the first months of 2015.

The quoted material that I selected to illustrate the Vocaloid scene and its mood in this chapter are used to address to different elements and, at the same time, the give shape to an overlapping and reiterative line of argumentation. The elements that I focused on to develop the argumentation of the chapter were action, texts and the ethos of the movement. As the main argumentative line of my research focuses on the nature of the relation between cultural texts and social action, I regard this last element of the ethos as the joint picture in which the particular action in the field unfolds as indivisible from the particular nature of the texts in the aesthetic-rhetoric field that shapes the Vocaloid scene.

The ‘history line’ or the ‘story of the development of the movement’ was analysed in this chapter as a movement departing from an original shape of community, going

through its growth and fragmentation and turning back again to its community form. This form is the shape of a small and closed genre within the Japanese subculture. After focusing on the element of community, I addressed the three different aspects of action, texts and the ethos of the field as a way to organise the material and analyse the particular nature of the meaning of participation in the Vocaloid scene through several empirical examples. As we saw throughout this chapter, all these examples showed the ways in which activities integrate into the Vocaloid scene in order to give substance and direction to the movement.

Thus, the meaning of participation in the Vocaloid scene stressed the integration of personal activities in the fashion of a one kind of textual productivity into a wider movement. This movement can be regarded as the story of a concrete, particular phenomenon initiated at the end of 2007 with the proliferation of the fictional character Hatsune Miku in the Japanese subculture, the growth and spread of particular practices, texts and social categories such as the 'Vocaloid' and its eventual fragmentation and fading. The narrative of the 'defeat of the author' and the 'fall' of the movement can be regarded in this context as the turning back of the movement towards its 'original' and motionless state. Here, the end of the movement appears as the defeat of the author to the 'oral tradition' predominant in the *dōjin* world.

Certain elements gave shape to the movement: a mix of several 'self-serving' and closed, deeply subjectively attached appropriative activities linked to the Japanese *dōjin* culture; the commercial practices of industrial sectors and the media environment they built and managed; the open nature of the informational networks and their communitarian orientation; the cynical and sceptic attitude of the Japanese subculture towards 'the front face of society' [*omote no shakai*] represented in the mass society and the worshiping of idols. These elements converged into what I regard as the ethos of the movement. It is a dynamic relation of an orientation towards truthfulness and freedom, based on the radical imaginary of values regarded as absolute and values regarded as relative. This ethos finds its expression in the field in the words 'do your will and let the others do their will' [*katte ni suru, katte ni saseru*], and it shapes the action and interaction that unfold in the narrative structure of the aesthetic-rhetoric field of the Vocaloid scene.

General Conclusions: The Imaginary Values in the 'Asobi-ba' and the Interinstitutional Fields

The interinstitutional field of one part of the Japanese subculture I have analysed here is an interesting example of the dynamics of culture in everyday life. In addition to the particularities that this unique configuration of institutions, actors and texts has in Japan, the dynamics I approached here may be found in different contexts and practices. Here, one of my principal goals was to highlight the role of the values and meanings that move across the different actors and fields in which they interact. I sought to maintain a focus on the empirical conditions and issues of concern I found in the field of research. However, the outline I present in the current work is framed within some particular subjects of theoretical interest. Those subjects are the understanding of the dimension of culture as autonomous from socioeconomic structures and personality systems and understanding the way in which this autonomous dimension shapes social interaction in mutual relation with those socioeconomic structures and personality systems.

The present work was divided into two sections. The first section presented a picture of the interinstitutional field and its dynamics as they unfold. Here, I exposed and analysed some empirical examples concerning theoretical issues of direct implication. I divided the institutions that composed my field of research in four types of fields: 1) an institutional field oriented towards the market; 2) an institutional field oriented towards cultural policies; 3) an institutional field oriented towards textual appropriation and activities; and 4) an institutional field oriented towards networking and participation.

Each field has a particular logic and orientation which frame the action or the approach towards texts in each distinctive field. These fields, are connected to each other in a continued relation of opposition and fulfilment. Furthermore, as they shape fields of action and not concrete subjects, actors usually belong to several different institutional fields and hold different orientations. The interinstitutional field is the integration of those fields in a complex field of opposition and fulfilment shaped through concrete action and interaction.

In Section Two, I addressed the dynamics of value in the interinstitutional field. For this, I focused first on the theoretical elements that allow for an understanding that dynamism, the field in which it unfolds and several theoretical elements linked to the latter theoretical issues or empirical issues regarded in Section One. The understanding of the theoretical grounds beyond what I call the 'aesthetic-rhetoric field' was one of the

major aims of the first theoretical discussion of Chapter Five. However, this first approach remains mostly on a meta-theoretical level. For this reason, this Chapter ends with an approach to some of the main theoretical elaborations regarding the field of the 'subculture' in Japan. These perspectives are the link for approaching the particular aesthetic-rhetoric field to be found in Japan.

Chapter Six is composed of the analysis of the 'dynamics of value on the particular aesthetic-rhetoric field that shapes the Vocaloid scene in Japan. I referred to this field, which I classified as 'networking institutions' in Section One, as the best example for approaching the dynamics of values in the interinstitutional field, as it encompasses the activities of actors in all the institutional fields I addressed. Furthermore, the Vocaloid scene was understood by its actors within a particular narrative that give to its aesthetic-rhetoric field cohesion that is comparatively easy to understand. I regarded that narrative as based on the radical imaginary of the contradictory and productive relationship between a two-folded orientation towards absolute and relative values. This radical imaginary is at the base for a narrative that I addressed as the 'defeat of the author'.

The strong sense of 'participation' is related to the multiple instantiations of this imaginary in regard to Vocaloid as a movement. The conflictive relation between property and appropriation, or creation and collaboration I regarded in the field, in the context of a dominant ethos focused on freedom and truthfulness is, in the aesthetic-rhetoric field shaped by the interinstitutional system, the main factor behind the dynamics of value I analysed in Chapter Six.

The empirical achievement from the general perspective of this research is in recognising the close interaction between several actors and fields and in finding a middle ground between dividing the field into different areas in opposition. This is done by focusing on the inner contradictions and combining all the elements into one organic field by focusing on its complementarity. The theoretical achievement is in understanding that the close interaction between opposition and fulfilment in the complex field cannot be fully grasped without understanding the autonomy of culture as a condition to regard the mutual determination between several elements. The dynamics of values I regarded in Chapter Six, where commensurate and incommensurate values interact, are only possible if those values are autonomous from the actors' personality systems and the socioeconomic structures that frame the field of interaction.

The Interinstitutional System, the Aesthetic-Rhetoric Field and the Dynamics of Value

The particular field composed of the production, management and appropriation of the cultural goods that I examined in this research is constituted of several institutions related to each other in a systemic way. As I addressed in this research, regarding this complex of institutions and actors as an interinstitutional system is the easiest and simplest way to approach its dynamics. Furthermore, the particular field of interaction in which this interinstitutional system unfolds has as its base the cultural texts that shape a particular area of the popular culture in Japan. All the dynamics that evolve across this field are connected with this particular set of texts in a certain way. It is because of this feature that this field has a particularly close relation with the aesthetic and rhetoric nature of those texts. These aesthetic and rhetoric features, as well as the imaginaries they shape, drive the different logics of action and interaction of the field and, therefore, its institutions. For that reason, I call this field an 'aesthetic-rhetoric field' and regard the drive that lies at its base as a dynamic of values.

In the chapters that form this work, I have approximated by empirical examples and theoretical analysis the different features of this particular interinstitutional system object of this research, its aesthetic-rhetoric field and the dynamics of values that give life to it. Here, I shall concretise my approach and synthesise some of the features I have regarded across this work, and I present the essence of my programme and the particular example I am approaching, which is one part of the Japanese popular culture.

The importance of a research framework departing from the perspective of institutions in interaction is essential to understanding its relation to the nature of the dynamic of value. The basic stance, the fact that social interaction is backed by institutions and the existence of several different institutions in mutual relation is no more than the reaffirmation of a standard supposition in the social sciences. Therefore, the importance of this perspective is not in the affirmation that there are several institutions related each other but rather through the focus on institutions, with the emphasis on social action as the departing point in this analysis. To clarify, this stance is relevant as many of the studies that focus on similar areas of research are usually centred on researching particular collectivities or a particular set of texts. That is the case with many of the studies on fan or otaku cultures.

In other words, my interest in developing this particular approach is not in focusing again on a particular collectivity (fans or otaku) or on a particular text or set of texts. Rather, my interest is in focusing on the particular relationship that exists between

actors and texts. The focus on institutions, which are social structures enacted by actors in their roles and particular orientations, is precisely the best way to analyse the relation between the actors and the texts. This is because texts can be regarded as a material form, as a commodity or as a representation as in the case of a work separated from its reading and, therefore, from social life. Texts, from this institutional perspective, are the materialisation of the meaning of social action and interaction. They are one particular shape of meaning. Therefore, if texts are at the foundation of the interinstitutional system I am analysing in this research, that is because they are the object of the orientation of action in each one of the different logics of action that composes the interinstitutional field.

The texts understood as the object of orientation in different institutional logics are an empirical reality that is easy to observe. For example, they may be the object of industrial production for the contents or cultural industry or the object in which the concept of Japan as a brand name is materialised by the Cool Japan strategies. They are also, at the same time, the object of emotive consumption for their fans or the object in which textual productivity is focused, as we saw in the *dōjin* culture. Furthermore, in cosplay practices, we regarded the texts in a particular shape. That is the texts as textual characters which can also be regarded as fictional others. Texts regarded in this shape also represent a particular object of orientation for actors' understanding of themselves, as well as resources for orientating action in the field. In the case of the networks of participation, as I have characterised the Vocaloid scene, the texts have the same role of orienting action by giving meaning to social interaction in larger groups of abstract relationships.

In all the cases, the focus on the text and the way in which it connects several actors with several different orientations make essential the understanding of those texts, not only as meanings or symbolic forms but also as values, as they are indivisible from the meanings of social action. The focus on values from the perspective of institutions and action, whenever we acknowledge the dimension of culture as an autonomous from socioeconomic structures and personality systems, also allows us to overcome the usual understanding of values as the opposition of use and exchange value. This perspective of value has shaped much of the discourses on the role of popular culture in industrial economies, as the subsumption of use value to exchange value, or as the resistance from the popular culture through appropriation and the restoration of the use value and, therefore, the social tie. As we observed, this perspective creates an artificial opposition between two different values and renders as inexistent the dynamics between the heterogeneous and concrete values that give orientation to action in the field.

The institutional or interinstitutional perspective, however, entails the risk of an over-determinism of the structure, or the frame of action over agency. A good example of this risk is what we can refer to as an 'architectural' understanding of institutions, which presents action and agency as always embedded in the particular logics of interaction. The importance of regarding the category of culture as autonomous from the structure of action and the personality system is essential to understand the dynamics of value. This autonomy not only allows us to take into account the plurality of values and meanings that give life to social interaction in the interinstitutional field but also holds particular relevance to focus on the category of persona, which is a collective category that enables an understanding of the self not as self-identity but as belonging.

The introduction of this collective category in the scheme has important consequences for our understanding of property, action, and rationality, as it appears opposed to the modern category of the individual. As we saw in the case of the Vocaloid scene, the understanding of authorship, which is a category tied to the individual in a modern sense, was in constant opposition to the understanding of social actors as part of a wider social reality. In this case, that was the abstract totality of the Vocaloid scene. In a different but nevertheless related example, cosplay presented a different case in which actors avoid their individuality through a social category—in this case, the textual character. As such, the textual or fictional character plays the role of a category of belonging, with a collective significance.

As we also saw in those examples, the meanings of action, appropriation and property were also closely tied to the place of the actor regarded from the perspective of this collective category. However, in order to have an accurate understanding of the existing dynamics between the values of texts, the actors and their place in interaction, either from a collective category or from an individual stance, as in the case of the 'author' or the emotive consumption in the fan, it is important to grasp the importance and place of what I regard as an aesthetic-rhetoric field.

As its name makes evident, the aesthetic-rhetoric field is characterised by its aesthetic and rhetoric nature. The relation between the aesthetic and rhetoric points out the open nature of the aesthetic message, which entails creativity and the possibility of reading new meanings, and the rather closed nature of the rhetorical message, which entails reaffirmation and attachment to already coded meanings. Both are closely tied each other and rely on similar mechanisms, where the particular disposition of the structure in the message brings to the reader something else which is not in the text. This 'something else' may be either the aesthetic experience or external

already coded meanings. In any case, the mechanism of the aesthetic or rhetorical message makes appear as natural and immediate the experience, achieving by this way a particular emotive effectivity. This emotive feature is experienced by the reader as authentic and, at the same time, as individual and rooted in his or her own subjectivity.

The tie-up of a particular message or text, emotive readings and action is the essence of the aesthetic-rhetoric field. The relation between emotion and action can be understood in different ways. In the case of this research, I regard this relation as in the case of values, which are the drive of social action and have an affective and cognitive nature. Therefore, the aesthetic element to regard in the field of interaction also has a particular association with the configuration of social action. As we saw in various empirical and theoretical examples, this is a logic with two poles in mutual relation. On one side, we regarded the communitarian attachment towards the particular and the sensual, which was related to a rather closed nature. On the other side, we approached an anarchic pursuit of a transcendent value. In this case, the logic was not communitarian but rather a logic of networks.

These two different sensibilities towards aesthetic commodities are in close relation with the disembedding mechanisms of late modernity. In the conditions of late modernity, meanings also are disembedded from commodities which therefore become increasingly aesthetic. This feature, in addition to the emphasis on self-reflexivity which this lack of contextual meaning entails, has made those commodities important sources not only for the shape of the individual self but also for the configuration of collectivities, as well as for the configuration of collective social categories.

This feature of the role of aesthetics in social action, which we have observed in the aesthetic-rhetoric field, is underpinned by two essential characteristics of the field as a field of interaction: 1) the nature of aesthetics forms as works, which are the distancing of a particular discourse from its author and conditions of production and, in the same way, the instantiation of the work as a new discourse; 2) the understanding of the process of semiosis or reading as the appropriation of resources and as the disappropriation of the self. Both characteristics are a link to understanding the connection between the material and the immaterial nature of cultural texts, as well as the connection between action and meaning through property. As we saw in certain examples, the relation between action and property was a constant topic of concern among the actors of each institutional field analysed in Section One.

The understanding of the texts as the distancing and also as the instantiation of the discourses allows us to draw a connection between the action of textual production and the action of readings. As observed in the case of textual productivity, this process

goes beyond the appropriation of texts as raw materials in order to engage in social interaction. The solely emphasis on such a characteristic loses sight of the role of the text in shaping meaning without an explicit orientation of social interaction. This role of the text in the shaping of meaning refers to the process of instantiation, when the text actualises its meaning. This process supposes the disappropriation of the reader's self and his or her world. As we saw, this characteristic is essential in order to understand the way in which the text can institute a social category, which in this case is the fictional character.

Within the present model, the differences between both types of orientation towards appropriation may be regarded as appropriation of the text as a resource for action and as disappropriation of the self as the instantiation of meaning. Moreover, the last one is focused on the emotive link between the text and its reader, and the former one is focused on the text as a source for enabling action towards a collectivity. In this research, I approached each orientation under two distinctive labels. I used the word 'activities' to refer to the orientation towards the text and the word 'participation' to understand the orientation towards the collectivity. However, notwithstanding that actors have a clear difference of both orientations in their activities, both processes are bound together in the interplay of meaning, action and interaction. Here, the focus on values and property is essential to understand the dynamics that bind this process. Values are the elements concerning agency, and property is the element concerning structure.

Within this model, I regard the dynamics that unify and animate action and interaction through texts as dynamics of value. These dynamics regarded within this model can be seen as a feature of any interinstitutional system, which holds particular relevance in the case of an aesthetic-rhetoric field of interaction. That is the case of the present research. In other words, this is the element we focused on at the beginning of our observations. In other words, the aim is to understand how the relation between actors and texts comes to shape social structures.

Here, following the characteristics of action and interaction as I observed in the field, I outlined a model of "dynamics of value" that focused on certain elements, which may be understood as the conflictive and productive relation between opposite poles. It included the community and the market, closed small groups and open networks and orientations towards absolute and relative values. As I observed in the case of the Vocaloid scene, this was a particular example where the different institutional fields were in clear interaction shaping a field composed of actors striving for both poles. In my analysis, the ethos of this scene synthesised this dynamic of value. I described this ethos, using actors' words, as 'do your will and let the others do their will'. The words 'do

your will' emphasised the romantic orientation towards an absolute value, regarded as the value of truthfulness or authenticity. In contrast, the words 'let the others do their will' emphasised an anarchic orientation towards relative values, or the coexistence of heterogeneity and difference. The dynamics I observed in the Vocaloid scene unfolded within both logics.

In order to understand the relation between the open and the closed, relative values and absolute values and instrumental action as in the orientation towards markets and non-instrumental action as in the orientation towards community, I followed a model which distinguishes between different senses of property and different realms of value. From here, the most notorious element is the Commons, understood not as public goods or as common pool resources but as inalienable possessions, which tie the subjects and the objects as the base of the community. This element allows us to see the dynamics and conflicts between different actors in the field as rooted in different and overlapping postures towards the nature of the value of cultural goods. A telling example of this, again from the Vocaloid scene, is the nature of a particular text, such as a song, as it is regarded simultaneously as private property and as commons. The narrative of what I regarded as the 'defeat of the author' in the Vocaloid scene relies on the tension between both senses of property. The actor who regards its creations as his private property takes a step apart from the community and gets closer to the instrumental rationality of the market. By doing so, he deprives the actual community of peers of resources for action and interaction. However, in the view of those actors emotively attached to the texts, the text is never fully detached from its collective nature, or its bond to the community. Therefore, the text, rather than only being a resource is the very shape of the community, unifying what *belongs* to the individual to what *belongs* to the collectivity. This feature of certain texts is particularly true in the case of the fictional characters used in the Vocaloid scene. Those characters are tools that enable textual productivity but, at the same time, act as inalienable possessions of both the community and its user, linking through textual productivity the user to the community. That is the meaning of participation in the case of the Vocaloid scene.

The particular perspective of the interinstitutional model and the focus on values enables these kinds of analysis, with particular output that may vary depending on the particular example to be analysed. Here, as a constant it is important to remark that the general theoretical framework that I have outlined in this work places emphasis on the following features in a systematic way: 1) the importance of a plurality of incommensurate values, which are the drive behind actions in concrete form; 2) acknowledgement of the dimension of culture as autonomous from socioeconomic or

personality systems, as well as not as a self-closed system, allowing innovation and alterity by shaping an open system; 3) the recognition of a collective social category for the self as belonging, alongside self-identity as an individual category. The relation between incommensurate values, the autonomy of culture and a collective social category for understanding the self as belonging are elements tied to the same basic feature in this model. That is the acknowledgement of an *other*, different than the social structure and the psychological subject, which is the fundamental condition for intersubjective action.

Appendix: Research Details

The details of the research appear in chronological order:

- 1) Dōjin Markets Research
- 2) Cosplay Research
- 3) Vocaloid Research

Notes on the language of the research and the quoted material

With the exception of the cosplay research in Taiwan and the press tour in Tower Records, all the fieldwork, research and interviews were conducted in Japanese. In regard to the research on cosplay in Taiwan, the language was English or Japanese, as many of the collaborators and informants had proficiency in one of those languages. During some occasions, some collaborators aided in the translation of Chinese into English or Japanese.

All the material was registered or transcribed and analysed in its original language. Only the portions of the material used for illustrative purposes in this thesis were translated into English. As in the case of the quotes from Japanese literature, all the translations were made by the author, although the final draft was revised by a native speaker. When translating the interviews, the aim was to maintain the original intention of the interviewees as much as possible. For that reasons, some adaptations where made in certain cases. All possible errors of interpretation, transcription or translation are fully the responsibility of the author.

All collaborators quoted under their names or using a pseudonym agreed on the use of sections of the recorded material to be quoted in this thesis. In the case of collaborators who preferred not be identifiable, or in the cases where the identity of the collaborator did not concerned directly with the analysis, such collaborators were quoted using letters from the alphabet. That is the case with most of the collaborators in the cosplay or dōjin culture research.

1. Dōjin Markets Research

Pre-research schedule:

Place of research	Schedule and data collected
Kobe University Manga Circle (University Circle)	May 2010: Participant observation (producing a dōjin magazine with the circle members) May to July 2010: Participation in the sessions of the circle. March 2010: Interview with some members of the circle (one session, two persons) and revision of the questionnaire draft (first version, two collaborators)
Dōjin-event : Osaka 80th COMIC CITY Intex Osaka, Third building	06 June 2010: Event observation Approach to the participant asking for collaboration in the research. Email collaboration with four participants One of them, Ms A, Collaboration from June 2010 to August 2011.
16st SUPER COMIC CITY in Kansai Intex Osaka, all buildings	22 August 2010: Event observation
77th Comic Market Tokyo Bight Sight	29, 30 and 31 December 2009: Event observation
78th Comic Market Tokyo Bight Sight	13, 14 and 15 August 2010: Event observation

Questionnaire research schedule:

Place of research	Schedule and data collected
80th Comic Market Tokyo Bight Sight	12, 13 and 14 December 2011: Event observation and questionnaire research (100 samples collected)
17st SUPER COMIC CITY in Kansai Intex Osaka, all buildings	29 August 2011: Event observation and questionnaire research (47 samples collected)

Questionnaire for the Dōjin Events Research

年齢 _____ 歳
 性別 _____ 男 _____ 女
 住所 _____ 都・道・府・県 _____ 市・区・町・村・郡
 職業 _____ 学生 _____ 社会人

以下の事柄について行なう頻度をお聞かせください
 (「毎日する」なら1に○をつけるように、あてはまる番号に○をつけてください)

	毎日する	2、3日に一回	1週間に一回	1か月に数回	まったくしない
アニメを見る	1	2	3	4	5
漫画を読む	1	2	3	4	5
テレビゲームをする	1	2	3	4	5
同人誌を読む	1	2	3	4	5
コスプレ関係の雑誌やネットサイトを見る	1	2	3	4	5
Facebook や mixi などをする	1	2	3	4	5
ブログや個人サイトを更新する	1	2	3	4	5
インターネット上の掲示板に書き込む	1	2	3	4	5
YouTube やニコニコ動画を見る	1	2	3	4	5
YouTube やニコニコ動画に投稿する	1	2	3	4	5
アニメ以外の、映画を見る	1	2	3	4	5
バラエティ番組を見る	1	2	3	4	5
テレビドラマを見る	1	2	3	4	5
テレビでスポーツの試合を見る	1	2	3	4	5
ライトノベルを読む	1	2	3	4	5
小説を読む	1	2	3	4	5
他	1	2	3	4	5

下記のリストからどのものに特に関心がありますか。以下のものから4つまで選んで、一番関心のあるものから順番に並べて、その番号を書いてください。

1) アニメ 2) 漫画 3) テレビゲーム 4) ライトノベル 5) 小説 6) 同人誌 7) コスプレ
 8) インターネット 9) テレビドラマ 10) 他 _____

① _____ ② _____ ③ _____ ④ _____

アニメを見る方は、好きなアニメを教えてください。
 (一つから4つまで書いてください)
 ① _____ ② _____ ③ _____ ④ _____

同人誌即売会へ行ったことがありますか。
 1) はい 2) 行ったことがありません 3) 行ったことがない
 ↓

同人誌即売会に行ったことがある方にお聞きします

大体どのくらいの頻度で行きますか。
 1) 年に3回以上 2) 年に2、1回 3) 少数回 4) 1回

初めて行った時から今まで、大体何年ぐらいたっていますか。
 1) 1年間未満 2) _____ 年間

イベントに初めて行った時、
 1) 友人や知り合いに連れてってもらった 2) 一人で行った
 普段、イベント行く時、
 1) 友人や知り合いと一緒に行く、或いは会場で会う 2) 一人で行く

会場で知り合った友人がいますか。
 1) 沢山います 2) 何人かいます 3) あまりいません 4) いない

同人誌即売会へ行った事がなかった人をイベントに誘った事がありますか。
 1) イベントに新しい人を連れて行った事があります
 2) イベントに新しい人を連れて行って行きたいと思いますがまだ連れて行って行っていない
 3) イベントに新しい人を連れて行く事に関心がない

イベントへ行く主な動機を教えてください。
 以下のものから4つまで選んで、一番強い動機から順番に並べて、その番号を書いてください。
 1) 同人誌を売る 2) 同人誌を買う 3) 友人や知り合いの付き合い
 4) 会場で友人や知り合いに会う 5) 新しい知り合いを作る 6) 雰囲気を楽しむ
 7) 他 _____

① _____ ② _____ ③ _____ ④ _____

同人誌研究会のスタッフとして参加したことがありますか。
 1) はい 2) 参加したことがないですが参加してみたいと思います
 3) 参加したことがない。

コスプレのイベントへ行っただことがありますか。
 1) はい 2) 行ったことがないですが行ってみたいと思います 3) 行ったことがない
 ↓

コスプレのイベントに行っただことがある方にお聞きします
 大体どのくらいの頻度で行きますか。
 1) 年に3回以上 2) 年に2、1回 3) 少数回 4) 1回
 初めて行った時から今まで、大体何年ぐらいたっていますか。
 1) 1年間未満 2) ____年間
 イベントに初めて行った時、
 1) 友人や知り合いに連れてもらった 2) 一人で行った
 普段、イベント行く時、
 1) 友人や知り合いと一緒に行く、或いは会場で会う 2) 一人で行く
 会場で知り合った友人がいますか。
 1) 沢山います 2) 何人かいます 3) あまりいいない 4) いらない
 コスプレのイベントへ行っただ事があった人をイベントに誘った事がありますか。
 1) イベントに新しい人を連れて行った事があります
 2) イベントに新しい人を連れて行きたいと思いますがまだ連れて行っていいない
 3) イベントに新しい人を連れて行く事に関心が無い
 イベントへ行く主な動機を教えてください。
 以下のものから4つまで選んで、一番強い動機から順番に並べて、その番号を書いてください。
 1) コスプレをする 2) コスプレの写真をとる 3) 友人や知り合いとの付き合い
 4) 会場で友人や知り合いに会う 5) 新しい知り合いを作る 6) 雰囲気を楽しむ
 7) 他 _____

① _____ ② _____ ③ _____ ④ _____

コスプレのイベントのスタッフとして参加したことがありますか。
 1) はい 2) 参加したことがないですが参加してみたいと思います
 3) 参加したことがない。

同人誌を創った事がありますか。
 1) はい 2) 創った事がないですが、創ってみたいと思います
 3) 創った事ありません

同人誌を創る知り合いや友人がいますか。
 1) はい 2) いいえ

コスプレをやった事がありますか。
 1) はい 2) やった事がないですが、やってみたいと思います
 3) やりません

コスプレをやる知り合いや友人がいますか。
 1) はい 2) いいえ

同人活動を行ったことのある方にお聞きします。
 今でも創っていますか。
 1) はい 2) いいえ
 大体、何年間同人誌を創っていますか、或いは創りましたか。
 1) ____年間ぐらい
 何人のサークルで活動していますか。
 1) ____人
 どのように同人活動を始めましたか。
 1) 一人を始めました 2) 友人や知り合いに誘われて始めました
 どんな同人誌を創っていますか。(当てはまるものに全て○を付けてください)
 1) パロディ (二次) 2) オリジナル (一次) 3) 漫画系 4) 小説系
 5) 他 _____

普段、同人誌を作る時どこからキャラクターや設定を選びますか。(当てはまるものに全て○を付けてください)

- 1) オリジナルだけ創ります。
- 2) アニメ 3) 漫画 4) ゲーム 5) 小説・ライトノベル
- 6) テレビドラマ 7) 映画 8) 他_____

普段、どこで自分の同人誌を発売しますか。(当てはまるものに全て○を付けてください)

- 1) 同人誌即売会 2) 自分のネットサイトやブログ
- 3) 同人誌関係のネット・コミュニティなど発売します。 4) 他_____

コスプレをやったことのある方にお聞きします。

今でもやっていますか。

- 1) はい 2) いいえ

大体、何年間コスプレをやっていますか、或いはやりましたか。

- 1) _____年間くらい

普段、コスプレをやる時

- 1) 一人でやります 2) 何人かでやります

どのようにコスプレを始めましたか。

- 1) 一人で始めました 2) 友人や知り合いに誘われて始めた

どんなコスプレをやっていますか。(当てはまるものに全て○を付けてください)

- 1) アニメ 2) 漫画 3) ゲーム 4) 制服 5) オリジナル
- 6) その他_____

自分で、自分のコスプレ写真を発表しますか。(当てはまるものに全て○を付けてください)

- 1) 発表しない 2) 個人サイトで発表します
- 3) コスプレのネット・コミュニティなどで発表します
- 4) コスプレ関係の雑誌で発表します 5) 写真は取らない 6) 他_____

～以上で質問は終了です～

ご協力いただきましてありがとうございます

2. Cosplay Research

Type of research	Schedule and data collected
Observation of contexts and places to frame the research on cosplay as part of fan culture. (Japan)	Mainly on the basis of the results from the 2011 research -Cosplay observed in previous research and former attempts to approach the scene -Several observations at the cosplay-only event at the Kyoto Manga Museum -March 2011: Observation at the street festival in Osaka Nippon-bashi. Video recorded and informal interview
Planning of the research and preparation of the draft for the questionnaire in Japan. The work was performed in collaboration with Dr Hayami Nanako. (Japan)	Spring 2012 to September 2012 -Observation at 'cosplay only' events Observations, informal interview, and testing the questionnaire draft -Observation at a public cosplay photo session in Shin Nagata
-82th Comic Market Tokyo Bight Sight -Tonari de Cosplay-sen in TFT ¹ Tokyo Fashion Town Building (TFT), 2 nd floor, west hall. Questionnaire research carried out in collaboration with Dr Hayami Nanako. (Japan)	10, 11 and 12 August 2012: Event observation, questionnaire and informal interview The questionnaires were collected outside of both halls 202 samples were collected. *The data input from the Japanese questionnaires was realised jointly with Dr Hayami Nanako
Research on Taiwan context and literature on Taiwan (Taiwan)	From August to November 2012
Interview with Taiwan cosplayers (Taiwan)	October and November 2012 -Four interviews, (between 12 and 60 minutes each) *Two undergraduate students at NTU *One graduate student at NTU *One non-student collaborator *All female, between ages 20-25 -I tested the first draft version in Chinese among them. -Interviews were recorded in field notes. -Interviews were carried out in English.
17 th Petit Fancy Taiwan National University, Gymnasium. (Taiwan)	27 and 28 October 2012. Observation and hearing survey at the event.
32th Comic World Taiwan Taiwan National University, Gymnasium. (Taiwan)	15 and 16 December 2012. Event observation, questionnaire and hearing survey. 199 samples were collected.

Taipei International Book Exhibition 2013 Taipei World Trade Centre (TWTC) Exhibition Hall 1 (Taiwan)	2 and 3 February 2013: Observation and hearing survey at the event. (Five short interviews with audio recorded, Chinese)
Interview with the organizer of the dōjin event Fancy Frontier Ms Sū wēi xī. (Taiwan)	14 March 2013: Interview recorded. 3 hours and 38 minutes. -The interviewee could speak Japanese, but part of the interview was conducted with the help of a Chinese-Japanese translator.
Cosplay photo session and cosplayer gathering Campus of the Kobe Shukugawa Gakuin University. (Japan)	5 May 2013 Group interview session (five cosplayers) 83 minutes recorded
Cosplay photo session and cosplayers-only event. 'Cosumeru in Old Futaba-ko' Shin Nagata, Kobe. (Japan)	10 August 2014 Participant observation as the main photographer for a group of four cosplayers

¹ となりでコスプレ博 in T F T <http://ameblo.jp/otakata/entry-11312373971.html>

² コスメル in 旧二葉小学校

³ When there is no specification, all research and interviews were carried out in Japanese.

Interview Research

Interviews realised within the research on cosplay culture

No	Interviewee	Place	Day	Details	Duration
1	Yu -22 (First cosplay at 15) Wan-22 (First cosplay at 15)	NTU, Taipei, Taiwan	14, October, 2012	Interview recorded in field notes. (English)	1:30
2	Ching -25 (First cosplay at 16)	NTU, Taipei, Taiwan	24, October, 2012	Interview recorded in field notes. (English)	Near 4:00
3	Chia-29	NTU, Taipei, Taiwan	6, June, 2012	Interview recorded in field notes. (English)	2:20
4	Ms. Sū wēi xī. Fancy Frontier Dōjin event organiser	Offices of the FF, Taipei, Taiwan	14, March, 2013	Voice recording (Chinese-Japanese translation)	3:38
5	Six cosplayers 1-27 (11 years of experience) 2-25 (5 years of experience) 3,4-18 (x2) 3-4 years of experience 5,6-19 (x2) 3-4 years of experience	Campus of the Kobe Shukugawa Gakuin University. (Japan)	5, May, 2013	Voice recording (Japanese)	1:23

6	Ms M -24	Kobe city, Japan	27, June, 2014	Voice recording (Japanese)	3:12
			1, October 2014		8:00

* Ages are at the time of the research.

The three interviews I focus on in the analysis [Chapter Three] are as follows: 1) a group interview conducted among six cosplayers at an event organised at the Shukugawa Gakuin University. The interview was possible thanks to the help of Professor Hara Kazuki; 2) an interview with a cosplayer (Ms 'M') with whom I had the opportunity to talk to at length and in detail; 3) Some interview content stems from a discussion with Nurupon, an amateur dancer I interviewed for the Vocaloid research who also practises cosplay. I also refer to some observations made at a cosplayer gathering during which I participated with the same interviewee (Ms 'M').

Interview at Shukugawa Gakuin University

The interview at Shukugawa Gakuin University included some students of Professor Hara Kazuki, who organised an event at the university. Two cosplayers with considerable experience also participated in the interview. The ages of the two experienced cosplayers were 27 and 25, while two of the students were age 19 and the other two were 18. The age, in addition to the difference in cosplay experience, shaped an interesting dynamic where the ones with experience were not only answering my question but also seemed to be teaching the younger, less experienced ones about cosplay.

Observation at the 'Cosumeru in Old Futaba-ko' in Shin Nagata, Kobe.

One of the participants was Ms M, whom I interviewed once. The other was her sister, whom I interviewed for the Vocaloid research and who formerly practised cosplay. I met the last two for the first time. One of them was an old school friend of Ms M and the other one was a new friend of all of them, whom they met at a previous cosplay event. On the day of the event, the trains were not running because of a typhoon, so the person who was supposed to be the main photographer could not go. As such, I was the only and main photographer for that group.

Questionnaire for the Cosplay Research - Japan

問 1 あなたがコスプレをする(あるいはしている)場所をすべて選んでください

1. 同人誌即売会の会場
2. レイヤー同士の個人的な集まりの場
3. 繁華街など人が集まるどころ
4. 写真撮影のためのスタジオ
5. コスプレカフェ
6. コスプレ企画会社が運営するイベントの会場
7. その他[]

問 2 あなたがコスプレをする(あるいはしている)対象をすべて選んでください

1. マンガ・アニメ・ゲームなどのキャラクター
2. アイドルやタレント
3. ビジュアル系
4. ロリータ
5. 映画・ドラマのキャラクター
6. 制服
7. 歌手・バンドのメンバー
8. 男装・女装
9. バーチャルアイドル (ボーカロイドなど)
10. その他[]

問 3 あなたが最初にコスプレをしたのは何歳の時でしたか?

[]歳

問 4 あなたと一緒にコスプレをしたことがある友人・仲間をすべて選んでください

1. 学校の友人・同級生(学生時代の友人・同級生)
2. 職場やバイトの友人・同僚(仕事・バイトをしていた頃の友人・同僚)
3. 家族・親族のメンバー
4. コスプレイベントへの参加がきっかけで知り合った友人・仲間
5. インターネットがきっかけで知り合った友人・仲間
6. その他[]

問 5 2012年(今年)に入って、平均して月に約何回くらいコスプレをしましたか?

1. 今回が初めて
2. 約[]回

問 6 今年コスプレした回数は、過去にくらべてどのようなものでしたか?ひとつだけ選んで下さい

1. 今年の方がコスプレをする機会が多い
2. 過去のほうがもっとコスプレをする機会が多かった
3. かわらない

問 7 あなたがコスプレをするようになった動機・きっかけは何でしたか?

あてはまるものをすべて選んでください

1. レイヤーである友人や、レイヤーである自分の家族から誘われたため
2. レイヤーでない友人や、レイヤーでない自分の家族から誘われたため
3. 衣装(変身)に興味があったため
3. ファッション・服に興味があったため
4. 衣装したい好きなキャラクターがあったため
5. 新しい自分を体験したいと思ったため
6. 自分らしさを表現できると思ったため
7. その他[]

問 8 あなたがコスプレをする際に大切だと思うことをすべて選んでください

1. 衣装の作り方にこだわること
2. キャラクターの背景と作品の世界観を知ること
3. キャラクターになりきること
4. 綺麗であること
5. キャラクターへの愛情を持つこと
6. カメコ・ヌイコ・レイヤーのネットワークを大切にすること
7. その他[]

問9 コスプレ関連の SNS を利用していますか？

- 1. はい
- 2. いいえ

下記の付問にもお答えください

問9-a-1：
どの SNS に登録していますか？登録しているものをすべて選んでください

- 1. コスプレ・ジャーナルズ・アーカイブス
- 2. Cure
- 3. Layer Cloud
- 4. Be-bit
- 5. Cos Praise
- 6. その他

問10にお進み下さい

問9-b-1：
コスプレ関連でない SNS は利用していますか？

- 1. はい
- 2. いいえ

問10 同人誌即売会へ行ったことがありますか？

- 1. コスプレと関係なく行ったことがある
- 2. コスプレが出来るので行ったことがある
- 3. 行ったことがない

問11 同人誌を作ったことがありますか

- 1. はい
- 2. 作ったことがないが、関心はある
- 3. いいえ

問12 あなたは現在、何歳ですか？

[] 歳

問13 あなたの性別はどちらですか？

- 1. 男性
- 2. 女性

問14 現在、学生ですか？それとも社会人ですか？(*学生の方は問14付問2にも、社会人の方は問14付問1と問14付問8にもお答えください)

↓ 学生
↓
↓
↓
↓
↓
↓
↓
↓
↓ 社会人

問14-b-1 ご職業の種別はどれですか？

- 1. 企業・団体の正社員(公務員含む)
- 2. 企業・団体の非正社員・派遣社員(公務員含む)
- 3. アルバイト・パート・日雇い
- 4. その他

問14-a-1 現在通われている学校はどれですか？

↓
↓
↓
↓
↓
↓
↓
↓
↓
↓
↓ 1. 小学校
↓ 2. 中学校
↓ 3. 高校
↓ 4. 専門学校
↓ 5. 大学・大学院
↓ 6. その他の学校

問14-b-2

最後に通われた学校はどれですか？

以上で質問は終了です。長時間にわたり、ご協力ありがとうございました。

Questionnaire for the Cosplay Research - Taiwan

問題 1 請選取您所進行 (或曾經進行過) Cosplay (角色扮演) 的所有場所。

1. 同人誌即賣會的會場、活動
2. Cosplay 同好的私人聚會
3. 商店街等人群聚集地方
4. 相片攝影棚
5. Cosplay 咖啡店、又或者客人能進行 Cosplay 的店
6. 大學或學校校園內
7. 自己的家或朋友的家
8. 其他 _____

問題 2 請選取您所進行 (或曾經進行過) Cosplay 的所有對象。

1. 日本漫畫、動畫、遊戲等角色
2. 非日本漫畫、動畫、遊戲等角色
3. 偶像或藝人
4. 視聽系
5. 羅莉塔
6. 電影、戲劇的角色
7. 制服
8. 歌手、樂團成員
9. 男裝、女裝
10. 虛擬偶像 (VOCAI.OID 等)
11. 布袋戲的角色
12. 東方 project
13. 其他 _____

問題 3 您第一次進行 Cosplay 的年齡是?
「 _____ 」歲

問題 4 之後也會繼續 Cosplay 嗎?

1. 是
2. 否

問題 5 請選取會與您一起進行 Cosplay 的所有同伴。

1. 學校的友人、同學 (學生時代的友人、同學)
2. 職場或打工的友人、同事 (職場或打工之前認識的友人、同事)
3. 家人或親戚
4. 參加 Cosplay 活動時認識的友人、同好
5. 在網路上認識的友人、同好
6. 其他 _____

問題 6 去年 (2011 年) 進行過幾次的 Cosplay?

1. 這次是我的第一次
2. 「 _____ 」次

問題 7 去年 (2012 年) 的 Cosplay 次數, 與過去比較起來是如何呢? 請僅選擇其一。

1. 去年 (2012 年) 的 Cosplay 的機會多
2. 過去的機會多很多
3. 不清楚

問題 8 請問您總共曾經 cos 過多少個角色呢?

全部共(約) _____ 個角色

問題 9 使您進行 Cosplay 的動機、契機為何? 請選擇與您相符的所有選項。

1. Coser 的友人 或家人邀請
2. 非 Coser 的友人 或家人邀請
3. 因對變裝 (變身) 有興趣
4. 因對時尚、衣服有興趣
5. 因為有想變裝的角色
6. 因想體驗新的自己
7. 因想表現自己
8. 其他 _____

問題 10 請選取您 Cosplay 時認為重要的所有事情。請選擇與您相符的所有選項。

1. 對服裝製作的要求
2. 去了解角色的背景和作品的世界觀
3. 完全融入角色
4. 漂亮、好看
5. 對角色有愛
6. 重視與攝影師、服裝師、馬內和 Coser 的關係
7. 其他 _____

問題 11 您使用 Cosplay 的 SNS (社交網絡服務) 嗎?

1. 是

2. 否

問題 11a.1 您註冊那些 SNS (社交網絡服務)? 請選擇所有您有註冊的選項。

1. Cosplayers Archive
2. Cure
3. Layer Cloud
4. Be-bit
5. Cos Praise
6. Plurk
7. 其他

問題 11b.1 您使用非 Cosplay (角色扮演) 關連 SNS (社交網絡服務)? (例如 Facebook)

1. 是
2. 否

Go to 問題十一

問題 11a.2 您使用 Cosplay (角色扮演) 關連 SNS (社交網絡服務) 的頻度是?

請選擇其一。

1. 每天
2. 兩或三天一次
3. 一週一次
4. 一個月一次
5. 完全沒有

問題 11a.3 您使用非 Cosplay (角色扮演) 關連 SNS (社交網絡服務)? (例如 Facebook)

3. 是
4. 否

問題 12 您去過同人誌即賣會的會場或活動?

1. 有去過與 Cosplay 沒關係的活動
2. 去過能 Cosplay 的活動
3. 沒去過

問題 13 您有創作過同人作品 (插畫、同人誌、動畫、遊戲、音樂等)?

1. 有
2. 沒創作過、但有興趣創作
3. 沒有

問題 14 請問您現在幾歲?

「 」歲

問題 15 請問您的性別是?

1. 男性
2. 女性

問題 16 現在您是學生還是社會人士?

1. 學生
2. 社會人士

問題 16a.1 (學生回答) 現在您的教育程度是?

1. 小學
2. 國中
3. 高中
4. 高職
5. 大學、研究所
6. 其他的學校

問題 16a.2 (學生回答) 現在您的教育程度是?

您最後的教育程度是?

1. 小學
2. 國中
3. 高中
4. 高職
5. 大學、研究所
6. 其他的學校

以上問題結束。謝謝您長時間的填寫及幫忙。

Table of Equivalences of the Analysed Variables (Japan and Taiwan)

Japan	Taiwan	サンプル番号	分析-標本源泉
g01-1	g01-1	問 01-01	コスプレする場所 同人誌即売会の会場
g01-2	g01-2	問 01-02	コスプレする場所 レイヤー同士の個人的な集まりの場
g01-3	g02-3	問 01-03	コスプレする場所 繁華街などが集まること
g01-4	g03-4	問 01-04	コスプレする場所 写真撮影のためのスタジオ
g01-5	g04-5	問 01-05	コスプレする場所 コスプレカフェ
g02-1	g02-1	問 02-01	コスプレをする対処 マンガ・アニメ・ゲームなどのキャラクター
g02-2	g02-3	問 02-02	コスプレをする対処 アイドルやタレント
g02-3	g02-4	問 02-03	コスプレをする対処 ビジュアル系
g02-4	g02-5	問 02-04	コスプレをする対処 ロリータ
g02-5	g02-6	問 02-05	コスプレをする対処 映画・ドラマのキャラクター
g02-6	g02-7	問 02-06	コスプレをする対処 制服
g02-7	g02-8	問 02-07	コスプレをする対処 歌手・バンドのメンバー
g02-8	g02-9	問 02-08	コスプレをする対処 男装・女装
g02-9	g02-10	問 02-09	コスプレをする対処 バーチャルアイドル(ボーカロイドなど)
g03	g03	問 03	最初のコスプレした年齢
g04-1	g05-1	問 07-01	一緒にコスプレした事がある友人・仲間 学校の友人・同級生(学生時代の友人・同級生)
g04-2	g05-2	問 07-02	一緒にコスプレした事がある友人・仲間 職場やバイトの友人・同僚(仕事・バイトをしていた頃の友人・同僚)
g04-3	g05-3	問 07-04	一緒にコスプレした事がある友人・仲間 家族・親族のメンバー
g04-4	g05-4	問 07-05	一緒にコスプレした事がある友人・仲間 コスプレイベントへの参加がきっかけで知り合った友人・仲間
g04-5	g05-5	問 07-06	一緒にコスプレした事がある友人・仲間 インターネットがきっかけで知り合った友人・仲間
g07-1	g09-1	問 08-01	コスプレをするようになった動機 きっかけがレイヤーでない友人や、レイヤーである自分の家族から誘われたため
g07-2	g09-2	問 08-02	コスプレをするようになった動機 きっかけがレイヤーでない友人や、レイヤーである自分の家族から誘われたため
g07-3	g09-3	問 08-03	コスプレをするようになった動機 きっかけがレイヤーでない友人や、レイヤーである自分の家族から誘われたため
g07-4	g09-4	問 08-04	コスプレをするようになった動機 きっかけがファッション・服に興味があったため
g07-5	g09-5	問 08-05	コスプレをするようになった動機 きっかけがファッション・服に興味があったため
g07-6	g09-6	問 08-06	コスプレをするようになった動機 きっかけが新しい自分を体験したいと思ったため
g07-7	g09-7	問 08-07	コスプレをするようになった動機 きっかけが自分らしさを表現できると思ったため
g08-1	q1 0-1	問 09-01	コスプレをする際に大切に思うこと 衣装の制り方にこだわること
g08-2	q1 0-2	問 09-02	コスプレをする際に大切に思うこと キャクターの背景と作品の世界観を知ること
g08-3	q1 0-3	問 09-03	コスプレをする際に大切に思うこと キャクターに成りきることにこだわること
g08-4	q1 0-4	問 09-04	コスプレをする際に大切に思うこと 綺麗であること
g08-5	q1 0-5	問 09-05	コスプレをする際に大切に思うこと キャクターへの愛情を持つこと
g08-6	q1 0-6	問 09-06	コスプレをする際に大切に思うこと カメコ・ヌイコレイヤーのネットワークを大切にすること
g09-a-2	q1 a2	問 11-a-2	どれくらいの頻度でコスプレ関連のSNSを利用しますか？
g09-a-3	q1 a3	問 11-a-3	コスプレ関連でないSNSは利用していますか？
q1	q1 3	問 13	同人誌を創った事がありますか？
q1 2	q1 4	問 14	現在何歳ですか？
q1 3	q1 5	問 15	性別
q1 4	q1 6	問 16-00	学生ですか、社会人ですか？
q1 4-a-1/b-2	q1 6a1/b2	問 16-a1-b2	最終学歴

3. Vocaloid Research

Table 3.1.1 : Collaborators in an interview with the author

No.	Collaborator	Place of interview	Day	Interview length
01	Kenmochi Hideki 剣持秀紀 株式会社ヤマハ 事業開発部 ボーカロイドプロジェクトリーダー	株式会社ヤマハ本社内 渋谷周辺、東京	2014年3月 28日	56
02	Nijihara Peperon-P 虹原ペペろん P ボカロ P	飲食店、渋谷周辺、東京	2014年3月 28日	1:50
03	Murakami Noboru 村上昇 株式会社インターネット 代表取締役社長	株式会社インターネット 本社内、新大阪周辺、 大阪	2014年4月 2日	32
04	Masaki Yoshiake 正木良明 みらいのねいろ 代表	飲食店、秋葉原周辺、 東京	2014年4月 20日 2014年6月 22日	4:20 3:41
05	Sakurai Susumu 櫻井晋 有限会社 C.P.U.C.O 代表取締役	アニメ・マンガ製作会社 内中野周辺、東京	2014年4月 28日	1:51
06A	Nakamura 中村屋与太郎 VOCALOID CRITIQUE 編集長	飲食店、秋葉原周辺、 東京	2014年5月 25日	1:51
06B	Hisayuki ひさゆき ボカロ評論 編集長			
07	Tanji Yoshinobu 丹治吉順 朝日新聞 デジタル編集部	飲食店、秋葉原周辺、 東京	2014年5月 26日	1:58
08A	Tower Records 花野頭 店長			
08B	Shinjuku 株式会社 タワーレコード 新宿店	タワーレコード 新宿店内 新宿、東京	2014年5月 28日	27
08C	一居純 広告宣伝 メディア本部			
09	Mio Daisuke 三尾大典 v flower project リーダー	新宿周辺、東京	2014年6月 13日	1:24
10A	Fujimoto Shohei 藤本祥平 VOCALOID PARADISE 関西 代表	「艦隊コレクション」オ ンリ、同人誌即売会イベ ント会場内、京都	2014年6月 15日	59
10B	Tanaka Mitsuhiro 田中光宏 MUSIC COMMUNICATION 代表			

11	Nurupon ぬるぽん 踊ってみた 人気踊り手	飲食店、 三ノ宮周辺、神戸	2014年6月 19日	3:00
12A	Yaoki 島袋八起 ボカロ評論 編集部員 / 設立者	飲食店、秋葉原周辺、 東京	2014年6月 22日	2:29
12B	Satoru さとり ボカロ評論編集者 ニコニコ大百科 初音ミク wiki		2014年6月 23日	2:40
13	EHAMIC ボカロ P	カラオケ内、中野周辺、 東京	2015年3月26 日	1:50
14	山田俊幸 (myrmecoleon) 米沢嘉博記念図書館 スタッフ ニコニコ学会 B 事項委員	米沢嘉博記念図書館、 東京	2014年6月 23日	2:06
15 (17C)	Mさん ¹ コスプレイヤー 踊ってみたファン	神戸	2014年6月 27日 2014年10月 1日	3:12 8:14 ²
16 (17D)	Bさん アニソングイイベント VJ	飲食店、 神戸	2014年9月 17日	2:08
17A	Cさん アニメ系バーオーナー アニソニイベント関係者など	飲食店、 関西	2014年10月 1日	8:14 ¹
18	NezMozz VOCALOID 聴き専ラジオ ラジオパーソナリティ	飲食店、 横浜周辺	2014年10月 27日	1:51
19	Hamasaki Masahiro 濱崎雅弘 Songrium プロジェクトリーダー 産業技術総合研究所 情報技術研 究部門 研究員	産業技術総合研究所 情報技術研究部門 つくば	2014年12月 15日	1:36
20	Kobayashi Onikis 小林オニキス ボカロ P	飲食店、 東京駅周辺	2014年12月 15日	3:33
21A	Mienohito 三重の人 動画師・VJ		2014年2月25 日	3:41
21B	Katō 加藤 大手同人サークルマネージャ	関東周辺		
22	Ogata Tomohide 尾形友秀 AHS Co.Ltd. 代表取締役	AHS Co.Ltd.の事務所、 東京	2015年3月26 日	1:35

23	Inoue Hioraki 井上博明	岡山周辺	2015年3月12 日	5:21
24	Crypton Future Media, Inc. クリプトン・ フューチャー・メディア株式会社	メールインタビュー	2014年7月 31日 回収	

*番号はインタビュー番号であり、BやCなどついているのは、同じインタビューで一緒に話した方である意味。

*同じ人に対して2回目のインタビューがあった場合以外、インタビューを行った順番で乗せてある。

¹Mさんは前の節、コスプレ調査のインタビュー表に現れている6番目のインタビューと同じものである。

²インタビューは断片的に様々な話題とバーのお客さんの話を混ぜながら、朝まで断片的に進んだ。その中、インタビューデータとして扱う情報は合計2時間を超えない。

Table 3.2.1: List of events or places observed

番	イベント種類	題名	場所	日付 ¹	参加の仕方
01	展示会 非公式	次元の壁をこえて初音ミク 実体化への熱情	米沢嘉博記念図書館1 階展示コーナー、東京	2014年2月 21日	一般来館者
02	講座 公式	ボーカロイド体験従業	バンタンゲームア カデミー、東京	2014年2月 23日	受講者
03	同人誌即売会 非公式	VOCALOID PARADICE 関西3 MUSIC COMMUNICATION	京都市勧業館、 京都	2014年3月 02日	一般参加者
04	アニメエキスポ 公式	Anime Japan 2014	東京ビッグサイ ト、東京	2014年3月 22-23日	海外プレス、 通訳者
05	ワークショップ 公式・非公式	Project Anime	秋葉原 UDX、東京	2014年3月 24-25日	通訳者
06	イベント 公式	ニコニコ超会議3	幕張メッセ国際展 示場、千葉		
07	同人誌即売会 非公式	THE VOC@LOID 超 M@STER 28 in ニコニコ超会議3	ニコニコ超会議3 イベント内	2014年4月 26-27日	一般参加者 27日参加
08	同人誌即売会 非公式	超みんなの UTAU	ニコニコ超会議3 イベント内		
09	ライブ 公式	JAPAN NIGHT International press tour	国立競技場、東京	2014年5月 28-29日	海外プレス、 通訳者
10	運動 非公式	PV撮影と ミクササイズ	阿倍野スポーツセンター 大阪	2014年8月3 日	撮影見学 運動に参加
11	アニメ関係バー	〇〇〇	関西	2014年10月 1日 2014年12月 5日	常連との 交流
12	イベント 公式/非公式	VOCACON 2015	ヤマハリゾート つま恋 静岡県掛川市	2015年 2月22日	一般参加者
13	同人誌即売会 非公式	VOCALOID PARADICE 関西4 MUSIC COMMUNICATION	京都市勧業館、 京都	2015年3月 8日	参与観察 カメラ担当

Coding and Analysed Material (Original coding)

Name of the code	Sources	References
1- ボーカロイドシーンの歴史	9	119
2- 活動	15	444
3- キャラクター	13	198
4- 産業と政策	14	230
5- 活動環境	15	207
6- ボカロシーンの特徴	14	251
7- ボカロ作品の特徴	13	140
日本人の特徴	7	16
評価、価値観、Ethos	13	161
理論分析要	4	7

Name of the code	Sources	References
1- ボーカロイドシーンの歴史	9	119
ボーカロイドシーンの現在	7	42
バラバラになる・情報が多い	2	3
ボカロの困難	6	23
参加しにくい	1	2
ボーカロイドシーンの初期	8	30
ボカロは想定外	1	1
初音ミクの登場	6	12
別の会社の登場	3	3
ボーカロイドシーンの前史	6	17
ボーカロイドシーンの変遷	6	23
ボカロシーンの将来	2	7

Name of code	Sources	References
2- 活動	15	444
MAD	1	2
MMD	3	12

SF	2	3
UTAU	2	4
アイドル	7	27
イラスト	1	1
活動の動機	1	1
エディター	1	3
オタク文化	5	11
消費者としてのオタク	1	1
コスプレ	7	25
キャラクターに近づく	2	5
自分を出さない	1	1
提議	1	1
サブカルチャー	1	1
ネット文化	1	2
バンド	1	1
バンドファン・ゴスロリ	2	4
ビジュアル系	2	5
ファン文化	6	10
ボカロP	1	1
ボカロとの出会い	7	11
違うジャンルの人達動詞の交流	4	12
動画作成・まとめ	1	1
歌ってみた	3	9
活動の詳細	14	146
一人で作りたい	3	4
お金かかる	1	1
コレクションする	1	1
ボカロを紹介する	1	1
演じる	2	8
楽曲政策プロセス	1	1
顔が広がる	2	2
競争	1	1
空間を作る	1	1
自分の活動の必要性	4	8
自分の活動への反応	3	4

自分の作品	1	5
自由に作られる	3	4
恥ずかし	1	1
動機	5	15
同じものを作る意義がない	1	4
共同創作	7	16
自分の物が使われるのが嫌	1	1
参加型文化	5	10
自分の活動の始まり	9	37
東方プロジェクト	3	6
同人音楽-DTM	7	15
同人誌即売会参加の始まり	4	6
二次創作	10	50
同人の世界とボカロの差	1	1
同人誌からライセンス化	3	5
同人誌即売会への参加	1	2
二次創作と一次創作の比較	2	2
売りたい	2	2
批評の同人誌	1	1
理論:未完成ゆえ創作可能	3	6
腐女子	1	1
踊ってみた	3	12

Name of code	Sources	References
3- キャラクター	13	198
Flower	2	17
キャラクターでつながる	4	9
キャラクターの開発	1	3
キャラクターの定義	2	2
キャラクタービジネス	4	7
キャラクター比較	3	6
キャラソング	5	5
ミクの曲でしょう	3	3
偶像	5	12

初音ミク固有の特徴	9	48
イラストが多い	2	2
ハブ	1	4
プラットフォーム	1	3
ミクじゃないとできない	2	2
歌手である	1	1
権利関係	1	3
宗教:ミク教	1	1
集合体としての初音ミク	1	1
初音ミクのデザイン	3	4
注目を浴びすぎ	3	6
日本らしい	1	1
人格、物語、キャラクター作り	10	36
キャラクターでもなく、楽器でもなく、主役	1	2
キャラクターはバラバラ:俺のミク	5	13
声の性格	1	1
人格のないキャラクター	8	11
人形、人間のイメージ	4	5
イメージより、声の質の大切さ	1	1
キャラクターのイメージが強い影響	1	1
二次創作としてのキャラクター	8	30
キャラクターは道具	1	1
キャラクターへの愛情表現	2	4
キャラクターを真似したくなる	3	6
プラットフォーム	1	4

Name of the code	Sources	References
4- 産業と政策	14	230
カラオケ	1	1
キャラクターを混ぜっては行けない	2	2
クール・ジャパン	6	8
グループ	0	0
AHS	1	1
DENTSU	1	1

Honey Works	1	2
JASRAC	3	5
KADOKAWA	2	4
TBS	1	1
インターネット社	1	1
カゲロ・プロ	4	8
ドワンゴ	2	3
ファミリーマート	0	0
ローソン	1	2
プロとアマチュア	8	19
ボカロ楽曲と作者	5	9
作り手が注目されない	1	2
作り手が注目される	5	6
ボカロ曲と音楽産業との差	4	7
ライセンス、権利と商業化	12	49
産業参入	6	9
著作権問題	4	9
信頼と教育	1	1
会社の態度の比較	1	1
開発	5	21
TOWER RECORDS	1	1
V Flower Project	1	12
キャラクターの背景・物語	1	1
使いづらい	1	2
自分の可愛い娘だ	1	1
声とイラストの合わせ	1	1
声の人の基準	1	1
インターネット社	1	6
ヤマハ	1	1
初音ミク	1	1
活動と仕事	3	5
市場・マーケット	8	14
自分の立場	10	76
TOWER RECORDS	2	7
V Flower project	2	12

インターネット社	1	4
インターネット社の作品の特徴	1	1
インターネット社の立場	1	3
クリプトンの立場	2	7
ボーパラ・MC	1	2
ボカロ批評の立場	2	19
みらいのねいるの立場	1	10
ヤマハの立場	3	8
桜井プロデューサーの立場	2	7
誰の歌のか	6	8
日本文化産業	3	10
Project Anime	1	1
アニメ業界の問題	1	3
キャラクターグッズ	1	1
メディアミックス	1	2
制作委員会	1	2
物語性	1	4

Name of the code	Sources	References
5- 活動環境	15	207
イベント	11	100
M3	3	4
Miku Fes	1	1
MIKUNOPOLIS	1	5
Music Communication	1	4
イベントの経緯	1	1
Vocaloid Paradise	2	8
イベントの経緯	1	3
イベント:ライブ	4	11
イベント:様々	2	6
イベント比較	2	4
クラブ	1	1
コミケ	4	5
コミティア	1	1

ニコニコダンスマスター	1	1
ニコニコ超会議	5	5
ボーカロイドファンタジア	1	1
ボーカロイド文化祭	2	3
ボーマス	3	8
メキシコライブ・イベント	3	4
ライブ・ハウス	1	1
海外:Hyper Japan	1	1
海外:アニメエキスポ	1	3
皆の UTAU	2	3
結月ゆかりオンリ	1	1
世界ボーカロイド大会	1	1
特徴	4	17
イベントがなくなると困るところ	1	1
イベントでの交流	3	6
ネーム バリユー	1	2
ネットとの関係性	2	2
一般参加者	1	1
開催作業	1	1
性別・年齢	1	1
総合的描写	1	1
中の人がつながっている	2	2
踊ってみたのオフ会	2	3
メディア環境	15	107
2ちゃんねる	1	2
PIXIV	2	5
SONGRIUM	1	3
Wikitia	1	1
YouTube	1	2
アーキテクチャー	1	1
ツイッター	4	19
ニコニコ大百科	1	4
ニコニコ動画とその環境	13	35
オープンな場所	3	4
サブの場	1	1

商売の場	1	1
にゃっぼん	3	6
ネットで足りない	5	9
ネット生まれ文化	3	3
ネット文化と発言	1	2
ピアプロ	1	1
メディアの合流	2	2
初音ミクウィキペディア	1	3
聴き専ラジオ	2	2
発表のチャンスを増やす	1	1

Name of the code	Sources	References
6- ボカロシーンの特徴	14	251
Hierarchy	1	2
アニメ文化とボーカロイド	9	25
カウンタ的な側面	1	1
政治的な話はない	1	2
クリエイターについて	5	13
ボカロがアーティスト化	1	2
ボーカロイドの技術	2	6
ボカロクラスター	1	1
ボカロとコミュニティ	6	20
音楽は主役	1	3
海外とボカロ	9	42
皆が繰り返す議論	1	2
活動でつながる	1	1
関東-関西	1	1
議論と自分の意見	1	4
作品が多い	1	1
事件	1	3
自由性	8	43
軸がない	2	3
オピニオンリーダーがない	1	2
それぞれが中心	2	2

音楽は中心	1	1
共通話題がない・バラバラ	1	2
初音ミク・キャラクターじゃない	3	7
キャラクターのイメージが強い影響	1	1
色々なジャンルを包括するジャンル	2	6
世代の差	8	25
性別の差	10	29
全体像・定義・描写	11	13
ボーカロイドの紹介	1	1
一つのブームに見える理由	1	1

Name of the code	Sources	References
7- ボカロ作品の特徴	13	140
アマチュアのもの	1	1
エロさ	2	2
コンテンツの価値-希少	1	1
ジャンル	1	1
テーマ	4	7
一次創作	1	1
フラットと声	2	2
ボカロの表現-描写	5	11
ボカロはゲームである	1	1
ボカロは楽器である	7	15
皆のまとまりになる	1	1
感情が抑えている	3	8
自分の声がボカロになること	2	3
人間と非人間	9	32
人間じゃない利点	7	22
欠点が魅力	1	1
人格は邪魔する	4	15
人間に近くなる	7	7
中身ない-作者が消える	1	2
中途半端	1	1
直接伝える	4	11

同じものを作る意義がない	1	1
特定の作品	0	0
Tell your world	1	1
イノコリ先生	1	2
オーディエンスを沸かす程度の能力	1	2
かあちゃん	1	1
ギフト	1	1
クローズ	1	1
ココロ	1	4
キセキ	1	1
シャノワールの冒険書	1	1
ブラックロックシューター	1	1
星の欠片	1	2
青いコンビニで会いましょう	1	2
千本桜	1	3
東京:連れて行って	1	1
炉心融解	2	2
曖昧なリーバス	1	1
物語性	10	32
ボカロ歌詞の大切さ	8	16
音楽対物語	3	5
共感と共感がない物語	4	5
物語がない方がいい	1	1
無色透明	4	6

Name of code	Sources	References
人の話	6	23
自己定義	10	60
ボカロは別世界だった	1	2
ミクではなく、ボカロが好き	1	1

Name of code	Sources	References
Ethos, evaluations and values	13	161
Reasons of the popularity of Vocaloid movement	10	55
PV 動画師のファン	2	2
SEGA のゲーム	1	2
キャラクターのイメージ: 創造しやすい。	3	5
キャラクターへの感情	2	2
Hatsune Miku (see Hatsune Miku code)	0	0
コスプレ	1	1
ストレスなく作れる	1	1
ぬる〜くなんとなく行けるところ	2	2
ボーカロイドでしかできないような表現	3	6
ライブ	1	1
楽曲を完成させる	4	4
環境	5	5
最初は音楽	1	1
自由性	2	4
色々な活動の合流	4	10
人間の歌声の代用	1	1
素人の場で、身近な存在だった	1	1
二次創作	2	4
いい評価	9	29
コミュニティ	1	2
サブカルチャーとハイカルチャー	3	11
ボーカロイドは手段か目的	3	3
ボカロPになりたい!	3	5
ボカロの影が大きい	1	1
悪い評価	10	39
皆で共有	1	1
義理	1	1
曲の価値のづけ方	1	1
偶像破壊・非キャラ	2	2
自分の物	1	1
自分らしさ	1	1

勝手にやる・させる	5	5
同じものを作る意義がない	1	1
評論の人	1	1
閉じた世界	1	1
利益を求めない	1	1

Name of code	Sources	References
理論分析要	4	7
Inalienable possessions	1	1
コンテンツが多すぎる	1	1
自分の物	1	1
所有できる	2	2
創作への欲望	1	1
名前・匿名性・名刺	1	1

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