

「萌え」とはなにか：人類学の視点と認知的メカニズム

What Is Moe: The Anthropological Perspective and The Cognitive Mechanism

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1. Backgrounds and objectives

During the past years, Moe-culture, which is generally referred to the boom of anime, manga, etc., has spread all over the world. People who appreciate Moe-works often have the feeling that they can actually understand how the characters feel, regardless of the “flat” style of representation. In this sense, the affection of Moe could be defined as the empathic response to the representations that are not exactly the same as human beings, which could sometimes be extended to other animals and even human. Though researches have shown that the perceived empathic and communicative abilities are correlates with the anthropomorphic characteristics and phylogenetic relatedness, this could not sufficiently explain the affection of Moe.

On the other hand, according to the theory of the abduction of agency, which is pinpointed by Alfred Gell, the Moe-characters are not only of aesthetic value, but are equivalents of social agents by exercising influence on their viewers. The relationship between art and society suggests us an anthropological perspective to assess the social impact of Moe-works, allowing us to investigate the evolution of culture by examining the emergence of Moe-culture. However, the cognitive model underlying this process is still missing.

Based on the above, the proposing work will focus on the following:

- 1. Providing experimental paradigm to test the effect of Moe-anthropomorphism.**
- 2. Providing cognitive model to accommodate the abduction of agency in respect of the Moe-culture.**

This work shall contribute to the research about human empathy, which is a prerequisite for social communication. Moreover, the cognitive model bridging art and agency shall shed a light on the research of evolution of culture from a new perspective.

2. Methods

The proposing work is highly inter-disciplinary and composing of both cognitive experiment and computer simulation.

【Cognitive experiment】A experimental paradigm that is able to discriminate the empathic response to various of representations will be proposed. Electro-encephalography will be employed to measure the brain activities during the experiment. Both the behavior result and the brain activation result will be analyzed to build the cognitive model.

【Computer simulation】Agent-based simulation will be carried out to evaluate the modeling work.