

American Subcultures

現代アメリカのサブカルチャー事情

Edward K. Chan
Notes by Motoko Aimoto



EIHO SHA

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preface

We have written this textbook to help students understand many of the other aspects of American culture beyond the mainstream. The idea is that these subcultures in American popular culture can be studied in a serious and critical way. Subcultures are important for understanding American culture, and they provide often overlooked ways to comprehend America. Moreover, subcultures represent some of the most fascinating aspects of American culture and often affect mainstream culture in important ways. Especially for young people in America, subcultures offer a sense of identity and community, as well as a fun way to invest their time.

For students, we think you will find these subcultures interesting and perhaps even new to your understanding about American culture as a whole. Some of the subcultures have also had a significant impact in Japanese culture as well (for example, hip hop).

For teachers, we hope that the textbook will give you a basic structure around which you can build a course that challenges students' existing knowledge of American culture. There are fifteen chapters that you can pick and choose appropriate to your teaching objectives or use in total. Although we have grouped the chapters into certain categories, the chapters can be used in any sequence you like. We have tried to balance the level of difficulty so that it is neither too easy nor too hard for students to understand.

はじめに

このテキストは著者Edward K. Chan氏が「アメリカサブカルチャー論」という講義で実際に扱ったトピックの内容を教科書向けに書き下ろしたものである。Chan氏はアメリカSF小説研究、トランスナショナル・フィルム・スタディーズの専門家で、アメリカ文化史、メディア論、アメリカンサブカルチャー、ポピュラーカルチャーなどの授業を勤務校で担当している。アメリカジョージア州のケネソー州立大学、愛知大学、国際コミュニケーション学部を経て、2016年春からは早稲田大学文学学術院、文化構想学部で教鞭を執ることになっている。

アメリカの歴史や文学に関する従来の授業では主流文化 (mainstream culture) が話題になっているが、そこでは決して出会うことのない興味深いアメリカの「おたく」文化に関する情報を、このテキストは提供してくれる。ここでのサブカルチャーの議論を通して、アメリカ文化を別の角度から、より深く総合的に捉えることができるだろう。また、異文化としてのアメリカ文化に対する理解が深まることは、英語を学ぶ意欲にもつながるだけでなく、グローバル化された時代の人材に求められる多様性 (diversity) を身に着けることができるにちがいない。

本書で扱われているトピックは、コスプレ、コミックブック、スタートレック、ヒップホップ、サーフィン、スケートボード、美少女コンテスト、LGBTなど多岐にわたり、それらはEntertainment, Music, Lifestyle, Sportsの4つのカテゴリーに分けて解説されている。読んで楽しく、興味深いトピックばかりだが、どの章も平明で明晰な英文で書かれているので、リーディングの教材として関心のある章から読むことができるし、異文化理解、アメリカ文化論などの講義で役立てることもできるだろう。各章には語彙、内容理解、要約などの問題が付いているので活用していただきたい。

最後に、英文問題についてご協力くださったJoan Gilbert氏にお礼申し上げます。また、本書の出版にあたって、適切なご助言をたまわった英宝社編集部の宇治正夫氏、下村幸一氏に心より感謝申し上げます。

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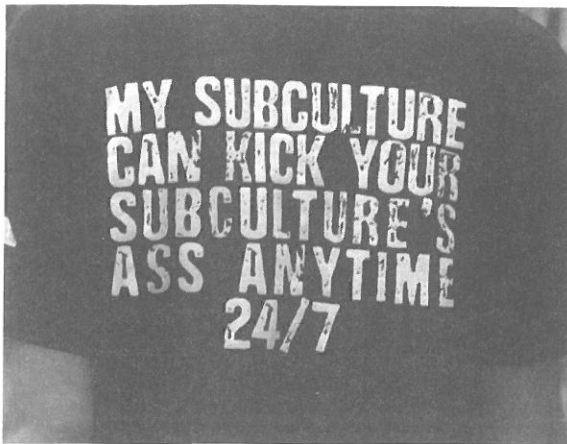
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Chapter

1

by Till Krech from Berlin, Germany

What is Subculture?

Vocabulary

Choose the appropriate word below.

1. Mary felt so much stress that she ate an () amount of cake.
2. A morning glory has pink or blue or white flowers that are ().
3. During World War II, Japanese soldiers' attitudes were regarded as () because sometimes they committed suicide.
4. This magazine specializes in the scandals of Hollywood ().
5. Iguazú Falls is one of the largest and most () waterfalls in the world.

bizarre / celebrities / excessive / spectacular / ephemeral

●このChapter理解のために

「サブカルチャー」とは「主流文化」ではないものと著者は規定する。「アメリカンサブカルチャー」はけっしてエキセントリックではなく、複雑な社会現象のひとつである。

In the fields of sociology and cultural studies, different subcultures have often been studied. In particular, those kinds of youth culture that seem “spectacular” (e.g., punk rock) because they incorporate “wild” or outrageous styles (e.g., Mohawk hair styles) are especially attractive to researchers. However, there are many different types of subcultures that are not necessarily related to youth culture and are enjoyed and participated in by adults as well.

Of course we need to define the term “subculture” from the beginning; however, no one definition can truly capture the passion, enthusiasm, and ephemeral qualities of any given subculture. Nevertheless, we must try. Perhaps it would be best to start with a basic definition of the term “culture”: the way a particular group of people live their lives; a shared pattern of behaviors, attitudes, and ways of thinking about the world around us. In 1871, the British anthropologist Edward Tylor defined culture as the entire way of life of a group of people: “knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits.”¹ More recently, the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz defined culture as the way a group of people understands reality handed down from one generation to another using symbols.² In colloquial usage, culture often refers to the lifestyles of particular ethnic groups. Another general way of thinking about culture is as “high” culture—“the best which has been thought and said in the world”³—versus popular or “low” culture (e.g., television, Hollywood cinema, pop music), generally considered to be merely “entertainment” and not a serious topic of study. As we can see, there are many ways to define culture, but perhaps the most useful definition for our purposes in this book is the idea of “mainstream culture”: the most popular elements of the social and artistic life of a particular group of people. As the prefix “sub” suggests, with subcultures we are dealing with the social and artistic life that is apart from mainstream culture. Subcultures are alternatives to mainstream culture that are not shared by the majority of the people. Instead, they are a culture that is shared intensely by a small or sometimes large group of people, but not the majority of the population.

Subcultures are created by people who share a very strong interest in a particular activity or thing. They often devote a lot of time, money, and energy to their involvement in the subculture, if not devoting their entire lives to it. Generally, the members of a subculture meet at communal gatherings (e.g., Comic-Con, where

3 **spectacular** 「人目をひく」

punk rock 「パンク = ロック → Chapter 5 参照」

3- **incorporate** 「組み入れる」

outrageous 「突飛な」

4 **Mohawk hair styles** 「モヒカン刈り」

11 **ephemeral** 「短命の」

21 **colloquial usage** 「慣用法」

31 **prefix** 「接頭辞」

40 **if not** ～「とまではゆかなくても」

41 **communal** 「コミュニティーの」

Comic-Con 「comic convention」

→ Chapter 4 参照

thousands of comic book fans gather to buy, sell, and trade comic books and other related items). Subcultures like “Trekkies” (people who love all aspects of the Star Trek franchise) are made up of thousands of “fans.” We should note that the term “fan” derives
 5 from the term “fanatic,” which Merriam-Webster defines as “marked by excessive enthusiasm and often intense uncritical devotion.” Merriam-Webster defines “fan” as “an enthusiastic devotee (as of a sport or a performing art) usually as a spectator” or “an ardent admirer or enthusiast (as of a celebrity or a pursuit).” What is
 10 notable about all these definitions is that they emphasize a high level of devotion that goes beyond casual interest.

In fact, most subcultures seem to have an inherent mystery or secret to be learned by the outsider. The members of a subculture have in-depth knowledge of the subculture because they live their
 15 participation of it and spend a great deal of time engaging in it. For those on the outside of the subculture, the activities and practices might seem bizarre or eccentric or even exotic, but to the insider they make perfect sense and even sometimes seem “natural” (as seen, for example, in dressing as a fictional character in cosplay).

20 Subcultures, like cultures, are complex social phenomena that involve many aspects. One of the most obvious characteristics might be a certain style of fashion (e.g., cowboy boots for rodeo cowboys and devotees). Often, there is also a special language associated with a subculture (there are many examples in hip hop). Next, there are
 25 organized events where the community can gather and meet old and new friends. It is important to stress that subcultures are not just disconnected activities by various people. Instead, they are shared by many people who create communal bonds with one another.

All cultures around the world have their own subcultures with-
 30 in them, but the subcultures we will study in this textbook are all from the U.S. While the U.S. is not unique in having subcultures, the many types of American subcultures are definitely related to the U.S. being an intensely media- and consumer-oriented society with a mixture of people from many different countries.

35 Our hope is that, after you read this textbook, you will see the wide range of subcultures that exist in the U.S. and have a clearer understanding of American culture with all its peculiarities.

3 **Star Trek franchise**
 「日本語で言うシリーズに近い用語」 Star Trek のキャラクターや世界観の使用権許諾。→ Chapter 2 参照

5 **Merriam-Webster**
 =アメリカで最も著名かつ最大のシェアを持つ辞書

6 **excessive** 「過度の」

14 **in-depth** 「徹底した」

17 **bizarre** 「風変わりな」

27 **disconnected** 「一貫性のない」

33 **-oriented** 「～志向の」

1 *Primitive Culture, Volume 1* (New York: Putnam, 1920), 1.

2 *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic, 1973).

3 Arnold, Matthew. *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism* (London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1869), viii.



1. Reading Comprehension

1) Mark T for true and F for false.

1. All subcultures are related to youth culture. ()
2. “Low” culture is generally considered an important topic of study. ()
3. The author thinks that one of the most useful definitions of culture when studying subculture is the idea of “mainstream culture.” ()
4. Subculture fans think their activities are natural. ()
5. Subcultures are simple social phenomena. ()

2) Answer the Questions in English.

1. What is “low” culture?

2. How does the author define subcultures?

3. Who creates subcultures?

4. What do the attendees do at Comic-con?

5. What is notable about the definitions of “fans”?

6. What are the characteristics of subcultures?

2. Prefix and Suffix

		meaning	an example	your example
prefix	sub-	of a smaller size of a subordinate nature	subculture	
prefix	de-	down from, away, off	derive	
prefix	un-	not	uncritical	
suffix	-ology	a subject of study	sociology	
suffix	-ous	forming adjectives; of the nature of; characterized by	outrageous	
suffix	-ee	denoting a person described as or concerned with	devotee	

3. Choose the Best Answer.

- Subcultures are
 - shared by a lot of people.
 - so eccentric that they are not valuable to study.
 - apart from mainstream culture.
 - not related to the lifestyles of particular ethnic groups.
- The members of a subculture
 - do not use a lot of time but a lot of money.
 - are usually alone because they are strange.
 - do not have in-depth knowledge of the subculture so they are not intelligent.
 - devote themselves to the subculture.
- We study subcultures in the U.S. because
 - they are exotic.
 - we can understand what “high culture” is.
 - we can understand American society as a society consisting of many different people.
 - they are culture for young people.



Chapter 2

Trekkies

by Ben Salter, "Trekkies" (2 March 2014)

Vocabulary

Choose the appropriate word below.

1. I was called a complete computer () when I was a high school student.
2. Both Star Wars and Batman became () because they are fictional works that exist in many types of media, including film, comic books, and games.
3. Toyota is a/an () name all over the world.
4. Sushi and sashimi are () examples of Japanese cuisine.
5. It is very difficult to have () coexistence though globalization has been advancing lately.

household / multicultural / geek / iconic / franchises

●このChapter理解のために

SFテレビシリーズ番組『スタートレック』の熱狂的ファンが作り出す「アメリカンサブカルチャー」を紹介する。

Almost all Americans know what “Star Trek” is even if they do not like it. Starting as a TV show that only had limited popularity in the late 1960s, Star Trek was nevertheless able to create a “cult” following (a group of people who fanatically follow a religious leader or some kind of political movement or cultural media) during its initial, three-year broadcast on TV. After its initial run ended, it often appeared on American TV as a “rerun” (also called “serialization”). Along with its growing cult popularity, it became a major “franchise” (a commercial or governmental system allowing individuals or groups to market, sell, or provide a service to consumers—e.g., McDonald’s restaurants are usually an individually owned franchise of a large corporation) that produced the Star Trek story in many different media forms: TV, animation, film, comic books, magazines, novels, graphic novels, video games, toys, and so on. In other words, Star Trek as a cultural phenomenon became what some people have called a “mega-text”¹: a brand name that exists in many different media (as noted above) and has generated a lot of related items as well, such as biographies and autobiographies, spin-offs, as well as serious study of its many aspects by academic scholars.

Star Trek exists as six different TV shows that often appear as reruns: the original *Star Trek* series (1966-1969), an animated series (1973-1974), *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987-1994), *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* (1993-1999), *Star Trek: Voyager* (1995-2001), and *Star Trek: Enterprise* (2001-2005). It is likely that one of the versions of the show plays on TV somewhere in the U.S. at any given point in time. As of 2015, there have been twelve different films starring the cast and characters of the original series, *The Next Generation*, and a new, younger cast for the most recent two movies: *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979), *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* (1982), *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock* (1984), *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home* (1986), *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* (1989), *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* (1991), *Star Trek: Generations* (1994), *Star Trek: First Contact* (1996), *Star Trek: Insurrection* (1998), *Star Trek: Nemesis* (2002), *Star Trek* (2009), and *Star Trek: Into Darkness* (2013). As you can see, the Star Trek storyline has appeared in many different manifestations, which has made it into a “household word”—in other words, words that almost every American knows.

The cast members of the original series have become iconic figures in American culture even to this day, especially William Shatner, who played Captain James Tiberius Kirk and Leonard Nimoy,

4 **cult following** 「熱狂的信奉者たち」

6 **run** 「連続放送」

7 **rerun** 「再放送」

9 **franchise** Chapter 1 notes p.3 参照

14 **graphic novels** 「劇画」

16 **mega** 「大きい」

19 **spin-off** 「続編」

27 **as of** 「の時点で」

37 **manifestation** 「現れ」

37- **household word** 「よく使われている言葉」

39 **iconic** 「聖像的な」

40 **to this day** 「今でも」

40- **William Shatner**
ウィリアム・シャトナー (1931~)。カナダのモントリオール出身の映画監督、俳優、声優、ラジオ DJ、SF 作家。ポーランド及びハンガリー系ユダヤ人移民の家庭に生まれる。

41 **Leonard Nimoy** レナード・ニモイ (1931-2015)。アメリカの俳優、映画監督、ミュージシャン。マサチューセッツ州ボストン出身。ユダヤ系ロシア移民。亡くなったときにはオバマ大統領も「とがった耳で冷静なミスター・スボックを愛していた」との追悼声明を発表。

who played Mr. Spock, half human and half “Vulcan” (another species from a different planet). It is also notable that the original series tried to create a multicultural cast with an African-American woman played by Nichelle Nichols (Lieutenant Uhura), an Asian-American man played by George Takei (Mr. Sulu), a Scottish character played by James Doohan (“Scotty”), and a Russian man played by Walter Koenig (Mr. Chekov). This multicultural strategy occurred at a time when most people shown on American TV were white, European-Americans.

Yet, as impressive as the Star Trek mega-text is, the devotion of its fans is even more impressive. Generally known as “Trekkies” (and sometimes as “Trekkers”), fans of the show come from a variety of races and cultures, a variety of careers and socioeconomic statuses, a variety of genders and sexualities, and a variety of geographic locations. To be a true Trekkie, one has to not just like or even love the TV show; one has to incorporate elements of the Star Trek mega-text into one’s life. As with all subcultures, we need to keep in mind that the participants are not just casual fans; they are *fanatics*. They don’t just love Star Trek; they live it in their daily lives. For many of these Trekkies, aspects of the mega-text affect several, if not all, parts of their lives, whether going to conventions that celebrate the mega-text—which often includes a form of “cosplay” (dressing up as their favorite characters in the TV shows), collecting merchandise related to the mega-text, watching the shows and films multiple times, waiting overnight in lines to be the first people to see the films, and so on.

There are many ways to express one’s devotion to Star Trek. Some people wear T-shirts that display some aspect of the shows, and some people incorporate “memorabilia” (items like souvenirs that people collect to express their love of something) or themes from the mega-text into their professional lives. As shown in the documentary film *Trekkies* (1997), one dentist and his wife transformed their entire dental office into a tribute to Star Trek, with decorations and memorabilia along with the staff dressing up in Star Trek costumes. Some Trekkies even write their own versions of the Star Trek universe. Often, these fans have memorized many aspects and details of the shows and films and have discussions or debates about which character is the best captain or which alien species is the most interesting (usually Klingons or Vulcans).

In the wider American culture, extreme fans of Star Trek are looked down upon and are considered to be “geeks” or “losers.” At

- 1 **Vulcan** Star Trek シリーズに登場する惑星の一つヴァルカンに住む種族。
- 4 **Nichelle Nichols** ニケル・ニコルズ (1932~)。アメリカの俳優、歌手、声優。アフリカ系アメリカ人の女性テレビ俳優の草分け的存在。
- 5 **George Takei** ジョージ・ホサト・タケイ・アルトマン (日本名: 武井 穂郷 (たけい ほと) 1937~)。日系アメリカ人二世の俳優。
- 6 **James Doohan** ジェームズ・ドゥーアン (1920-2005)。カナダ出身の俳優。スコットランド風のなまりをしゃべるので、スコットランド人の機関長を演じた。
- 7 **Walter Koenig** ウォルター・ケーニッヒ (1936~)。アメリカの俳優、映画監督。両親はロシア系ユダヤ人の移民。
- 19 **fanatic** 「熱狂的愛好者」
- 22 **convention** 「熱狂的ファンの集まり」
- 29 **memorabilia** 「記念となるもの 複数形」
- 33 **tribute** 「賞賛のしるし」
- 39 **Klingon** クリゴン人。Star Trek シリーズに登場する異星人。好戦的で戦闘種族。
- 41 **look down upon** 「を低く見る」
geek 「奇人変人」
loser 「何をやってもダメな人」
- 41- **at the very least** = at least

the very least, they are curious because they are so obsessive about Star Trek and devote much money and time to their obsession. They have been parodied famously on the TV show *Saturday Night Live* in a comedy skit starring William Shatner as well as the more recent show *The Big Bang Theory*. On *Saturday Night Live*, Shatner tells the fans at a Star Trek convention that they need to “Get a life!” In other words, they need to realize that Star Trek is just a television show and that they should be spending their time living their own lives rather than obsessing over minor details about Star Trek. Nevertheless, Trekkies are mostly very intelligent and creative people, and are often ordinary Americans. One anthropological study found that 57% of them are female, 54% are married, 87% are between 21 and 60, 55% have at least a college degree, and the majority earn over US\$50,000 per year.² While most Trekkies live in the U.S., they exist around the world and even in Japan, where the show is called “Uchu Daisakusen.”³

All subcultures involve a community of people devoted to the subculture, and Trekkies are one of the most active communities out of all the subcultures introduced in this book. The conventions devoted to Star Trek are impressive displays of costumes, memorabilia, and intense discussions of various aspects of the mega-text. It has been claimed that every weekend, somewhere in the world, a Star Trek convention takes place.⁴ These conventions provide a way for Trekkies to share their enthusiasm with other people who have the same interest.

1 **obsessive about** 「にとりつかれている」

3- *Saturday Night Live* 『サタデー・ナイト・ライブ』。アメリカNBCで、1975年より生放送されている、深夜90分の公開コメディバラエティ番組。

5 *The Big Bang Theory* 『ビッグバン・セオリー / ギークなボクらの恋愛法則』。テレビドラマシリーズ。2人合わせたIQが360という20代のカリフォルニア工科大学の物理学者のオタクコンビが繰り広げるコメディ。

6 **get a life!** 「まじめに生きよ、夢からさめよ」

1 Daniel Leonard Bernardi, *Star Trek and History: Race-ing Toward a White Future* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 7.

2 Daryl G. Frazetti, “The Culture of Trek Fandom: Wouldn’t You Like to Be a Trekkie Too?” http://www.academia.edu/461218/Results_Star_Trek_Fandom_Survey.

3 Jamie Lano, “Japanese Trekkie Community Expanding at Warp Speed,” *Japan Today*, 2010 May 8, <http://www.japantoday.com/category/arts-culture/view/japanese-trekkie-community-expanding-at-warp-speed>.

4 *Trekkies* (1997), directed by Roger Nygard.

**1. Reading Comprehension****1) Mark T for true and F for false.**

1. Star Trek started as a popular television show. ()
2. Twelve different movies have been produced as of 2015. ()
3. Trekkies are the cast members of the original series. ()
4. All American people admire the fans of Star Trek. ()
5. More than half of the fans of Star Trek are female. ()

2) Answer the Questions in English.

1. What is a mega-text?

2. Why is it notable that the original series tried to create a multicultural cast?

3. How can we become true fans?

4. What did one dentist and his wife who are Trekkies do?

5. Why are Trekkies considered to be geeks or losers?

6. What do Trekkies do at a Star Trek convention?

2. Choose the Best Answer.

1. Star Trek became a franchise because
 - a) it has a huge number of fans.
 - b) it has many franchise shops.
 - c) a lot of money has been spent on it.
 - d) it has many media forms such as film, magazines, and television.

2. Trekkies
 - a) just love Star Trek.
 - b) are poor and losers.
 - c) do not mind waiting overnight in lines to be the first person to watch the movie.
 - d) rarely go to conventions.

3. Trekkies are often ordinary Americans because
 - a) they have memorized many aspects and details of the shows and films.
 - b) a cultural study shows that more than 50% of them are married and have a college degree.
 - c) they dress up in Star Trek costumes.
 - d) the results of an anthropological study showed that 58% of them are between 21 and 60.



Chapter 3

by Kyle Nishioka, "DragonCon 2013 – Genderbent cosplay" (30 August 2013)

American Cosplay

Vocabulary

Choose the appropriate word below.

1. Takeshi, who has an intense, obsessive interest in manga, is a manga ().
2. Don't () () () him because he blushes when he speaks in front of people.
3. He () all his money () horse racing.
4. It is () for Japanese to eat eel on the hottest day of the summer, in order to overcome the heat.
5. It is () that my grandfather will live to ninety.

make / spent / likely / on / fun / customary / nerd / of

●このChapter理解のために

現在ではしばしば大会が開催されるほど人気のあるアメリカの「コスプレ」は、どのようにして始まったのだろうか。