Envisioning the Bubble: Creating and Consuming Lifestyles through Magazines in the Culture of the Japanese Bubble Economy (1986-1991)

Hui-Ying Kerr

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Abstract

‘Envisioning the Bubble: Creating and Consuming Lifestyles through Magazines in the Culture of the Japanese Bubble Economy (1986-1991)’

Keywords: Japanese Bubble Economy; Internationalisation; Postmodernism; Consumption; Lifestyle; Gender; Work; Leisure

This thesis explores the consumer culture of the Japanese Bubble Economy (1986-1991). Using the four key magazines of *Mono*, *AXIS, Hanako* and *Brutus* as vehicles, it shows how the culture of 1980s-Bubble Japan was expressed and celebrated through its consumption. Using the critical theories of Baudrillard and Bourdieu, it explores the various consequences of this newly liberated consumption, showing how the effects of the Bubble were not just economic, but also social and cultural.

Spanning a period of about 4-5 years, the Bubble Economy was a time of ballooning prosperity in Japan. Following an upward revaluation of the yen and financial liberalisation instigated by the signing of the 1985 Plaza Accord, the late 1980s saw Japan entering a period of market frenzy, as a credit-fuelled boom caused assets to rocket and land speculation become rife. Consumption too boomed, along with a shifting focus from work to lifestyle, and magazines surged as guides to this new glittering life of prosperity and ease.

As lifestyle magazines, the four chosen deal with different areas of the market that reflect the changes happening in and because of the Bubble. *Mono* describes new, faster patterns of consumer behaviour predicated on the increasingly fast and superficial tastes of its readers. *AXIS* places itself firmly in the international sphere of design culture, and in doing so reflects the subtle nationalist agendas of industry. *Hanako*, catering to the new consumer market of young women, uses travel and consumption to distract and compensate for inequalities in their working lives, while *Brutus* demonstrates a secret dissatisfaction of its male readers at their own restrictions of privilege.

Using critical theory to interrogate the deeper implications of the Bubble, the thesis shows how rather than symbolising the apex of Japanese development and success of its unique system of working and social relations, it merely disguised the cracks that were beginning to form. Moreover, by encouraging the rampant consumer behaviour that was to characterise the Bubble, the government was inadvertently changing attitudes and expectations that would hasten

dissatisfaction with the restrictions of a system that included considerable gender bias and heavily internetworked localised social and corporate relationships.

In the final chapter to the thesis, the more strange and unusual aspects of the Bubble are explored, showing how even as it papered over faults and invited dissatisfaction, it also provided opportunities and space for transformation and self-expression. While many aspects of present-day Japanese culture, such as the trend for *kawaii* (cute), or hyper-energetic characters, are attributed to the 1990s, this thesis shows how these trends relied on the possibilities inherent in the Bubble Economy to flourish, before gaining enough impetus to travel abroad as mature cultures.

Finally, in the field of Japanese studies, the Bubble period is notable for its relative absence in its social and cultural aspects. This is not to say that it was an inconsequential period, but rather that the difficulties of the decades after its bursting and the extravagance that marked it have made it both less urgent and culturally problematic as a period of study. However, this has meant that it has been denied rigorous study, in favour of the more pressing urgencies of the Lost Decades. Using critical theories to a depth rarely seen in Japanese studies, this thesis aims to rectify this and provide a deeper insight into the Bubble than has been allowed before.

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Author's Declaration

During the period of registered study in which this thesis was prepared the author has not been registered for any other academic award or qualification.

The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

Signature_____

Date__28th March 2017_____

Definitions

Bubble Economy (also Bubble, Economic Bubble) – This refers to the period in the late 1980s when Japan experienced an economic surge following its yen value increase and liberalisation of its financial system.

Bubble Culture – The Bubble Culture was the exuberant and extravagant consumer culture that sprang up around the economic boom and financial rewards in the Bubble Economy, and for the purposes of this dissertation the period of study is set 1986 – 1991.

Shinjinrui – Meaning 'New Breed / New Humans' this was the term given to young people in the Bubble whose spendthrift ways were seen as a completely new phenomenon in Japanese society.

Salaryman – The salaryman is the name given to a Japanese white-collar salaried worker, typically working for a company. During the Bubble Economy, he was the figurehead of Japan's corporate success.

OL – An acronym for 'Office Lady', the OL was the salaryman's office counterpart. Usually in her twenties, her role was predominantly clerical and supportive to the salarymen. Noted for their lack of responsibilities, the OLs were the highly visible consumers of the Bubble.

EEOL – This is the acronym for the Equal Employment Opportunities Law, passed in 1986 and heralded as a progressive step forward in women's equal rights at work in Japan.

Kokusaika – Meaning internationalisation, *kokusaika* was a prominent part of government policy that looked to encourage greater engagement between Japan and the international community.

Nihonjinron – Referring to a belief in Japanese 'uniqueness', *nihonjinron* is a nationalistic discourse that can be seen as the other side to the *kokusaika* movement.

A Note on Translations

Isolated words and phrases in Japanese are romanised following the revised Hepburn system. At times if necessary the Japanese script in *kanji*, *hiragana* or *katakana* is provided if it significantly enhances understanding of the text. Interviews were generally conducted in English or interpreted through a translator, and any quotations are verbatim. Unless quoted, all translations are self-translated. Japanese names are given in line with the Japanese practice of family name preceding given name.

Introduction to the Project

This project began life as an intended contributor to the exhibition, 'Postmodernism: Style and Subversion (1970-1990)' held at the V&A Museum that ran from 24th September 2011 – 15th January 2012. However, as preparations advanced, this project became a standalone piece of research, freeing it to evolve more naturally to fit the unique circumstances of Japan's 1980s.

Unlike other areas of Japanese study, the culture of the 1980s is noticeably silent. Cultural research abounds on either side, charting the development of the mass-consumer society of the miracle economy or the globalised spread of Japanese subcultures in the 1990s. Much has been written on the economic aspects of Japan's 1980s, helping to frame the stagnation of the Lost Decade. Yet regarding socio-cultural histories, the Bubble Economy is derided for its shallowness, and marked by writing predicting ascendancy into a global superpower, and after, analysing the fall. The silence that follows echoes back in nervous incredulous laughter of Japanese acquaintances as they try to convey the valuelessness of the decade. Meanwhile non-Japanese often assume the usual tropes of scholarly interest – namely high-value design and events. However, what typifies the Bubble Economy, indeed what typifies all bubble economies, is the consumption it inspires, of frenzied excitement before inevitable shame and regret. It is precisely this consumer culture that needs in-depth study, which for a short time was embraced wholeheartedly in glorious trashiness, before discarded as incompatible with Japanese values of modesty, social equality and politeness.

The late 1980s in Japan were an exciting time, distinct from any post-industrial society that had come before. The excesses and exuberance left their mark on the now 30-years old construction projects and closed-down theme parks. Yet no one talks about the Bubble, nor talks about a desire to go back. Limping through the 1990s, Japan's experience of the 21st century has been marked by recovery and introspection. Yet it has notably shied away from looking directly at the trauma of falling from such a great height, seeing shame where once was delight. This thesis aims to illuminate this period, and see what was glimmering in the darkness.

Fieldwork, Sources, Research Methodology, Literature

Primary research for the project was conducted in 2012, over a 9-month period as a visiting researcher at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, Japan. During this time, museums, libraries, archives and second-hand bookstores around the Kansai area and Tokyo were visited, and the snowball method was used to make friends and connections, gaining access to first-hand accounts through interviews and informal conversations.

From the mixture of primary source materials, literature and testimonies, four main magazines (*Mono*, *AXIS*, *Hanako* and *Brutus*) were selected to use as original artefacts, chosen as publications set-up in the 1980s, and for their relation to popular material culture (*Mono*), design and industry (*AXIS*), gender and youth (*Hanako* and *Brutus*). The last two were also chosen as typical media aimed at young working urban people, positioned at the forefront of work/leisure, producer/consumer dualisms that characterised the frenzied attitudes of the Bubble.

In addition to being physical period-pieces, the magazines were vehicles for exploring themes of consumption, gender, internationalism and the postmodern. In this I follow a tradition of using Japanese magazines and popular culture in the analysis of cultural trends.[1]

In focusing on the cultural aspect of the Bubble, this had a consequential impact on the historical period of study. Although in terms of economic history, the Japanese Economic Bubble burst in 1989, the period was expanded to include the early 1990s. This was to take into account the persistent nature of its effervescent culture, which continued until land prices finally peaked in 1991 along with the interest rate rise of 6%, and which anecdotally was said to continue even beyond, finally deflating with the double shock of the Great Kobe Earthquake and the Tokyo sarin gas attack in 1995[2]. Moreover, just as authors such as Gluck[3] and Vaporis[4] note that periods in Japanese culture are not necessarily bordered by clear cut-off points of time or geography, so too the research conducted for this study shows that aspects of Bubble culture continued well past the initial raising of interest rates in 1989.

Additional objects, images and accounts taken from interviews are also included as further testimony from the period to enrich the research. Notably this includes some secondary academic

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[1] Nancy R. Rosenberger, *Fragile Resistance, Signs of Status: Women between State and Media in Japan,* in Anne E. (ed.) *Re-imagining Japanese Women*, ed. by Imamura, (Berkely, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1996), pp.12-4;
Tanaka in Martinez, Dolores P., *The Worlds of Japanese Popular Culture; Gender, Shifting Boundaries and Global Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998);
Keiko Clarence-Smith, *Copying in Japanese magazines: Unashamed copiers*, in Cox, Rupert (ed.) *The Culture of Copying in Japan: Critical and Historical Perspectives* (Oxon, USA and Canada: Routledge, 2008) pp.51-68

[2] 17th of January 1995 and 20th of March 1995 respectively – see Conclusion chapter, pp. 243-245 for more details.

[3] Gluck, for example, explores how Meiji as a period, though a distinct cultural period, can also be seen as part of a 'synchronicity' of modernity, and as such cannot be viewed purely self-referentially nor vertically, with the end of the Meiji period as a clear cut-off point. Carol Gluck, *The End of Elsewhere: Writing Modernity Now* (The American Historical Review, Volume 116, Issue 3, June 2011) pp.676-687

[4] Vaporis meanwhile notes how the term 'Edo culture' is problematic in academic scholarship on Japan, with assumptions often of a city/Edo-centric capital culture flowing outwards to the localities. However, as he points out, as this was an amalgamation of Japanese culture from different sources in the Tokugawa period, Edo-culture as a term was much more fluid than one rigidly defined by only the city of Edo. (Constantine Nomikos Vaporis, *Tour of Duty: Samurai, Military Service in Edo, and the Culture of Early Modern Japan* (Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press, 2008) p.6

literature published around the late 1980s and early 1990s in which are not only relevant accounts and primary source data, but also attitudes towards Japan that are telling for their complacency about its economic and social prospects at the start of the Lost Decade.

While cultural studies on Japan as pre-war, inter-war, miracle economy and post-Bubble Economy abound, there is remarkably little cultural reflective work on the short period of the Bubble Economy itself. Despite leaving behind a detritus of postmodern buildings and a legacy of changed consumer attitudes in the post-Bubble landscape, literature from the 1990s onwards has focused more on the consequences of the Bubble felt in the years of the Lost Decade than it has on the cultural machinations that led up to the bursting. There are economic texts that examine the phenomenon of the Japanese Bubble[5], yet as the stagnation of the 1990s rolled on, these too have tended to dismiss Japan's late-1980s euphoria to a chapter in a wider story of gloom.

More recently there have been some attempts by researchers to look back at the 1980s, notably Kurotani[6] and Hidaka[7] who include testimonies from Bubble-era salarymen and women. However, these are often subsumed into a larger narrative of gender and work, and do not go into sufficient detail to comment much about the 1980s themselves. More widely there has been some activity in re-examining aspects of the 1980s, from the aforementioned V&A Postmodernism exhibition to the conference, 'When were the 1980s?' held in June 2015 at the Instituto de História Contemporânea[8]. Publications too have explored how the financial and consumer developments of the 1980s led to subsequent cultural and design turns, for example Julier's work on Barcelona of the 1980s[9]. Yet although they provide relevant studies of this period, the focus on accounts of the West for a Western audience makes their contribution partial and fragmentary to this study. East-Asian histories of the 1980s[10] meanwhile tend to focus more on the socio-political and cultural-economic, which is not to belie their usefulness, but which lack the grounding in material and physical artefacts and objects that is fundamental to design history.

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[5] Mitsuhiko Iyoda, *Postwar Japanese Economy: Lessons of Economic Growth and the Bubble Economy* (New York: Springer, 2010); Robert J. Brown Jr., *The Ministry of Finance: Bureaucratic Practices and the Transformation of the Japanese Economy* (Westport: Quorum Books, 1999); Thomas F. Cargill, and Takayuki Sakamoto, *Japan Since 1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

[6] Sawa Kurotani, *Capturing Contemporary Japan: Differentiation and Uncertainty*, in Satsuki Kawano, Glenda S. Roberts and Susan Orpett Long (eds.), (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2014) pp.83-103

[7] Hidaka, Tomoko, *Salaryman Masculinity: Continuity and Change in Hegemonic Masculinity in Japan* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010)

[8] Universidade Nova de Lisboa

[9] Guy Julier, *Barcelona Design, Catalonia's Political Economy, and the New Spain, 1980-1986* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Journal of Design History, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1996), pp. 117-127

Viviana Narotzky, *'A Different and New Refinement': Design in Barcelona, 1960-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Journal of Design History, Vol. 13, No. 3, 2000), pp. 227-243

[10] For example, Thomas R. H. Havens, *Chapter 4 Parks and Prosperity, 1950s–1980s* in *Parkscapes: Green Spaces in Modern Japan* (Hawai'i, University of Hawai'I Press, 2011)

Since 1989, Miyoshi and Harootunian's 'Postmodernism and Japan'[11] has been a staple in the critique of Japanese postmodern culture, while in design, texts on Japan tend to veer towards the chronological and descriptive. Bartal's recent 'Postmodern Advertising in Japan'[12] is a rare example of a design historical approach in which critique is applied to the analysis of specific materials from Japan's 1980s and 1990s. Furthermore, his examples typically engage with the mass-consumer culture that characterised the Bubble, as opposed to glorified specimens of 1980s Japanese furniture and clothing so prized in Western accounts of that period. As such, this research aims to combine historical and social critique with the analysis of visual primary sources to analyse the mass-consumer culture experienced by so many in the Bubble, demystifying its glamour and its terror.

Use of Theory

As a period marked by late-capitalist mass-production and high consumption, postmodern theory appeared natural to use in the analysis of Japan's 1980s. Baudrillard and Bourdieu's work on consumer capitalism and status were chosen as particularly relevant to the understanding of 1980s Bubble culture, both in their theory and chronology of their writings in the late-twentieth century, and as contemporaneous to the Japanese Bubble itself. It must be noted that postmodern theorists such as Baudrillard had an especially symbiotic relationship with 1980s Japan; their ideas both inspired by modern Japanese culture[13] and enthusiastically taken up by Japanese cultural commentators[14]. By the 1990s slump and end of the bubble-era, their use in Japan waned, just as their own attention passed on to other more pressing concerns in international culture, and although researchers would still reference their work on the study of Japan[15], these have been typically superficial in nature. While the use of critical theorists is common practice in the study of design history, in the field of Japanese studies this is a much rarer occurrence, especially in-depth application. The few who do use postmodern or critical theory in this way include Clammer[16] and Tanaka,[17] although in the former, his work tends to veer towards generalised statements with little

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[11] Miyoshi, Masao and H.D. Harootunian, *Postmodernism and Japan* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1989)

[12] Ory Bartel, *Postmodern Advertising in Japan: Seduction, Visual Culture, and the Tokyo Art Directors Club* (New England, USA: Dartmouth College Press, 2015)

[13] For example, Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983)

[14] Baudrillard especially.

[15] Miller, Laura, *Cute Masquerade and the Pimping of Japan* in Allen, Matthew and Rumi Sakamoto, *Japanese Popular Culture: Critical Concepts in Asian Studies Volume IV, Globalising Japanese Popular Culture: The Coolness of Japan* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 57-71

[16] Clammer, John, *Contemporary Urban Japan: A Sociology of Consumption* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011)

[17] Tanaka, Keiko, *'Japanese Women's Magazines: the language of aspiration'* in Martinez, Dolores P., *The Worlds of Japanese Popular Culture; Gender, Shifting Boundaries and Global Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) pp. 110-132

analysis of concrete examples, while Tanaka's work primarily uses semiotic theory to analyse the machinations of advertising.

In this study, I resurrect the earlier spirit of Baudrillard and Bourdieu by using theories taken from the key texts, *System of Objects*[18] and *Distinction*[19], making minor references to Lyotard[20] and Jameson[21]. The focus has been kept deliberately narrow to engage more fully with their theories and more completely deconstruct the materials at hand. While there are other theorists of the period[22], Baudrillard and Bourdieu are seen as particularly relevant. Baudrillard for his early work on the changing nature of objects in a system of mass-production and consumption, useful for the analysis of the formal qualities of the magazines, as well as his strong links and influence in Japanese cultural studies. Meanwhile, although problematic in the context of a Japan in which homogeneity is the dominant ideology, Bourdieu's theories on class differentiation and struggle are applicable to studying Japan in the 1980s, especially with its emphasis on bourgeois material consumer culture. Rather than a historic concept of class based on feudal systems of land ownership, inheritance and rigid hierarchies, Bourdieu's work addressing modern 1970s French bourgeoisie – whose aspirational formation of middle-class identity was based on shifting boundaries of culture, education and consumption rather than rigid structures of inheritance, family networks and impermeable communities – are similar to changes happening within Japanese consumer culture of the 1980s. These ideas about culture and its value in enabling social groups to differentiate themselves through the incorporation and performance of taste will be useful in analysing how lifestyle magazines were reflecting and enabling the identity formation of their audience, at a time when Japan perceived itself to be changing, its economic boom opening up new fields of economic, social and cultural opportunity. Finally, not all chapters will include the use of these theories, concentrated mainly in the Chapters 2 and 5 where their application was judged appropriate to the sources.

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[18] Baudrillard, Jean, *The System of Objects*, trans. by James Benedict (London and New York: Verso, 2005)

[19] Bourdieu, Pierre, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2010)

[20] Lyotard, Jean-Francois, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (Theory & History of Literature)* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984)

[21] Jameson, Fredric, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Poetics of Social Forms) (London: New Left Review, 1984)

[22] For example, Stuart Hall, who explores the agency of participants of culture as both producers and consumers through a Marxist / post-Gramscian lens, particularly through the 1980s and 1990s. Also, Anthony Giddens, whose work of structuration in society explored issues of agency, structure, and the impact of modernity, globalisation and postmodernity. However, for reasons expressed in the main text, these theorists fall outside the current scope of this research, and therefore will not be used.

Design History Methodology

Situated within design history, this research project acknowledges and follows 3 main approaches: intersectionality, cultural analysis, and qualitative research. Furthermore, the subject areas this research touches upon deliberately coincide with many areas explored within the discipline, such as popular culture and the everyday.

Intersectionality is the deliberate recognition of the multitude of interpretations, positioned between and across disciplines, fields and texts in the study of culture and history. This understanding of design history as interdisciplinary, intertextual, transcultural and transnational[23], identified as within an interconnected network of relational and reciprocal object-people-culture relationships, has been explored not only within design history, but also disciplines such as cultural studies, history, ethnography, gender studies and visual and material culture[24]. Breaking from a tradition inherited from art history in the 1970s[25], this approach explores the material in a thematic rather than purely chronological way, and in doing so aims to use comparative and connective methodologies as a way of moving away from the hegemonic Western-centric approach of traditional histories. Straddling the areas of Japanese cultural studies and history, economic history and design history, while drawing from material consisting of magazines, interviews and critical and cultural theory, this research engages with current trends of exploring border-area design in design history methodologies[26] whilst adding to our understanding of the subject within Japanese and economic histories.

This thematic, cultural approach mirrors the 'cultural turn' within design history in the 1980s, during which the significance of cultural and social practices was highlighted as a way of reframing and decoding the object[27]. Discourse analysis, visual and material approaches, contextual and cultural analysis; this research acknowledges these methodologies in its analysis of the material, using a mixture of formal, contextual and cultural analysis of the primary source materials alongside individual narratives and oral histories that make up this discursive approach[28]. It particularly looks at the cultures of working metropolitan Japanese men and women aged 20-30, against the

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[23] Glenn Adamson; Giorgio Riello; Sarah Teasley (eds.), *Global Design History*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2011)
[24] Nicholas Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999)
[25] Kjetil Fallan, *Design History: Understanding Theory and Method*, (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2010);
Hazel Conway (ed.), *Design History: A Student's Handbook* (London and New York: Routledge, 1987)
[26] Grace Lees-Maffei; Rebecca Houze (eds.), *The Design History Reader* (London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2010) p.2
[27] Stuart Hall, 1997a:2 as cited in Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*, 4th Ed. (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC, Melbourne: Sage Publications Ltd, 2016), p.2
[28] Conway, 1987

background of consumer and corporate cultures, as a way of contextualising the primary source material and the period. Furthermore, the application of critical and cultural theories, namely Baudrillard[29] and Bourdieu[30], but also Lyotard[31], Jameson[32] and Stewart[33], and Japanese cultural historians and theorists such as Ivy[34] and McVeigh[35], aid an ontological reading of the research material, applying cultural theory to the analysis of material and visual culture. Furthermore, the use of Baudrillard and Bourdieu follows the use of French social theorists as pioneered by the founding of the 1979 journal, Block[36], and by moving away from the overly structural readings of those such as Williamson[37], it embraces readings that are more culturally nuanced and global rather than formalist and universal[38].

The approach to the research in this project is predominantly qualitative, informed by some quantitative analysis of the primary source material (magazines), and supported in turn with additional empirical material. Overall this contributes to a striving for a post-formalist approach that includes a mixing of methods, drawing on a variety of primary and secondary source materials, while recognising the partial, fragmentary nature of both the research and the subject area.

The research prioritises the everyday and popular as a deliberate strategy of exploring low-cultural forms as relevant and meaningful subjects of study. Following anti-formalist turns in design history and cultural studies championing the anonymous/non-authored, as well as that born out of consumer culture, the focus on popular lifestyle magazines of the period sits within this tradition. In this, Mirzoeff's work on visuality may be relevant, as an imagining or visualisation of history[39]. However, rather than his interpretation of an authoritative gaze implicit within visuality, of one that

[29] Baudrillard, 2005
[30] Bourdieu, 2010
[31] Lyotard, 1984
[32] Jameson, 1984
[33] Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2007)
[34] Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan*, Edition (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995)
[35] Brian J. McVeigh, *Life in a Japanese Woman's College: Learning to be Ladylike* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997)
[36] Fallan, 2010, pp.2-5; Woodham, 2004:51 as cited in Fallen, 2010, p.5
[37] Judith Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising* (London and New York: Marion Boyears Publishers Ltd, 1978)
[38] Glenn Adamson; Giorgio Riello; Sarah Teasley (eds.), *Global Design History*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2011)
[39] Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look* (Critical Inquiry, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Spring 2011), pp. 473-496; The University of Chicago Press, 2011) p.474; Nicholas Mirzoeff, *On Visuality*, (Journal of Visual Culture, Volume 5, Issue 1; pp.53-79; London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006); Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011)

catalogues and arranges[40], this research recognises 'the right to look'[41] implicit within the low-form of magazine culture, as a way of seeing that claims back through its own subjectivity an autonomy over the visible, and an indication of the autonomy and power of the magazine reader within cultural history. Furthermore, as magazines of change and influence, they are archives of mediation, encompassing the global within, of the super-local within the context of the local. In this way, they contain narratives of agency within their own narrative, having a constant folding and unfolding process of world-making, where the object becomes both an object of study and a methodological tool.

It is this process of unfolding of multiple viewpoints that is most prevalent in this work. As mentioned, the culture of the Bubble Economy is one that is currently under-researched and suffers from a dearth of interpretations. Through the themes in this work, multiple viewpoints and readings are explored and offered, adding not only to the field of study but also, in being able to hold this multiplicity in the same field of vision, to the methodological process of understanding research and analysis. The next step in acknowledging the multiplicity of interpretations and interdisciplinary nature of design and cultural analysis, is in the amalgamation of these multiple viewpoints; where one does not negate the other, but instead each sit alongside and intertwine. In this way while dealing with a postmodern period, and using postmodern critical theorists, this research goes beyond the fragmentary nature of postmodernism, reconstructing it to create a complex and complementary web of interpretations and viewpoints of the same whole.

A Note on Interview Subjects and First-hand Accounts

As mentioned, interview subjects were sourced using the snowball method, relying on contacts to make introductions. The ability to find appropriate sources for first-hand accounts was thus restricted to networks, reflected in a final demographic of 10 men and 2 women. Of these, two took place in groups of two and three people, and three interviews were conducted with the help of translators. As such it was fortunate that the interview subjects encountered were people involved in the cultural production of the Bubble, in the fields of advertising, design, architecture and television.

[40] Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look* (Critical Inquiry, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Spring 2011), pp. 473-496; The University of Chicago Press, 2011), p.476. Although one must admit the authoritative position of the historian on the organising and interpretation of material.

[41] Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look* (Critical Inquiry, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Spring 2011), pp. 473-496; The University of Chicago Press, 2011), p.474

Being a beginner in Japanese studies, language and research did hamper proceedings, meaning missed opportunities to ask pertinent questions or find more relevant sources, that became clear only once back in the UK.

As such the gathered testimonies are used to apply added colour and texture to the study, rather than as definitive or objective accounts of the period. Moreover, the accounts have to be balanced against the nostalgia for youth, the desire to impress an interviewer, and the problem of memory in general. As opinion and personal anecdote, they are thus included mainly as footnotes to the main text. It is also important to note that although they appear to be in poor English, this is because they are direct transcriptions from interviews conducted in English, except for two that were conducted via translators. As such it was felt important to keep them in the original rich spirit of the interviews as direct quotations.

These interviews revealed details about the Bubble, not only particular to the experiences of the interviewees, but also about their general attitude towards the period. Coming from a place of few preconceptions and little knowledge about Japan's Bubble Economy, it was fascinating to observe subjects' complex reactions to questions and attitudes towards their own stories. In their twenties during the Bubble Economy, these men and women displayed conflicting emotions of surprise, amusement, embarrassment, shame, ruefulness, secret pleasure, pride, humility, and finally open and unabashed enjoyment as their stories gathered pace. In these we also see the complexity hidden in the Bubble Economy belied by its marginal status in academic study. As such, although the sample size is small, these testimonies are also valuable, the richness of their content adding validity and an experiential dimension to the study.

Aim of the Project

Understanding the Japanese Bubble Economy has been a tricky task. Comprised of many parts, like the postmodernism that surrounded it, the Bubble Economy as a cultural phenomenon is difficult to pin down. As such, this project aims to examine the nature of consumption as a culture in the Japanese Bubble, as portrayed through its lifestyle magazines aimed at the young working people who, were at the forefront of both work and consumer leisure.

As consumption as a term spans a variety of implications, this thesis takes its definition from that within cultural studies, sensitive to both 'economic and cultural dimensions' [42]. As such, consumption in this research refers to the process of absorption of cultural artefacts and events

[42] Lee, M. *Consumer Culture Reborn; The Cultural Politics of Consumption* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993) p.49

such as visual media (i.e.: magazines, advertisements, fashion, cinema), experiences (i.e.: travel, drinking cultures, music), and concepts (i.e.: lifestyle, internationalism, individualism, time, nostalgia). While consumption may be measured tangibly through economic data, what is of equal interest is the way in which it becomes a conduit for a range of practices: expressive, transformative and performative; through which distinct cultures are born and developed. Furthermore, the study of consumption as a cultural practice becomes a way to explore the dynamics and hierarchies of power and autonomy made visible through the consuming practices of the inhabitants of a culture. In this it follows a history of writers in cultural studies, from Mulvey[43] and Williamson[44], to Hebdige[45] and Miller[46], who in their examination of cultural objects of everyday life, explore the complex and symbiotic relationships that contextualise consumer culture, and the consumers and goods within. When using the terminology of consumption, it is as 'a combination of practices and behaviours'[47] in which as agents of change, the new spaces of consumer culture such as mass media, are scrutinised and absorbed by their consumer-audience-participants.

Using the magazines, *Mono*, *AXIS*, *Hanako*, and *Brutus*, the thesis will show how government policies on the economy directly impacted the attitudes and practices of young people, shaping the character of the Bubble as intimately interwoven with consumer desires for liberation and self-expression. Moreover, it will show how, rather than affecting only the material culture of the Bubble, these policies of individual consumerism would have longer-reaching effects in the fields of work, home, and culture.

Using a mix of quantitative, qualitative material and theoretical analysis, I demonstrate how an overall structural analysis of magazines can tell us as much about the imagined positioning of an audience as a more in-depth analysis of an image. Furthermore, by concentrating on gendered magazines, I explore how the intersections of gender with consumption create contradictions and tensions that have long-reaching consequences for individuals operating in highly gender-stratified systems.

New Knowledge

Framed against the wider context of design history and Japanese cultural studies, this research brings to the fore different new material for both disciplines. Regarding Japanese studies, it

[43] Laura Mulvey, Visual and Other Pleasures (London: Macmillan, 1989)
[44] Williamson, 1978
[45] Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London and New York: Routledge, 1979)
[46] Daniel Miller, The Comfort of Things (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008)
[47] Shields, Rob (ed.) *Lifestyle Shopping; The Subject of Consumption* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992) p.6

examines the phenomenon of the Japanese Bubble through a cultural lens, of which there is a lack of current academic research. It does this through the new material analysis of Japanese magazines of the period, *AXIS*, *Mono*, *Hanako*, and *Brutus*, bringing tangible material to the study of consumer culture of the Bubble and which specifically have not before been the subject of major study. In doing so, it questions widely-held beliefs in economic literature that the late 1980s were a peak of the Japanese development, and posits that it instead disguised cracks and hastened dissatisfaction with a uniquely rigid Japanese corporate system. Furthermore, in exploring the consequences of the cultural and consumer bubble, this work attempts to locate within these cultures some originating changes of gender norms that became more pronounced once the Bubble ended. Through this analysis, the research brings a new interpretation to the period as not solely negative, but also positive, opening up new avenues and opportunities for self-expression that fostered trends and rich sub-cultures, ultimately leading to the development of a modern Japanese identity, as well as the possibility of a unique East-Asian modernity framed within its own reclaimed context.

In terms of design histories, this work also provides a necessary addition of economic history, itself a scarcity in design history perspectives that focus more on socio-cultural and object-oriented narratives. In doing so, this thesis emerges alongside other new design historical inquiries that bring economic perspectives into design history, for example, Julier's recent work on the complexities of design's relationship with macro, mirco and socio and political economies[48]. In this, the combination of empirical work and content analysis is also something that adds to gaps in design histories on Japan that often draw on traditional concepts of pure object analysis, but which lack appropriate contextualisation[49]. Moreover, in its use and application of detailed critical theories to material culture, while this follows a tradition of conventional Western design histories, this is something that has been less frequently applied in Japanese design history, and thus adds to the theoretical expansion of this area.

Chapter Structure

Chapter 1 outlines the historical background to the Bubble Economy, including the economic and international policies that led to its creation, the consumer and leisure culture that inflated it further, and the main bywords in the Bubble of youth, internationalisation, corporate culture, the salaryman and the office lady. It also sets out the base understanding to Japanese magazines in

[48] Guy Julier, *Economies of Design* (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC, Melbourne: Sage Publications Ltd, 2017)
[49] For example, Penny Sparke, *Modern Japanese Design* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1987)

1980s-Japan, its role in shaping identity, and introduces some of the theories of Baudrillard and Bourdieu that is used in the other chapters.

Chapter 2 focuses on the two magazines, *Mono* and *AXIS*. Exploring the wider issues of mass-consumption in the Bubble, it explores the relationships between postmodern consumption and technology, the body, the corporate and the international.

In Chapter 3, *Hanako* magazine is used as a vehicle to examine women's role as workers and consumers. Using analysis through the complete year of 1989 at the height of the Bubble, it looks at how the wider restrictions on their economic potential affected the way they accessed leisure, consumption and the international.

As a counterpoint, Chapter 4 uses *Brutus* magazine over the span of 1986 – 1991 to explore men's roles and experiences of work, leisure and international culture through the wider period of the Bubble. Through this it explores how their attitudes might have been affected by the changes around them.

In Chapter 5, some of the more ambiguous aspects to the Bubble Economy are explored, looking at how flows of time were affected by some of the innovations and trends that characterised the period.

Finally, in Chapter 6, the end of the Bubble is briefly explored through its different aspects of economics, culture and its significance today, before an overall conclusion to the thesis itself.

Limitations to the Project

Culturally speaking, the Japanese Bubble Economy was not made of one aggravating factor, but was a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon, made up of many parts and affecting different sectors. As such to study the whole of the Bubble is too great for one thesis, and there are inevitable gaps for lack of time and space. Ironically these include many of the things that Japan was famous for in the 1980s, such as furniture design, designer fashion, product design, electronics and technology, automotive design, video games and computers, architecture and interior design, theme parks, expositions and festivals. The list goes on. However, although considered, these were eventually discounted for reasons that included a difficulty to access primary sources or entry to industries, the barrier of language, not having the time nor resources to nurture appropriate networks, lack of opportunity, and in some of the more well-known areas such as fashion and electronics, an already over-subscribed area of research. However, it is hoped that there will be an opportunity in the future to revisit some of these areas to add to the analysis of this period.

Other limitations to this project are to do with my own subjectivity and position as Other to the research. Necessity limited the use of sources to mainly images and painstaking translation of titles, headings and small paragraphs. However, magazines as source material are intended to be speedily and ephemerally consumed – overall impressions counting for more than meticulous study. Moreover, it is important to note that while my positioning to the subject will always be Other both culturally and temporally, each reading of any source is a fresh reading, bringing the potential for new interpretations and understandings to light.

Chapter 1: Introducing the Bubble Economy

On the 24th March 1999, Nonaka Masaharu, a 58-year-old golf purchasing manager, burst into his company president's office. Protesting his dismissal, he produced two long fish-carving blades and committed *seppuku*, or ritualised self-disembowelment. In his letter his words, 'loyal workers are being discarded like torn up rags' echoed the feeling of crisis that was befalling Japan's corporate workers, enforced restructuring sending a downturn across Japan that was to last years if not decades.[50] Yet just only 9 years before, unemployment was at a low of 2.5%,[51] annual growth at 5.8%[52] and Japan's unprecedented wealth had enabled it to become the second largest economy in the world, predicted to soon overtake even that of the U.S. What had happened?

In the late 1980s, Japan experienced an exaggerated asset bubble of such proportions, it was later dubbed the 'Bubble Economy'. Building on the success of its 'miracle economy' of the 1950s and 1960s[53], Japan's current account surplus rose sharply in the early-1980s, reaching $35 billion by 1984[54]. At its peak of $85.8 billion in 1986[55] it was the world's second-largest economy, creating trade tensions with the international community and especially the U.S. Succumbing to mounting international friction, Japan signed the 1985 Plaza Accord, agreeing to upwardly revalue the yen against the dollar, open up its domestic markets and liberalise its banks in order to reduce its own trade surplus.[56]

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[50] Peter Matanle, Leo McCann and Darren Ashmore, *Men Under Pressure: Representations of the `Salaryman' and his Organization in Japanese Manga* (Organization, Volume: 15 issue: 5, 639-664, Sage, 2008)

[51] Curtis Andressen, *A Short History of Japan: From Samurai to Sony* (Australia: Allen and Unwin, 2002) p.181

[52] Maurice Obstfeld, *Japan's Bubble, Deflation, and Long Term Stagnation*, ed. by Koichi Hamada, Anil K. Kashyap, and David E. Weinstein (Cambridge Massachusetts and London, England: the MIT Press 2011) p.57

[53] The miracle economy, also referred to as the High Growth Period (HGP), is commonly attributed to the period between 1950-1970, although some place this more from 1955 due to the economy not reaching the pre-war peak until this point, and until the early 1970s due to the first oil shock of 1973-74. During this time, Japan experienced rapid reindustrialisation and stability, with economic growth quadrupling, and nominal GNP at 15.7 percent per annum, while real annual GDP growth averaged at around 10 percent, leading to rising living standards and a boom in a new consumer society and culture. (Thomas Cargill and Takayuki Sakamoto, *Japan Since 1980* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.2.; Atsushi Maki, *Postwar Private Consumption Patterns of Japanese Households: The Role of Consumer Durables* (Pacific Economic Papers, No. 262, Canberra, Australia-Japan Research Centre, 1996), p.4)

[54] Shingo Tamari, *Japan Economic Almanac 1988; The Japan Economic Journal*, ed. by Masahiko Ishizuka, (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shimbun Inc., 1988) p.26

[55] Christopher Wood, *The Bubble Economy: The Japanese Economic Collapse* (London: Sidwick & Jackson, 1992) p.16

[56] While outwardly one of the reasons behind agreeing to the Plaza Accord was Japan's increasing sense of responsibility to the international community as its own economic and industrial power was on the rise (Tamari p.26) – and indeed the bailing out of the U.S. stock market following the 'Black Monday' crash of October 1987 further showed Japan's commitment to stabilising the U.S. and global financial system – it must be remembered that easing trade frictions was also paramount to the Japanese export industry, with countries such as the U.S. (Japan's largest market) threatening to implement protectionist trade policies. Meanwhile with many Japanese companies already manufacturing products abroad, a higher yen was not

In the 8 months following, the yen soared from ¥240 to ¥150 to the dollar. Nevertheless, Japan's continuing trade surplus prompted the need to artificially raise the yen several more times and agree to a raft of further liberalising policies in the 1986 Baker-Miyazawa agreement and the 1987 Louvre Accord[57].

However, while intending to help stimulate the American economy and ease trade frictions, the effect of the higher yen depressed exports and put pressure on Japan's economy, resulting in the small *endaka* recession of 1985-1986. This caused the Bank of Japan to pursue an expansionary monetary policy, increasing domestic monetary supply with low interest rates to stimulate investment. Slashing from 5% at the end of 1985 to 3% in November 1986, it ended at 2.5% in February 1987.[58] This had two effects; increasing money flow actually lowered the value of the yen, counteracting the Plaza Accord, while the resulting expansion of money and credit in the economy, coupled with a newly liberalised credit market, gave rise to the rapid escalation of equity and property prices, leading to the asset bubble of the late 1980s[59].

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seen as necessarily overly problematic to industry. Furthermore, liberalising its domestic market can also be viewed as part of Japan's own policies of economic development. Following the recessions of the 1970s (caused in part by the depegging of the yen to the dollar in 1971, the collapse of the Bretton-Woods system of fixed currency exchange, and being over-reliant on global oil during the two Gulf War oil shocks of 1973 and 1979), Japan was already in the process of liberalising its economy, overseeing the transfer of household savings to the corporate market that helped fund the expansion of industry and investment into the liberalised international markets enabling the Japanese economy reach it's 'high-water mark' of 1980-1985. (For a more comprehensive analysis of the Japanese Economic Bubble see Koichi Hamada, Anil K. Kashyap, and David E. Weinstein, *Japan's Bubble, Deflation, and Long-term Stagnation,* (Cambridge (Mass.) and London: MIT Press, 2011) , as well as Thomas F. Cargill and Takayuki Sakamoto, *Japan Since 1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) and Carl Mosk, *Japanese Economic Development: Market, norms, structures* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008); for a more detailed overview of the Japanese economic system as a whole, see Kazuo Sato (ed.), *The Transformation of the Japanese Economy* (New York and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1999)

[57] Fiona Graham, *Inside the Japanese Company* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003) pp.1-2

[58] Makoto Itoh, *The Japanese Economy Reconsidered* (New York: Palgrave, 2000) p.14 – To be fair to the Bank of Japan, the first rate-reduction was in response to the Japanese recession of 1986 that itself was a consequence of the Plaza Accord instigated yen appreciation and consequent decline in Japanese exports. Moreover, the further rates reduction that led to the 2.5 percent rate in 1987 were also politically instigated, in the main by the agreement of the Louvre Accord of 1987 that aimed to stabilise the US economy after the collapse of the dollar that in itself was also instigated by the policies agreed in the Plaza Accord (Wood p.20 and W.R. Garside, *Japan's Great Stagnation: Forging Ahead, Falling Behind*, (Cheltenham, UK, Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar, 2012) p.63

[59] There is some dispute over whether the talk of Japan's Economic Bubble has been exaggerated, especially in light of the fact that the asset boom of the 1970s was bigger and sharper than during the late 1980s. However, if the late 1980s asset Bubble is seen in relation to the dollar-yen exchange rate, rather than just isolated in terms of domestic price hikes, then it is at this point that assets in Japan reach peaks of not just national, but international value, making the idea of labelling this an economic bubble feasible. (For example, the land value of the Imperial Palace in central Tokyo, at the peak of the Bubble, could be equated to the real estate value of the entire state of California, or the whole of Canada) (Mosk p. 331). Furthermore, Barsky (in Hamada, Kashyap, and Weinstein, 2011) notes that 'Between January 1985 and December 1989 the real value of the Nikkei 225 stock price index tripled. By the middle of 1992, the index in real terms was less than 20% above its January 1985 level. Land prices behaved similarly. An index of land prices in Japan's six largest cities almost tripled in real terms between 1985 and 1990. Land prices fell more gradually than did stock prices,

However, while high asset values, investment and a strong yen made it appear that Japan was experiencing a boom, this was essentially a hollow growth, predicated on an artificially inflated currency, cheap international credit, a bullish asset market and stimulated consumer demand. The strong economy masked stagnating industries squeezed by the high yen, international trade frictions, and competition from 'Newly Industrialised Countries' (NICs) such as South Korea and Taiwan[60]. In response to these recessionary and international forces, the low interest rates were intended to aid domestic industry and stimulate consumer demand.

For as the ramifications of the yen's appreciation became more apparent, Japanese policy shifted, discarding the government's previous 7-year economic plan ending in 1990, in favour of a new 5-year economic plan 1988-1992[61]. In light of its struggling export industry, the new policy looked to balance the economy through growing its consumer base. Achieving stable growth through price stability, incomes were predicted to rise, stimulating a domestic demand that would offset the negative effects of stagnating exports.[62] Thus rather than wanting to dampen down the effects of the asset boom as part of a credit-fuelled economic bubble, the Japanese government instead saw this as a way of negating the detrimental effects of the yen rise and stagnating exports, incorporating it into its overall plan for economic growth based on high capital investment and domestic consumer demand.

Moreover, with financial liberalisation came a fundamental change to the way banks raised and distributed capital. While previously the banks had largely dealt with the large cash-rich companies of Japanese industry, following liberalisation they were now bypassed in favour of cheaper funding in the international money markets. As an alternative, banks increasingly lent to smaller companies

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but by 1995 the real land price was no more than 45% higher than its 1985 value. Without making any presumption as to the cause (or the "rationality") of this dramatic asset price behaviour, we will refer to it as the "Japanese Bubble". I thus adopt the neutral Kindelberger (1996) definition of a bubble as merely "an upward price movement over an extended range that then implodes". (Barksy in Hamada, Kashyap, and Weinstein, 2011:17)

[60] Takahide Nonaka *Japan Economic Almanac 1988; The Japan Economic Journal*, ed. by Masahiko Ishizuka, (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shimbun Inc., 1988) p.84

[61] As called for by the 'New Maekawa Report' of 1987 (Toshinori Dozen, *Japan Economic Almanac 1988; The Japan Economic Journal*, ed. by Masahiko Ishizuka, (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shimbun Inc., 1988) p.8)

[62] 'Domestic demand is seen contributing 4.7% to exceed real growth, while external demand is expected to take 1% off the overall figure for the third straight year of minus growth. On the domestic front, the government forecasts a slowdown in housing construction. But personal consumption (private final consumption expenditure) which normally account for nearly 60% of GNP, is expected to rise 3.8% and private capital investment 9.8%, both in real terms. This reflects a government scenario which see capital spending and personal consumption taking up the baton for growth in fiscal 1988 from the combination of personal consumption, housing investment and government expenditures which propped up the economy in fiscal 1987.' (Dozen, in Ishizuka, 1988, p.6)

and consumers, often using land as collateral. In this way, they added to the rising land prices of the Economic Bubble.[63]

The Bubble Economy in Japan was therefore a period in which international policy agreements from 1986, aiming to reduce Japan's trade surplus and ease trade frictions, in fact created conditions for rampant investment and credit to flood the Japanese system. Meanwhile domestic policies aimed at stimulating the Japanese economy kept interest rates artificially low, directly contributing to the extreme rise in asset values, a bullish overconfident market, and a rampant consumer culture that characterised the 1980s. Looking to cool down the overheated market, it was the Bank of Japan's interest rate hikes of 1989 and 1990 that finally prompted the collapse of asset prices through 1990 and 1991, and this and the subsequent revelations of political and corporate corruption and misjudgement allowed by the excesses of the Bubble, finally led to the halting of Japan's economy before it descended into the prolonged slump of its 'Lost Decade' through the mid-1990s onwards.[64]

Consumer Culture and the Bubble Economy

In stimulating consumer demand, Japan was not only changing its economy, but also the practices and attitudes that shaped its modern society. At its heart, Japanese consumption is intimately linked to production and the narrative of modern Japan. Coinciding with the development of industry and the rebuilding of the modern Japanese economic and industrial state, consumption has often been limited to its ability to support the production system, with rationality a byword in consumer behaviour.[65]

Starting from the boom in household goods in the 1950s/1960s that fuelled the miracle economy,[66] the improvements in living standards is described in each decade's three key items, light-heartedly based on the three sacred treasures of the Emperor (sword, mirror and jewel). From the three 'S's

[63] Wood, pp.12,23-24; Banks were also complicit in the uniquely Japanese system of *keiretsu*, in which lending in a heavily internetworked system of companies and banks led to a lack of transparency and governance that contributed to the financial mistakes of the Bubble.

[64] For a more specific analysis of the Bubble Economy itself, see Wood (1992). For a more general overview of the Bubble Economy and how it sits within wider landscape of the Japanese economy, technology and industry, see Itoh (2000) and for an analysis of the policies and actions that led to the Bubble Economy and its bursting, see Garside (2012).

[65]Although studies show Japan to have not only a flourishing consumer culture that was separate from the production of mass produced goods but one that also predated the opening up of Japan to the West and the industrialising of modern Japan (Pratt 1999, Platt, 2000 in Franks, Penelope and Janet Hunter (eds.), *The Historical Consumer: Consumption and Everyday Life in Japan, 1850-2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) p. 8)

[66] Partner, 1999; O'Bryan, 2009 (in Franks and Hunter (eds.), 2012) pp. 6-7

of the 1950s, *senpūki*, *sentaku*, *suihanki* (electric fan, washing machine, electric rice cooker)[67], the three 'C's of the 1960s, *kaa*, *kura*, *kara terebi* (car, air conditioner, colour television), to the three 'J's of the 1970s/1980s, *jueru*, *jetto*, *jūtaku* (jewels, overseas vacation/jet travel, house)[68]. While describing each era, they also chart the change from rational domestic goods to consumer lifestyle accruements.

However, the 1970s also saw domestic demand for consumer goods plateauing, and alongside rising cost of labour and trade tensions, companies were encouraged to expand abroad, eventually leading to the rapid escalation of Japan's trade surplus in the 1980s. With exports hampered by the higher yen, domestic consumption in the 1980s was needed to once again make up the shortfall, and by concentrating demand in the consumer industries of retail and services,[69] increased consumption would further help reshape the economy away from primary and secondary industries and towards a tertiary or service economy[70]. During this period, between 1980 and 1990, GDP increased from ¥240,175.9 billion, to ¥430,039.8 billion, and national disposable income from ¥208,917.8 billion to ¥369,462.8 billion, an increase of 79.05 percent and 76.84 percent respectively. Meanwhile, private final consumption expenditure rose by 76.39 percent from ¥141,324.3 billion to ¥249,288.5 billion, indicating significant rises, although not as dramatic as during the miracle economy.[71]

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[67] Other 'treasures' of the 1950s include 'television, electric washing machine, and refrigerator' (Parissa Haghirian*, Japanese Consumer Dynamics* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.6); also 'refrigerators, vacuum cleaners and washing machines' (Weekly Asahi, 1988, 1990, in Atsushi Maki, *Postwar Private Consumption Patterns of Japanese Households: The Role of Consumer Durables* Pacific Economic Paper No. 262 (Canberra: Australia–Japan Research Centre, 1996) p.9

[68] Varley, 2000, p.334; Haghirian, 2011, p.9

[69] Consumer industries rose between 2.5 - 4.2% in 1988 (NEEDS in Ishizuka, 1988) p. 12

[70] According to Sand, the late-1970s saw manufacturers increasingly investing overseas, encouraged by US pressure on exports and shifts in the economy. Furthermore, manufacturing at home was moving towards micro-technology, meaning that heavy industry became 'a less visible part of the domestic urban landscape and that many more Tokyoites were donning suits and "office-lady" uniforms to commute to their bright new office blocks.' (Jordan Sand in Sheldon Garon and Patricia L. Maclachlan (eds.) *The Ambivalent Consumer: Questioning Consumption in East Asia and the West* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006) p.87. Further to this, Meyer also notes how the oil crises during the 1970s encouraged Japanese industries to lessen their vulnerability to oil by shifting to alternative power sources, and moving to other avenues of output, such as automobiles and electronic goods. By the 1990s, 10 percent of the country's labour force worked in the primary sector, one third in the secondary sector, and the majority in the tertiary or service sector. (Milton, W. Meyer, *Japan: A Concise History* (Third Edition; USA: Littlefield Adam Quality Paperbacks, 1993) pp.237-238

[71] Information taken from: *3-1: Gross Domestic Expenditure (At Current Prices, At Constant Prices, Deflators), - 68SNA, Benchmark year = 1990 (C.Y.1955--1998, F.Y.1955--1998)* (Economic and Social Research Institute, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan) <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/03.htm> [accessed 24/01/2017]; *3-7 Gross Domestic Product and Expenditure Account - 68SNA, Benchmark year = 1990, (C.Y.1955--1998, F.Y.1955--1998)*, (Economic and Social Research Institute, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan) <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/03.htm> [accessed 24/01/2017]; *3-8: National Disposable Income and Its Appropriation Accounts - 68SNA, Benchmark year = 1990, (C.Y.1955--1998, F.Y.1955--1998)*, (Economic and Social Research Institute, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan) <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/03.htm> [accessed 24/01/2017]

However, while appearing to once again link consumption to production and industry and the reiteration of the 'top-down, supply-side' approach[72], the policies of the late 1980s produced a different kind of consumption. Here, consumer demand was not used to help develop budding industries for industrial and economic development as in previous decades, but instead propped up stagnating industries and an economy struggling under the export limitations of an appreciated yen. However, while service-related sectors in a consumer economy such as luxury goods, food, advertising, travel and retail benefited, essentially production became less relevant, especially with the move of cheaper manufacturing overseas. Furthermore, spending became unlinked to rationality, as irrational consumption became key to the success of persuading people to engage in consumer activities – itself an historic unlinking with Japanese cultural identity. However, it must be remembered that these policies of shifting industry from secondary to tertiary were in line with the pattern of economic planning followed by other late-capitalist, post-industrial nations looking to shift their economy to a consumer base as manufacturing moves overseas, and demand declines with falling competitiveness in a globalised economy.

Lifestyle and the Leisure Economy

A key 1980s policy used to boost consumer behaviour was the promotion of lifestyle and leisure. Like consumption in Japan, leisure has a complex relationship with wider notions of cultural and national character, industry and economy. Scholars such as Linhart have noted how Japanese words for leisure have either Western (*reja*) or Chinese (*yoka*) roots, that among the older generation have come to be associated with the problem of 'spare time left over' (*amaru hima*) as in '*reja mond*ai' and '*yoka mondai*'.[73] Furthermore Japanese cultural discourse has tended towards the narrative of industriousness rather than leisured, useful in its development of national industries. Although lauded for its role in the development of the Japanese economy, by the 1980s the international community was largely critical of the Japanese work-ethic, seeing it as the reason behind the huge trade surplus and a barrier to their own trade advancements.

Although Japanese industriousness was not in itself a barrier to leisure,[74] just as consumption was subsumed into the narrative of production and industry, so leisure too was dependant on the

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See also Appendix IV, Japanese Domestic Consumption, p.319

[72] Franks and Hunter (eds.), 2012, p. 5

[73] 'leisure problem' and 'spare time problem' respectively (Linhart 1998) p. 2

[74] Studies by scholars such as Formanek and Bergman (in Linhart 1998) have shown how the pre-industrial Japanese participation in leisure activities contributed to the development of a rich cultural heritage, while those of scholars such as Ben-Ari and Mansenreiter (in Linhart 1998) show how leisure was reframed in the 20th century to include new activities and cross-cultural exchanges, Hendry and Raveri (2002) meanwhile discuss the playfulness of Japanese cultural pastimes. Furthermore, after the post-war years, the high-growth

working conditions of employees. By the 1980s the ability to enjoy leisure was segregated by gender, age and income, with male employees having the least time to participate in leisure due to long working hours, while young working women had the best balance of available time, disposable income and relatively few responsibilities.

It was against this background of rising personal wealth, international criticism, and trade frictions that prompted the government directive to reduce working hours and further increase consumption of leisure goods. Elaborating on these new policies was the 1986 Maekawa Report, that set out 'the expansion of domestic demand, the transformation of industrial structure, the improvement of market access for manufactured goods, the stabilization of exchange rates, and an increase in overseas development assistance.'[75] Although Leheny[76] ascribes this to the Maekawa Report's aim of attaining international harmony and national status,[77] it must be remembered that the government was also looking for a way to boost domestic consumer industries to offset its struggling export industries and ease trade frictions by opening up Japan's domestic market to foreign goods. Moreover, since the 1970s, government strategy had been to gradually move the Japanese economy from export-driven to a more service and information-led economy, and changes in industrial policy must also be seen within this wider context.

Nonetheless, a policy on developing the leisure economy could not be drafted without changes to the Japanese lifestyle, and the Maekawa Report[78] emphasised the importance of reducing working hours for the promotion of a better work-life balance. This recommended a change from around 2,100-2,000 hours per annum, to 1,800 hours per annum, more in line with European and North American counterparts.[79] Following the report, in 1987 the National Diet reformed the Labour Standard Law to shorten work hours, reducing the legal limit from 48 hours per week to 44 within 3 years, eventually reaching 40 hours per week by the early 1990s, while the government also

period of the 1950s and 1960s saw a growth in leisure that often centred on personal or home life and the boom in consumer domestic goods, and that gained momentum as personal disposable income increased. Lehney (2003) for example, discusses in detail how since the 1970s government ministries have had official policies exploring the development of leisure for the Japanese public, using models taken from other industrialised nations in the promotion of an appropriate tertiary economy of leisure industry.

[75] '[…] attain the goal of steadily reducing the nation's current account imbalance to one consistent with international harmony', as well as a socio-political shift within Japan from being a society driven by economic overseas expansion to one 'driven by domestic demand more reflective of its advanced status' (Leheny, 2003) p. 112

[76] Leheny, 2003

[77] Leheny, 2003, pp. 111-113

[78] and subsequent New Maekawa Report of 1987

[79] Leheny, 2003, p. 113 & Shinomai in Ishizuka, 1988, p. 48

oversaw moves to introduce two two-day weekends per month for civil servants, closing government offices on Saturdays by the end of 1988[80].

Although as Leheny[81] points out, the reduction of working hours was not an entirely new directive having been proposed by previous governments in the early-1970s, this drive to improve Japanese lifestyles was one that gave new impetus to Ministry departments (especially the Ministry of Labour) to work with industry to reduce working hours. Furthermore, with labour unions such as *Nikkeiren* and Labour making a shorter working week part of their major 1988 spring offensive of union negotiations[82], we can see how this was not just a top-down driven government directive, but one which was being actively participated in by labour unions alongside the traditional demands for wage increases.[83] Between 1976 and 1991, average time spent on rest and relaxation more than doubled for men and women[84] while time spent on work slightly lessened[85]. Taking into account other forms of tertiary leisure activities[86] total time spent on leisure between 1976 and 1991 increased by around 25% for men and 20% for women[87].

As such the late 1980s saw a leisure and lifestyle boom during which, influenced by international pressure to open its domestic markets and address the trade imbalance, the areas of travel, sports, entertainment consumer goods and resorts/theme parks enjoyed high popularity. During this time, the golf market grew by 10% in 1988 to reach a value of about ¥250 billion a year[88], and policies – such as the MOT Ten Million Program that aimed to double the number of outgoing Japanese tourists from 5 million in 1987 to 10 million in 1992[89] and the 1987 Resort Act providing incentives for added investment into leisure resort development[90] – showed government encouragement and

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[80] Shinomai in Ishizuka, 1988, p. 48
[81] Leheny, 2003, p. 113
[82] Ibid
[83] The fact of this official directive in shortening working hours did not of course necessarily reduce them in reality, as much work was hidden, either through work outside of normal office hours (client entertaining and drinking with colleagues), or remaining undisclosed by Japanese workers keen to protect their company. The flexibility of the female workforce and their own working hours may also have contributed to disguising the practical application of the legislation.
[84] For men: 0.56 hours in 1976 to 1.20 hours in 1991 per day. For women: 0.58 hours in 1976 to 1.23 hours per day in 1991 (*26-27: Average Time Spent per Day on Activities by Type of Activity and Sex (Weekly Average) (1976 – 2006)*, Statistical Survey Department, Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication), <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/26.htm> [accessed 23/01/2017]
[85] Men: 6.03 hours in 1976 to 5.46 hours per day in 1991. Women: 3.21 hours to 2.59 hours per day. (ibid)
[86] Shopping; watching television, listening to the radio, reading newspapers or magazines; rest and relaxation; hobbies and amusements, sports, volunteer and social activities, and social life (ibid)
[87] From 3.67 hours to 4.41 hours per day for men, while for women it increased from 3.75 hours to 4.45 hours per day. (ibid)
[88] Makino in Ishizuka, 1988, p. 234. Of course, golf was also heavily associated with men and work, meaning its significance as leisure is amplified by its dual function as a work activity.
[89] Leheny, 2003, p. 135
[90] Osada in Ishizuka, 1988, p. 214

an enthusiasm by the public that was to create a huge domestic market for investment and enjoyment of leisure and improved concepts of lifestyle.

However just as the Resort Act highlighted how rampant corruption and 'pork barrel' politics[91] was able to permeate the system, rather than answering to any specific popular demand at ground-level, so the entire leisure and lifestyle project can be seen as a hollow advancement. Even with official limitations on working hours, with little direct enforcement and a culture of working long hours of unclaimed and unregistered overtime, the time available for leisure was dependant on personal circumstances, with working men having the least and women and the young the most. Furthermore, while certain industries were suffering the effects of the yen rise, with the boom in domestic consumption ironically the sectors catering to this were busier than before, putting more pressure on their employees to work rather than enjoy themselves.

The *Shinjinrui*

Coinciding with the leisure and consumer boom of the Bubble Economy, were the *shinjinrui*, or "New Breed". Labelled by the media as a new species of human being, the *shinjinrui* were a 1980s-youth phenomenon who epitomised a new lifestyle culture in which conspicuous consumption and enjoyment of leisure were key to accessing the Bubble. Building on the social and political passivity of the previous 1970s-generation of youth[92], the *shinjinrui* were a consumer generation born into a media-saturated world, embracing the consumer, media and technology opportunities available in the new globalised world of the Bubble Economy.

As a result, their tech and media-savvy, especially with information-processing and disseminating apparatus such as the personal computer, astounded older generations, who labelled them as '[…] being so different from their elders as to be no longer "Japanese"'[93]. Not just restricted to tech-capabilities of the new modern age, their consumption and social habits – displaying a penchant for high-end brands and other markers of an urban consumer lifestyle, and rejection of the old hierarchical social relations of previous generations – showed them to challenge the traditional concepts of inherently assumed "Japaneseness" such as a high savings culture, rational spending, and adherence to social norms.

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[91] Leheny, 2003, pp. 123-128

[92] The *shirake sedai*, who in turn had rejected the politically charged ideals of the previous generation of *dankai* 1960s youth.

[93] Gordon Mathews and Bruce White, *Japan's Changing Generations: Are Young People Creating a New Society?* (London: Routledge, 2004) p. 5

Scholars such as Kotani[94] saw the *shinjinrui* and their rejection of the dense-networks of human relations on which corporate Japan was based, as not just a rejection of normative values but also deconstruction of the corporate system. However, at the same time, their wholehearted embracing of consumption and media appeared to render ridiculous the ideals of social change as held by the previous *dankai* generation. As such the *shinjinrui* could be seen as a symptom of the pressures upon young people imposed by Japan's place as a dominant world economy, and the unchallengeable rigid corporate structure that facilitated it.

According to Kotani[95], resignation to the system was widespread and resulted in differing reactions from young people. The most obvious were the *shinjinrui*, whose enthusiastic take-up of consumptive practices of goods and information could be seen as proof of the advancing conservativism of a late-capitalist society buying into the concept of Japan as a dominant power, whilst also paradoxically rejecting the rigidity of traditional social relations and the political idealism of the *dankai* generation. However, there were other less mainstream forms of youth who were not willing to conform, for example those who, raised delicately in an affluent society with none of the hardships of the previous generations, became increasingly hesitant to conform to the pressures and competition of corporate society, preluding the *hikikomori* of the Lost Decade[96]. *Otaku* too were a 1980s phenomenon, coming into age in the new visual and media cultures of the Bubble and using their deep interest in adolescent pursuits such as manga and video games to reject and escape the apparent emptiness of capitalist consumer ideals and rigid social hierarchies[97].

However, while the *otaku and hikikomori* would come to dominate discussions of disaffected youth in the decades after the Japanese Bubble, it was the *shinjinrui* who best epitomised the consumer fizz and excitement of the Bubble period. From the delicate consumer *shōjo* (young women) cultures depicted and made famous in the 1980s novels of Yoshimoto Banana[98] to the rampant consumption that formed the basis of Tanaka Yasuo's novel, *natonaku kurisutaru* (Somehow Crystal) and spawned the name, "crystal tribe" (*kurisutaru-zoku*) for followers of this lifestyle, the *shinjinrui* were avid participants in the consumer market so encouraged by the Japanese government.[99] Published in 1981, in which characters appear synonymous with their objects and

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[94] in Matthews and White, 2004, p. 38

[95] in Matthews and White, 2004, pp. 38-39

[96] *Hikikomori* and otaku refer to the 'shut-in' and 'manga enthusiasts' youth subcultures, prominent in 1990s and 2000s Japan.

[97] Barral, 1999 in Sakurai and Kotami, in Matthew and White, 2004, p. 23; pp.38-39

[98] See Whittier Treat in Skov, Lise and Brian Moeran, *Women, Media and Consumption in Japan* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1995)

[99] 'Bestor's claim that "most forms of popular culture are associated with commercialised mass production and consumption" (1989) p. 2. The lifestyle of the 1980s which Bestor describes is crystallised in the novel, *Natonaku Kurisutaru* (Somewhat Crystal) by Tanaka Yasuo (1981) which depicts the lives of the young and comfortably-off residents of Tokyo, who have since been nick-named the "crystal tribe" (*kurisutaru-zoku*).

means of consumption, the popularity of the book was as much based on its authority as comprehensive guide to brands and shops through its extensive footnotes as it was as a novel. In the ubiquitous presence of goods, brands and signs that seemed to structure the characters yet also reduce them down to the objects and shops they frequented, it reflected the superficial and deadly serious attitude of the Bubble towards consumption. In their flagrantly lavish spending habits, disregard for financial prudence and excessive enjoyment of consumer goods, the *shinijinrui* appeared to embody all the worst consumer excesses of the Bubble and of the postmodern condition[100].

Shopping, travelling, dining out, discoing at Tokyo clubs[101], and partaking in sports like skiing, tennis and jet-skiing, these were the pursuits the *shinjinrui* enjoyed, and the way they captured the public imagination can be seen in the number of *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper articles discussing *shinjinrui* over this period. From a total of zero articles in 1985 before the Bubble starts, this jumps to 74 in 1986, peaking at 93 the following year before steadily creeping downwards to 87 in 1988 and 68 articles in 1989. By the early-to-mid-1990s, articles mentioning *shinjinrui* drop to an average of 19 articles per year. [102] While only in relation to the number of newspaper articles in *Asahi Shimbun*, these findings suggest that *shinjinrui* could be viewed as a Bubble phenomenon, with the excesses of consumption and carefree lifestyles of leisure unsustainable in the face of the financial uncertainty as the Bubble burst.

Despite being short-lived, we can take a few things from the *shinjinrui* movement; as an enthusiastic consumer movement, they could be seen as the main participants in the government strategy of developing Japan's economy through increasing domestic demand. Moreover, through their active and enthusiastic uptake of consumer trends, contribution to industry, and influence on literature and the arts, the *shinjinrui* were more than just a consumer movement, but embody the celebratory nature of Bubble culture. Nevertheless, the question remains whether the young men and women of the Bubble really were the *shinjinrui* as painted by the media, and whether they really did enjoy

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Bestor (1989) remarks on Tanaka's 442 footnotes which identify food, drink, clothes, sport equipment, and other consumer goods, for the benefit of unfamiliar readers. Other studies of 1980s consumerism in Japan reinforce this picture of increased consumption (see Field 1983 and 1989). There is thus a clear relationship between the "pervasive middle-class affluence of the 1980s" (Bestor 1989) p. 12, and the changing trends in magazines…' (Tanaka in Martinez, 1998) p. 115

[100] Kinsella in Allen & Sakamoto, 2014, p. 387

[101] Maharaja and Juliana's in particular were both well-known Tokyo bubble-era discotheques, famous for their crowds of partying Japanese and large dance floors. Juliana's was well-known for its scores of young women (OLs), dressed in tight body-con dresses, waving large feathered fans as part of the bubble-era fashion. James Sterngold, *A Night on the Town in Tokyo*, (New York Times, 18th October, 1992) <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/10/18/travel/a-night-on-the-town-in-tokyo.html?pagewanted=1> [Accessed 3th June 2015]

[102] Japanese language *Asahi Shimbun* database. See Appendix III, Asahi Shimbun Data, p.305

themselves in the leisure opportunities of the Bubble as much as is claimed. It is this aspect that will be examined in the two chapters on *Hanako* and *Brutus* magazine.

Kokusaika

The Bubble period was also known as that of *kokusaika*, or internationalisation. With international pressure mounting to address Japan's trade surplus, the Maekawa Reports of 1986 and 1987 emphasised the need to open up Japan's domestic market to foreign competition in order to smooth over the trade frictions with the international community. [103] Going beyond a straightforward promotion for increased imports, this was taken as an opportunity to "internationalise" Japan, with wide-ranging campaigns to promote *kokusaika* among the general population that included informational access to technology and news from abroad, consumption of material goods such as foreign food, clothing, and other consumer durables, and internationalising the human aspect through tourism, international marriage and educational exchanges.[104]

With government backing, local governments were allocated an important role in this internationalisation drive, with the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) created to coordinate local level programs, overseeing a diverse range of programs at local and national levels, from foreign exchange and teaching, to international aid. However, although widespread, internationalisation was interpreted differently among different areas and groups, varying from purely economic (for example, opening Japan up to international capitalism), to political (implementing international standards of democracy and concepts of the individual free citizen), and cultural (through the diversification of goods, services, foods, and access to Western thought and modes of behaviour). In this way *kokusaika* was controversial, with both an enthusiastic uptake of the cultural and economic opportunities, and suspicion of diluting Japanese

[103] 'Prime Minister Nakasone's appearance on television in a Pierre Cardin necktie, exhorting the Japanese to buy more foreign products, was as gaudy a symbol of the shift as were the "Import Now!" (written in English and probably directed more at the foreign critics than at the average Japanese citizen) bumper stickers paraded around Tokyo (Marilyn Ivy, Discourses of the Vanishing, 1995)' (Leheny, 2003) p. 115

[104] *Kokusaika* is also linked to higher educational reform policies of the 1980s looking to introduce greater flexibility, creativity, individuality and diversity. This outward-looking ethos was in response to previous criticisms of Japanese education in the 1970s and to prepare Japanese students for the coming international challenges of the 21st century. It also takes place against a background of greater government and corporate involvement in international industry, economics and politics, where greater numbers of corporations were investing in overseas projects and the Japanese government holding greater political influence abroad due to its strong economy. Furthermore, as has been covered, this was also a period in which the government was actively implementing a policy of encouraging improvements in national standards of lifestyle and leisure embracing those of other developed first world economies. (Leheny, 2003) p. 117

culture that veered towards cultural protectionism against the onslaught of state-sponsored internationalisation.

For although with the intention of mollifying international trade tensions that were ostensibly economic and political in nature, the *kokusaika* project inadvertently brought the issue of Japanese national and cultural identity to the fore, at a time when Japan appeared to be changing its role in the wider global culture. In a sense *kokusaika* can thus be placed within the wider discourse of *nihonjinron* that had gathered pace through the 1970s and 1980s, coinciding with Japan's development into an economic powerhouse. While through the industrialisation of the economic miracle, Japanese development and modernisation had been linked with the rhetoric of Westernisation, *nihonjinron*, or the "uniqueness of the Japanese people", had begun to untangle this concept to place national development as specific to Japan, and one that could enable it to compete on the world stage, just as Japan was coming into its own. As such internationalisation as *kokusaika* was a convenient way to promote the development and modernisation of Japan as part of the international community, with the suggestion that Japan could contribute as one of its top players without the problematic taint of Westernisation. The 1980s *kokusaika* movement can therefore be seen as a replacement for the Western-centric modernising narrative of the previous decades, and linked to the *nihonjinron* discourse of uniqueness that was to find more pace in the decades following the Bubble.[105]

Thus, alongside the *kokusaika* programs and a sharp spike in popular interest[106], during this time the government simultaneously and paradoxically promoted 'cultural assertiveness' establishing the International Research Centre for Japanese Studies in 1987 outside of Kyoto (*Nichibunken*), and helping local communities develop culturally nostalgic hometown themes to encourage tourism.[107]

However, internationalism at this point may not have been necessarily suggestive to Japanese uniqueness, and Leheny[108] suggests that as a top-down directive, there was the assumption from government departments such as the Economic Planning Agency (EPA) that models of Western lifestyles as a marker of development would be preferable to that of neighbouring Asian countries. Furthermore, it must be remembered that other than the strategy of easing international relations, there were other economic benefits to the internationalisation of Japan, from encouraging greater international cooperation in trade and industry and ensuring a friendlier environment for their own

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[105] For a discussion on *nihonjinron*, see Kosaku Yoshino, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan: A sociological enquiry* (London and New York: LSE Routledge, 1992), and Harumi Befu, *Hegemony of Homogeneity: An Anthropological Analysis of Nihonjinron* (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2001)

[106] *Asahi Shimbun* articles in Japanese that mention *kokusaika* increased from 374 in 1985 to 1097 in 1989, before stabilizing around 898 articles in 1991 onwards (See Appendix III, Asahi Shimbun Data, p. 305)

[107] Although as Leheny (2003) points out, this had the added effect of auto-exoticising Japanese culture for urban Japanese visitors.

[108] Leheny, 2003, p. 116

Japanese exports, to smoothening the way for the investment opportunities of Japanese companies operating abroad. For with globalisation the flow of internationalisation could go both ways, and Japanese companies were becoming increasingly interwoven with the global economy, exporting not just goods and manufacturing, but also through the expansion of financial credit and acquisition of foreign assets. In this sense *kokusaika* could also be seen as a national project of rebranding Japan to the outside community against hostile attitudes to trade frictions and Japanese investments abroad, mollifying international criticism whilst contributing to the narrative of Japanese cultural identity.

With this aspect of international corporate cooperation in mind, a final way in which *kokusaika* could be viewed is as part of a wider policy of greater Japanese involvement in the international community, as it became aware of its rising economic power. With Japan's ascent into the world's second-largest economy, internationalisation could also mean preparing its citizens for Japan's greater involvement with international affairs and integration as a world leader, and aspects of the *kokusaika* projects such as the overseas development and cultural programs suggest an investment in greater international engagement of Japan, not just in importing foreign goods and culture, but also exporting Japanese soft power through cultural exchange.

The significance of *kokusaika* as a policy trend in Bubble Economy Japan was therefore multidimensional, felt along all levels of the international, national and local. Impacting on areas of politics, policies, economics, industry, and concepts and experiences of national and cultural identity, this was a time when Japan appeared to be undergoing drastic changes in its economy, society and political standing in the international community, bringing forth debates about its place in the world. However, as the number of articles in *Asahi Shimbun* over the period show[109], the popular enthusiasm for *kokusaika* did not last, peaking in 1989, before falling to the internal pressures of the Lost Decade. Following this the conversation appears to change to one of transcultural flows of Japanese popular cultures migrating abroad, especially in the fields of manga, anime, popular music and film[110]. However despite being brief, *kokusaika* is important for not only its relative impact on culture in Japan in the 1980s, but also for embodying a collective and optimistic dream of Japan as a nation both fully-realised culturally and integrated with an international community of equals, and one from which can only be drawn parallels with the beginnings of the European project of international community and harmony at the dawn of the new millennium (and which coincidentally, coincides with its own 21st century global Bubble

[109] See Appendix III, Asahi Shimbun Data, p. 305

[110] Harumi Befu and Sylvie Guichard-Anguis, *Globalising Japan: Ethnography of the Japanese presence in Asia, Europe, and America* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2001); Iwabuchi, Koichi, *Recentering Globalisation: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002)

Economy). It is this spirit of optimistic internationalisation that will be examined more closely through popular magazines in the following chapters, for its physical representation and relative impact on the ordinary Japanese consumer of media.

Company Culture in the Bubble

A discussion about the Japanese Bubble Economy cannot be held without mention of the Japanese company, as significant players in the development of economic and corporate cultures within the Bubble.[111] Although seemingly familiar in corporate structure, Japanese companies differ greatly from their Western counterparts by the very nature of the system in which they reside. From the pre-war *zaibatsu* company system, through the post-war American reorganisation and attempts to break up the *zaibatsu* system, the 1980s are marked by the *keiretsu* system of modern Japanese corporations, built out of the chaos of the post-war period into a unique system suited to Japanese business.[112] Some notable characteristics include: consistencies of strong networks of formal and informal intercompany relationships, the emphasis on avoiding direct conflict, resolution via consensus, and the internetworked responsibilities that all individuals have with their company, resulting in the commitment to lifetime employment. These all have been linked to the strong kinship and network bonds that form the basis of communities in Japan and characterise the Japanese company.[113]

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[111] For a study of pre-modern development of the Japanese organisation, see Kasaya, Kazuhiko, *The Origin and Development of Japanese-Style Organisation* (Kyoto: Nichibunken International Research Centre for Japanese Studies, 2000)

[112] In the pre-war period, conglomerates under the control of a main parent company, called a *zaibatsu*, dominated the economic landscape, but which in the post-war period were targeted by the American occupying forces as monopolising and undemocratic systems. Following the war, efforts were made to dissolve them through the establishment of the 'Holding Company Liquidation Commission', the 'Fair Trade Commission', and the passing of laws such as the 'Anti-Monopoly Law' and the 'Elimination of Excessive Concentration of Economic Power Law' (1947). However, in the escalation of Cold War hostilities and the outbreak of the Korean War, reindustrialisation of Japan became politically expedient and complete dissolution was never achieved, with many Japanese companies reforming into the *keiretsu* system which, although not formally the same, share similarities to the *zaibatsu* system.

[113] In essence the *keiretsu* system is a type of corporate network in which many companies, large and small, are internetworked to a main company and satellite around a main affiliated bank. Depending on each other for capital, technology and trade, together they form a complex web of formal and informal partnerships cemented by small mutual shareholding stakes in each other's companies, common banking, the sharing of trademarks and technology, preferential inter-firm trading, and the movement of employees, usually from the controlling company into the smaller subsidiaries (Victoria Miroshnik and Dipak Basu, *Corporate Culture in Multinational Companies: A Japanese Perspective* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)) p. 17.

Although this may seem uncompetitive and thus unworkable in a normal capitalist market, Hamada (1992) stresses that this is not a cartel, but instead 'is a corporate alliance across industrial sectors and markets, often tied through client-supplier business relationships.' (Sugiyama Lebra, 1992) p. 140, and the benefits of which include reducing overall costs of transactions, development and production, whilst creating a stable chain of supply networks (Miyashita & Russell, 1994; Hill, 1995 in Miroshnik & Basu, 2014) p. 17. Furthermore

Thus, in the 1980s, many Japanese companies were heavily internetworked with each other across many sectors, from energy production and supply, to manufacturing, insurance and banking – and it was this system that aided Japanese companies in the expansion of their interests abroad. With financial liberalisation, Japanese companies were in the privileged position of having huge resources from their networks to fund overseas investments, secure in the safety-net of the *keiretsu*.[114] Moreover with changes to Japanese law, access to the international financial markets meant Japanese companies were for the first time able to benefit from not just the investment opportunities abroad, but also international credit and the raising of funds from the valuation of their assets. With a booming asset market flush with investor and consumer confidence, the overvaluation of Japanese company assets enabled many to use them as collateral for investments, fuelling the Bubble emerging in the stock and property market.[115] Coupled with the *keiretsu*-style focus on forming long-term networks and relationships even at the expense of short-term profitability, and their relative inexperience in the international markets of foreign capital

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as Kester (1991) explains, the *keiretsu* system's heavy use of informal networks have practical benefits to do with time and flexibility, with implicit informal agreements between companies cutting out the hassle and expense of drawing up formal contracts, whilst allowing for greater flexibility and therefore competitiveness 'If the relationship lasts long enough and becomes close enough, the trading firms can become virtual extensions of one another in a vertical or horizontal production and distribution system, though without some of the management control problems that plague large operations integrated under a single corporate hierarchy. Since the relationship is arm's-length and equity ownership is restricted to minority positions, market incentives are preserved and bureaucratic disabilities held to a minimum.' (Kester, 1991) p. 61. Pairing down the unwieldy bureaucracy can also theoretically enable companies the overall streamlined ability to make fast decisions, and cooperation between companies also enables greater distribution of resources and capabilities that mutually benefits all (Kogut & Zander, 1992 in Miroshnik & Basu, 2014) p. 17.

However, in order for this system to work, a great store is set by trust-relationships between companies, hence the close networks made up of formal and informal links and intertwined trade and supply agreements they have with one another – essentially monopolised client-supplier relationships. While these arrangements are open to abuse, often privileging the dominant company over the smaller, the support in terms of financing, resources and trade supplied by the stronger companies, especially in times of crisis, make this a mutually beneficial system, kept in check by common objectives and a sense of corporate and personal responsibility to partner organisations and the colleagues within them. Furthermore, other benefits of a long-term reciprocal relationship include savings on time and money through in-depth understanding on both sides of client needs and supplier capabilities, knowledge of product and inventory, and the savings made on close-established networks of communication between supplier and its client company that led to, among other things, the smooth implementation of the manufacturing innovation pioneered in Japan, the 'just-in-time' (*kanban*) delivery system.

[114] And indeed when trouble did hit companies, it would be common practice for the parent company [usually a bank] to bail out the struggling subsidiaries, even though it would often only hold a nominal stake in that company.

[115] Japanese life insurance companies in particular started to engage in riskier behaviour, investing heavily in overseas securities, and making up over half of the enormous capital outflows from Japan in this period. However, in seeking higher returns, they were essentially operating with little experience of global investment, currency risk and hedging techniques, making them vulnerable when the investments went bad. (Fiona Graham, *A Japanese Company in Crisis: Ideology, Strategy and Narrative*, London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005) pp. 11-12

investment, these factors may explain the seemingly reckless and over-reaching actions of Japanese companies in the foreign and domestic financial and asset markets of the late 1980s.[116]

Thus, while 1980s Japanese corporate management was internationally lauded as a unique and exciting form of capitalism, from whose successes the West could learn much, in hindsight the *keiretsu* system itself may have contributed to the complacency and overvaluation of Japanese companies in their investment adventures abroad and relative exposure to risk. Furthermore, while known for their financial power and status as giants of industry, these characteristics were not replicated across all sectors of industry, with the overvaluation of assets and booming consumer market disguising real falls in the economies of exports and heavy industries.

Japanese companies therefore have a strong corporate culture, which stems from the idea that 'If an organisation has a "strong culture" with a "well integrated and effective" set of values, beliefs, and behaviours, it normally demonstrates a high level of corporate performance'[117]. The motivation of employees through the implementation of a successful corporate culture and corporate values thus is vital for the enhancing of performance and delivery of work.[118] In Japan this means a strong collectivism that creates high levels of cooperation within the company that echo the strong interdependent links in the *keiretsu* system. Furthermore, it is generally believed that many of these corporate values derive from 'layers of values of national culture and societal behaviour'[119]meaning the influence of corporate culture on the Japanese employee is interlinked with strong connections of cultural and national identity.

During the Bubble, at a time when Japanese corporations dominated not only the domestic but also international landscape, their brands, products and investments at the forefront of public consciousness, Japanese corporate culture was the most visibly dominant culture in Japan, appearing synonymous with the identity of the nation and unquestionable in the face of Japan's booming economy and its unfettered rise as an industrial power through the latter-half of the 20th century[120]. From the 1970s onwards there was international interest in Japanese management styles that appeared to enable Japanese industry to bypass the pitfalls of the suffering American

[116] During this time stories abound of expensive Japanese buyouts of overseas land (New York Rockefeller Centre by Mitsubishi) and companies (Columbia Pictures – Sony), in whose investments their high-profile but essentially low-performing nature would come to incite American fears of Japanese corporate domination while exacerbating the overexposure of corporate financing to risk in the Bubble.
[117] Aoki (2008) in Miroshnik, Victoria and Dipak Basu, *Corporate Culture in Multinational Companies: A Japanese Perspective* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) p. 33
[118] Miroshinik & Basu, 2014
[119] Miroshinik & Basu, 2014, p. 168
[120] Japan Inc. was a common phrase used in reference to Japan, embodying the success of its industries with its overall political and economic prowess.

and European economies, and the 1980s saw a glut of literature on the supposed advantages of the Japanese corporate system.[121]

With this in mind, it was the corporate employees who were at the forefront of the Bubble Economy, experiencing through the corporate culture the immediate effects of the Bubble. Furthermore, with the government aiming to expand the domestic consumer market, young company employees were the ideal consumers. Typically, in their 20s and 30s,[122] and earning but unencumbered by family, they had the disposable time and income to spend on lifestyle and leisure in the Bubble. It is these young working men and women, known as the 'salaryman' and 'office lady' (or OL)[123] who will be studied as the hegemonic ideal of the Bubble persona, as working consumers and indeed *shinjinrui*, as depicted through the magazines *Brutus* and *Hanako*. Examining their consumer habits as catered for by the magazines, we can see their impact if any, on the domestic economy, and gain insight into their experiences of work and leisure.

The Salaryman

Citing Benedict Anderson, Germer, Mackie and Wöhr[124] state that not only is gender constructed, much like nationhood and national identity, but that they are mutually conducive to each other; national identity as gendered experience, while the experience of gender differs according to national context (and further to this is, of course, time, with interpretations of gender and national identity transforming through historical experience).

Identity in the context of the Japanese Bubble Economy is therefore complicated by the influences of nation, gender and temporality that frame experience, and the specific demands and

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[121] See Yoshino, Kosaku, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan: A Sociological Enquiry* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992). Examples include, Nippon Steel Corporation, Personnel Development Office, *Nippon: The Land and Its People*, 2nd ed. Tokyo: Gakuseishacited, 1984) cited in Yoshino, p.173; Taiyō Kōbe Bank Ltd, *The Nipponjin/The Scrutable Japanese*, (Tokyo: Gakuseisha, 1988) cited in Yoshino, p.173; also, Ezra F. Vogel, *Japan as Number One: Lessons for America* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1979)

[122] Average age of female employees of companies of 1000+ employees in 1989 was 30.1 years, with an average of 8.3 years of service. Average age of male employees of companies of 1000+ employees in 1989 was 38.6 years with an average of 16.9 years of service. (*19-38: Age, Years of Service, Monthly Cash Earnings of General Employees and Number of Employees by Size of Enterprise and Sex (1958--2006)*, (Statistics and Information Department, Minister's Secretarial, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/19.htm> (accessed 25/01/2017)
See also Appendix IV, Japanese Women's Statistics, p.321

[123] 'Salaryman' is a generic term for male white collar worker, and as such covers a range of ages and cohorts, while OLs tended to be young and within a smaller age range, for reasons covered later in the thesis. However, for the purposes of this research, the demographic explored are the younger salarymen and OLs for reasons outlined above.

[124] Germer, Andrea, Vera Mackie, and Ulrike Wöhr, *Gender, Nation and State in Modern Japan* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), p.1

expectations of the culture in which it sits. For Japanese men and women, these experiences are intertwined with their roles in the development of the modern Japanese state, as producer/worker, nurturer/homemaker, with emphasis on the male/breadwinner role as the dominant, traditional mode of social organisation. More recently as gender and cultural boundaries have shifted with globalisation, so the performance of gender in Japan has travelled with it to explore issues of transcultural and transgender flows, from the blurring of the traditionally segregated gender roles in public and private, work and home, to transgressional behaviour performed by those who do not conform to a culturally asserted norm.[125] These changes, while still ongoing can be charted to some of the developments in the 1980s covered in this research.

During the dizzying heights of the Bubble Economy, a critical and transgressive approach to gender and identity was still playing on the periphery, bound up with the certainty of the established hegemonic model of the salaryman. With the muscular self-confidence of the Japanese corporatized economy, the Japanese salaryman together with his office counterpart, the office lady, presented the new dynamic face of the Japanese 1980s. Embodying youth, dynamism, corporate success and internationalism, they represented a glamorised lifestyle of a consumer leisure economy that in turn appeared to signal the beginning of a new age of Japanese prosperity. While not all of them may have identified as *shinjinrui*, they were nevertheless the young producers and consumers who contributed to the cultural effects of the Bubble Economy.

As the typical Japanese white-collar office worker, the 'salaryman' (*sarariiman*) has developed through the specific working environment of the Japanese company to encompass a whole culture, shaped by the requirements for operating in a highly internetworked reciprocal *keiretsu* system. These include the assumed guarantee of lifetime employment and the implementation of a seniority system in which employees progress upwards through the same company[126], as well as the avoidance of conflict in consensus-rule.

An effect of this lifetime employment and seniority-based progressional hierarchy is that mutual responsibility between company and employee has added emphasis, with the implication that the company becomes a surrogate family to the employee, inspiring reciprocal bonds of trust, loyalty and duty[127]. As a result, hiring policies for starting salarymen have not traditionally been

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[125] Blake Willis, David and Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, *Transcultural Japan: At the borderlands of race, gender, and identity* (Routledge: London and New York, 2008)

[126] Due in part to the need for time to develop long term relationships and bonds of trust between colleagues and counterparts in subsidiary companies.

[127] 'As Nakane (1967) pp. 30-31 argues, participants in this study generally indicated their subjective perception of their companies and used expressions such as "*uchino*" (my), which connotes "I am an insider and, therefore, 'you are an outsider'", or "*warewareno*" (our) company, implying the importance of a collective or family-like structure in men's lives as well as their oneness with the workplace.' (Hidaka, Tomoko, *Salaryman Masculinity: Continuity and Change in Hegemonic Masculinity in Japan* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010) p.103)

conditioned by specialist expertise, but in light of long-term policies of employment, are governed by considerations of potential for further training and ability to successfully operate within the specific working environment of the Japanese company, leading to more generalist corporate skills of cooperation, consensus-building and networking. Furthermore, the implication of lifetime employment and seniority progression of Japanese employment, as situated within the *keiretsu* system that is based on intercompany relationships of trust and reputation, is that employee responsibility and loyalty are paramount to career development, translating into the long work hours that define Japanese corporate culture.

While this working practice of mutual cooperation was conducive to the latter 20th century economic success and development of Japan – the streamlined and smooth operating of networks of companies adding to its overall competiveness whilst shutting out uncooperative rivals from the supplier networks – it also had detrimental effects on the personal lives of its workers. The long work hours expected from salarymen as a sign of commitment to their careers and colleagues were not just spent in the office, but also in outside work activities such as company trips, client entertaining, and after-work drinking with bosses and colleagues. In addition the possibility of frequent role changes and company postings around different sites at home and abroad as the company salaryman's career progressed also had knock-on effects on their personal lives, uprooting families as they travelled around the country or abroad on company postings as *tenkin* (transfers)[128], or living apart from their families for years as *tanshin funin*.[129] As a result company men were often absent from their families and had little to no personal time outside of work, earning the 'workaholic' label by the international community that encouraged the government in the 1980s to decrease official working hours in a move to improve the quality of Japanese lifestyles.

However, these qualities of self-sacrifice, hard work and loyalty are part of the salaryman's narrative as national symbol of masculinity. Although there have been other interpretations of masculinity in Japan, over the post-war years as Japan adapted from an environment of national militarisation, men's new roles in Japan were of company men, adapting to the rise of the industrial corporation and Japanese industry to become 'corporate warriors' (or 'corporate samurai')[130]. As such the salaryman as a form of masculinity became central to the narrative of Japan's regeneration in the latter-half of the 20th century, and as policy shifted from military to economic aims, corporate

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[128] Hidaka, Tomoko, *Salaryman Masculinity: Continuity and Change in Hegemonic Masculinity in Japan* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010)

[129] Dasgupta, Romit, *Re-reading the Salaryman in Japan: Crafting Masculinities* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013)

[130] Moreover, it must be remembered that due to the post-war agreement Japan was restricted in its size of military, and as a result not only were the majority of its resources channelled into industry, but so were the majority of its working population, employed in the factories and offices of production. (Mouer & Hirosuke, 2005) p. 91

values became aligned with national. The salaryman motif thus became intricately linked to a number of national, cultural, social and economic aims, from ideological, hegemonic ideas of patriarchy, post-war gender roles, economic divisions, and social and national citizenship, to the role of men becoming intertwined with the role of capitalist worker, producer, tax payer and nation builder – all enacted within the public social space and in direct opposition to the feminine roles of consumer, nurturer, enabler, that take place within the private domestic sphere. Often described in reference to the *daikokubashira*[131], or central supporting pillar of a traditional Japanese house, the post-war masculine role has been successfully linked to the working role of the salaryman and his place in the development of late-20th century capitalism, and like the notion of everyone being 'middle-class' that enables Japanese society to think of itself as classless despite social and economic realities, so the salaryman acts as a hegemonic ideal for Japanese male citizenship.

By the Bubble Economy, the salaryman moreover had in addition to his role as masculine worker, provider, nation-builder and citizen, also taken on the heroism of being at the helm of the world's second largest economy and potential world leadership. However, there were challenges to the all-encompassing vision of the salaryman as the dominant narrative of masculinity, from that not all Japanese men fell into the category of white collar company workers, to only a small proportion of all Japanese men enjoyed lifetime employment at one company[132], one of the defining characteristics of company work in late-twentieth century Japan[133]. Furthermore, although the salaryman occupied what Dasgupta calls 'the visibly hegemonic apex of these ideological expectations.'[134] men nevertheless had to give up many freedoms in the face of the demands of capitalist production, privileging work over the enjoyment of its benefits. While common to the narrative of nation-building in the immediate post-war period through to the 1970s, by the 1980s the disparity between the consumption culture and prosperity of the Bubble Economy with the relatively poor quality of life experienced by its working men would have been more pronounced, especially in the face of the enjoyment of consumers such as the *shinjinrui* during the consumer

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[131] (Hidaka, 2010) p. 89

[132] '[…] only 9.8 percent of Japanese male workers between the ages of fifty and fifty-four have worked for only one company since their graduation from school and entering the job market… Most Japanese workers change organisations at least once in their life course.' (Hamada in Sugiyama Lebra, 1992) p. 142.

[133] '"the three pillars" by the OECD (1977) and the "Three Sacred Emblems" by Yakabe (1977). The three pillars were lifetime or career employment (*shushin koyo* or *shogai koyo*), seniority wages (*nenko joretsu chingin*), and enterprise unions (*kigyobetsu kumiai*). Although these three practices had been noted earlier by Abegglen (1958) and Hazama (1959 and 1962), references to the "three sacred treatures" (*sanshu no jingi*) became common in the academic literature on Japan's industrial relations in the early 1970s. Accepting them as widespread practices and the norm, many authors sought to systematise their understanding of those practices in terms of a unique set of Japanese cultural values that were seen as underpinning these institutions (e.g. Hazama 1971; Tsuda 1977 and 1980; Iwata 1974 and 1975)' (Mouer & Hirosuke, 2005) p. 146.

[134] (Dasgupta, 2013) pp. 8-9.

boom of the Bubble. Indeed, at times the salaryman, rather than a figure of idealised masculinity[135] can often be viewed as largely absent, pitiable or as later years following the Bubble would have it, an object of comedic ridicule[136].

After the Bubble burst from 1989 onwards, the concept of the salaryman as masculine ideal started to crack as employment became less secure and the conditions under which their hegemonic status was dependant on changed. Many of the things that characterised the traditional salaryman (single-income/main-breadwinner status, lifetime employment, generalist corporate skills of cooperation and consensus-building and networking rather than specialist technical ones) had become obsolete, or were changing and challenged by new globalised flows of cultural change (homosexuality, the changing nature of the *sengyō shufu* housewife, the decline in authority of the patriarchal system over an increasingly disaffected and disengaged youth), alongside the changing status of Japan in the international community. Although not necessarily articulated during the frenzy of the Bubble, the seeds for this were sown in the inequalities of access to and demands for work and leisure in the Bubble, the consequences for which would become more apparent during the crisis of the post-Bubble Lost Decade(s). The Bubble period can therefore be seen as the last and most glorious expression of this hegemonic masculinity as corporate salaryman that had been developed through its post-war years, to become intertwined with the dominant narrative of Japan's own nationhood, economic prosperity and international status in the second-half of the 20th century.

The Working OL

Although the natural partner to the salaryman is his wife, the *sengyō shufu* middle-class housewife that has been the ideological norm for Japanese women, in the office his counterpart was the 'office lady', or 'OL'. Building on developments in women's work and feminist movements in modern Japanese industrialisation from the mid-1800s onwards, the office lady started life as the 'business girl' of the 1950s, with the term 'office lady' first coined in 1963 by the weekly woman's magazine, *Josei Jishin*, as a popular replacement[137]. Commonly used to describe women who work in supporting clerical roles in an office environment, the OL is differentiated from the managerial-track 'career woman', and make up the majority of female office staff whose duties include simple clerical tasks and providing support for their managerial-track (mostly male) colleagues through a

[135] See Manga: Hirokane, Kenshi, *Kachō Kōsaku Shima* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1983-1992)
[136] Dasgupta, 2013, p. 36 and p. 119; Roberson and Suzuki, 2003, p. 7
[137] Yuko Ogasawara, *Office Ladies and Salaried Men; Power, Gender, and Work in Japanese Companies* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1998) pp. 23-24

mixture of administration and assistant services, from writing and filing reports to serving tea and greeting clientele.

The strong dominance of patriarchal hierarchy in Japan alongside lifetime employment meant that there was significant gender disparity in work roles, determined on employment when women would be automatically streamed into clerical-track roles[138] and men to managerial-track work[139]. It also had knock-on effects on future wage structure, career progression, and tenure of work where women would experience little wage or career progression and expected to be retained for a short period between college or university education and eventual matrimony.

Echoing traditional gender norms, women were expected to act as support for the men in the office, who were promoted as the heroic captains of industry and nationhood. However, although in the later-20th century narrative of industrial nation-building, working women could, like their male counterparts, have been viewed as producing citizens in their own right and contributors to the national economy, this role was reserved for the more ideologically and culturally established housewife, who supported the working man through her domestic work and the 'good wife/wise mother' motif[140]. As such the OL as largely young and unmarried, of minor producing capability and short retention, was not able to occupy a primary social or economic role, but instead was seen as predominantly decorative and known colloquially as an 'office flower', her presence used to brighten up the office.

However, although seemingly lacking in real power, Japanese women have been able to exercise influence through soft power in their domination of the private sphere. As Ogasawara[141] observes, OLs too could demonstrate relative power and independence against the corporate system through a mixture of expertise in office administration and lack of responsibility and investment in a system biased against women's career progression. Some of these include taking liberties with time in and around work hours, the relative freedom to disagree with (male) office superiors, and the ability to take leave for sickness or holiday – something denied their male counterparts heavily invested in the culture of corporate-employee responsibility.

Furthermore, although appearing to occupy a relatively minor role in the industrial and economic development of Japan, at the beginning of the Bubble Economy working women's status was about

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[138] *Ippanshoku* (also known as 'non-career track')
[139] *Sōgōshoku* (also known as 'career track')
[140] Women as housewives also made up a significant part of the labour force, and in their supply as cheap flexible labour, could also be counted as significant contributors to the successful development of Japanese industry. See also Helen Macnaughtan, *Women, Work, and the Japanese Economic Miracle: The Case of the Cotton Textile Industry, 1945-1975* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005) for an example.
[141] Ogasawara, 1998

to change, with the passing of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law[142] (EEOL) in May 1985 (effective by the following April)[143]. Intended to encourage and improve women's position at work as a move towards gender equality, it coincided with the start of the Bubble, and coupled with the demands to answer potential employment shortages in the booming economy, indicated that women were seen as a new valuable workforce[144].

Although problematic[145], nevertheless the EEOL highlights the significance of women in the workplace during the Bubble, especially in the company office space. Ogasawara[146] for example claims the EEOL did benefit women with university degrees being considered for employment in companies for the first time, where previously they would not have been. Likewise, the employment of women had grown since the 1960s, from around 17 million in 1960 to 23 million in 1985, and 25 million in 1990[147]. By 1990 women made up nearly 40 percent of the labour force[148]. Although as has been outlined, this included the part-time and short-contracted work, with clerical office jobs increasing and blue-collar work decreasing since the 1960s, thereby opening up more

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[142] *Danjo Koyō Kikai Kintō Hō*

[143] Mackie 2003, p. 184 cited in Dales, Laura, *Feminist Movements in Contemporary Japan* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009) p. 24

[144] Of course, women have always been a significant part of the labour workforce, contributing significantly to the development and competitiveness of Japanese industry. However, as a largely flexible and part-time labour force made up of mainly housewives, their historical value has been overshadowed by that of men, and masked by their martial and dependant status.

[145] There were of course issues with the EEOL, and to see this only as a progressive move benefitting women may perhaps be oversimplifying it. As indicated by Robins-Mowry, Dorothy, *The Hidden Sun: Women of Modern Japan* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983) and Dales (2009), women have always worked in Japan through areas such as agriculture, family businesses and low-waged temporary or short-contracted labour, and in offices in the form of the 'Business Girl' of the 1950s, and the 'Office Lady' of the mid-1960s onwards (Ogasawara, 1998). Even when supposedly free from formal work, housewives too either took on part-time work or applied themselves to community projects organised by the local women's groups, and the non-recognition of unwaged and reproductive labour is something that has been mentioned by authors such as Dales (2009), and Bishop (2005). The EEOL also lacked enforcement through explicit penalties meaning that adherence by employers was often discretionary rather than mandatory (Hayashi 2000 cited in Dales 2009, p. 30), and Dales (citing Mackie 2003 p. 182) points out that the EEOL, by focusing on equality, opened up interpretation of this by employers to mean equal treatment, and in particular to be in parity with the masculine model rather than making allowances for female inclusivity, thus making it more difficult and not less to perform equally in the workplace (Dales, 2009, p. 24; Bishop, 2005). Instead it has been suggested that the EEOL benefited the part-time work of housewives as a secondary labour force rather than for women to pursue careers. (Ogi in Allen & Sakamoto, 2014, pp. 288-289) Moreover, with 1985 being the UN International Decade for Women, the bringing in of the EEOL can also be seen as more a political exercise required for the ratification of the 1985 UN Convention (Edwards 1988, p. 240; Mackie 2003, p. 179, cited in Dale 2009, p. 24) and part of Japan moving to join other developed countries through parity in lifestyle and social norms (Lehney, 2003), rather than a real concerted effort to change opportunities for women in the workplace.

[146] Ogasawara, 1998, p.28

[147] *19-2: Population 15 Years Old and Over by Labour Force Status, Five-year Age Groups and Sex (1920 – 2005)*, (Statistical Survey Department, Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications) <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/19.htm> [accessed 12/02/2017].

[148] 25 million out of 63.5 million in 1990 (ibid).

opportunities for women[149], the 1980s saw more women entering the workforce fulltime, often directly from higher education, whether university or college[150].

With the increase in the employment of young women in offices, in the 1980s the type of women who held her own disposable income changed, from the middle-aged housewife in charge of the wellbeing of her household, to the young working office lady. With OLs making up the largest group of working women by 1990[151], this was a new and emerging consumer market[152] who, through the nature of their working conditions, were also the perfect recipients of the new consumer culture policies being enacted by the government. Often living at home with parents and little investment in a career, the few responsibilities they had at home and work meant that OLs had the time to spend on the new leisure opportunities in the Bubble. Coupled with their income[153], almost wholly disposable with theoretically no immediate domestic commitments to put it towards, as well as a pressure to enjoy themselves before marriage and domesticity, OLs were ideally placed to become the new consumer market that was to take a central position within Japan's plan for domestic economy in the late 1980s.

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[149] According to Ogasawara, by 1975 at about 35 percent, clerical jobs made up the biggest percentage of labour for women (Ogasawara, 1998, p. 20)

[150] Although it must be noted that although the number of women at work overall increased between 1985 and 1990, as the total labour force increased significantly between 1980 and 1990 (almost doubling from about 57 million to over 100 million), this meant that as a proportion, women's participation actually dropped, from 51 percent in 1985 to 40 percent in 1990. However, it must be remembered that this comes from 37.7 percent in 1980 of women as part of the labour workforce, showing that overall women's engagement in the workplace was on the rise. (*19-2: Population 15 Years Old and Over by Labour Force Status, Five-year Age Groups and Sex (1920 – 2005)*, (Statistical Survey Department, Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications) <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/19.htm> [accessed 12/02/2017])

[151] Iwao, 1993, p. 160

[152] Between 1985 and 1990, for women aged between 20 and 34 years old, their average earnings increased by 19.03 percent, from ¥4,128,600 to ¥4,914,600, a difference of ¥786,000 in five years. (*19-36: Regular Employees of Contractual Cash Earnings, Scheduled Earnings and Annual Special Earnings by Sex and Age, Enterprises with 10 or more Regular Employees) (1985--2005)*, Statistics and Information Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/19.htm > [accessed 23/01/2017])
See also Appendix IV, Japanese Women's Statistics, p.320

[153] In 1989 at the height of the Bubble, of women employees, of average age of 32.4 years, working in companies of 1000 + employees, average contractual earnings pcm: ¥214,600. Average Regular earnings pcm: ¥201,100. Average Annual Special Earnings: ¥808,400. (Total: ¥4,988,400 contractually, or ¥5,796,800 with bonus [around £ 25,882.46 in 1989] *taking into account the inflation of the yen internationally)
(*19-38: Age, Years of Service, Monthly Cash Earnings of General Employees and Number of Employees by Size of Enterprise and Sex (1958—2006)*, Statistics and Information Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/19.htm > [accessed 23/01/2017]).
*Historic currency exchange calculated using online forum: http://fxtop.com/en/currency-converter-past.php?A=6011500&C1=JPY&C2=GBP&DD=01&MM=04&YYYY=1990&B=1&P=&I=1&btnOK=Go%21 [accessed 23/01/2017]) See also Appendix IV, Japanese Women's Statistics, p.321

On Magazines in the Bubble

The history of Japanese magazines is synonymous with the development of its modern consumer culture. From the 1900s to the end of the 1980s, Tanaka[154] describes six distinct periods of Japanese women's magazine development, during which issues of female suffrage and the education and ideology of the housewife, morph into that of the female consumer by the second-half of the century. From 'making dresses' to 'buying dresses'[155], women's magazines shift from the message of 'good wife and wise mother' to individual enjoyment, changing their emphasis from housewife to consumer of the miracle economy[156]. The 1970s by contrast show an increasing diversity of consumption, and both Tanaka[157] and Moeran[158] see this period as the change from post-war to a new 'information consumerism'. Using foreign words and expanding topics from fashion to include tourism and food, they mark the beginning of a consumer culture in Japan linked to increasing numbers of women at work with disposable income, and traditional female roles breaking down.[159]

Segmentation of the market continued into the 1980s, with publishers releasing increasing numbers of titles to appeal to changing tastes and attitudes in a rapidly expanding consumer market. By the early-1980s between 182 and 245 new magazine titles were launched annually[160]. During this time, Japanese publishers released their own editions of established Western titles such as *Cosmopolitan* (1980) and *Marie Claire* (1982), while new Japanese titles began to use more European-sounding names such as *25 ans* (1980), *ViVi* (1983) and *Éf* (1984), in tune with the international outlook of the 1980s. In the need to appeal to increasingly specific segmented parts of the market, crossover titles were created, with many magazines diversified into brother-sister publications (such as *Brutus*/*Hanako*, and *Olive*/*Popeye*). These were intended to appeal directly to specific genders and age groups, and readers were expected to graduate from young publications to those catering to an older readership as they grew out of their specific age brackets, keeping the readership loyal to not the magazine, but the publisher overall.

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[154] Tanaka in Martinez, 1998, pp. 110-113

[155] Tanaka in Martinez, 1998 p. 111; see also Andrew Gordon, *Like Bamboo Shoots after the Rain: The Growth of a Nation of Dressmakers and Consumers*, in Franks and Hunter (eds.), 2012, pp.56-78.

[156] For more on housewives and their role in Japanese consumption, see Masayuki Tanimoto, *The Role of Housework in Everyday Life: Another Aspect of Consumption in Modern Japan*, in Franks and Hunter (eds.), 2012, pp.27-55; Helen Macnaughtan, *Building up Steam as Consumers: Women, Rice Cookers and the Consumption of Everyday Household Goods in Japan*, in Franks and Hunter (eds.), 2012, pp.79-104.

[157] Tanaka in Martinez 1998 p. 111

[158] Moeran, 1996, p. 202

[159] (Koide 1992 cited in Tanaka in Martinez, 1998, p. 112)

[160] Tanaka (in Martinez, 1998, p. 113) puts this figure at around 1,300 new magazines being launched or re-launched, in the period 1980-1985. Although between 115 and 151 were discontinued every year of that same period (Moeran, 1996, p. 203) this also indicated the need to remain flexible and specific.

The second-half of the 1980s also oversaw the launch of magazines by retailers, sold through supermarkets providing practical household advice and tips, and considerably cheaper than the more established housewife magazines. Meanwhile the launch of *Hanako* magazine in 1988 listing not solely fashion or domestic housekeeping advice, but entertainment, travel, shopping, dining, and other general lifestyle and consumption options, heralded the start of the urban metropolitan leisure guide in Japan. This ties in with the popular rise of other consumer-guide trends, notably with the intense popularity of Tanaka Yasuo's novel, *Somehow Crystal*[161], in which the detailed listing of shops, goods, restaurants and brands not only encapsulated the consumer frenzy of the 1980s, but also could be used as a guide to metropolitan Tokyo in its own right, and leading to the rise of the *kurisutaru-zoku* consumer lifestyle.

Of all Japanese print mediums, magazines are a good barometer of popular consumer culture, published on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis, and having to frequently change and adapt to suit the tastes of their readership. It has been noted in the study of Japanese magazines how important prescriptive guides are in Japanese culture, where sympathetic and anticipating behaviour is highly prized[162], and moreover, taste-formation is greatly related to concepts of groupism and collective learning.[163]

With high circulation, specialist niche publications are printed in the tens of thousands, special interest magazines in the hundreds of thousands, and popular weekly magazines from half a million to over a million copies[164]. In Japanese publishing, magazines take-up is high while books are low[165], as book sales decreased and magazines and small paperbacks increased in popularity after 1945, indicating the trend for lighter publications in size, shape or content[166], alongside a general trend among publishers to privilege magazines with their more lucrative advertising budget than a slower and less predictable book market. By the 1980s, over 17 million copies per issue were being sold in 1989 with a weekly average of 2.5 magazines per person[167]

With increased segmentation of the market since the late-1960s and early-1970s, Japanese magazines can target a select audience, singled out by age, gender, interests, even occupation. This

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[161] As referenced in Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian, *Postmodernism and Japan* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1989)
[162] McVeigh, 1997, p. 50; Tanaka in Martinez, 1998, pp. 117-123
[163] Clarence-Smith in Cox (ed.) 2008, pp. 51-67
[164] Moeran, 1996, p. 204
[165] Kiyota in Tanaka, in Martinez, 1998, p. 113
[166] Tanaka in Martinez 1998, pp. 113-114
[167] 'The Japan Audit Bureau of Circulation's figures for the first half of 1989 showed that, on average, 42 selected weeklies sold more than 12 million copies, and 30 monthlies over five million, giving a grand total for 72 magazines of 17,247,604 copies per issue that were bought and presumably read by a population whose members buys an average of almost five magazines every two weeks.' (Moeran, 1996, p. 205)

is an advantage taken notice of by the advertising industry, who use the specific readership to create targeted low-budget/high-impact messages for a receptive audience with a high recall ability due to their collective interests. Magazines thus attract a high rate of advertising that helps keep their output flexible through the dependable monthly advertising revenue streams, and which make up around 30% of total magazine space[168]. This makes advertising in magazines more influential than in any other medium, and linked to new developments in Japanese visual culture that have been bolstered by the traditionally close relationships between government, industry and media in Japan[169].

Although catering to niche markets, with their diversity and ability to rapidly respond to changing tastes and interests, magazines can thus offer in-depth representation of a whole range of groups. Furthermore, the widespread belief in a unifying homogeneity within Japan[170] means that even though many magazines are published within metropolitan urban areas, magazines also act as a unifying medium in which a desired, mythologised homogeneity is articulated, albeit one split and categorised by age, gender and interests. In essence magazines thus become a site for imagined community, as an imagined space into which communities can come into being, or in which gender and identity may be performed in a way that is both public and private[171].

Finally, although there has been good scholarly research on Japanese popular magazines[172], on the whole these have focused on either specific examples taken from magazines, or studies of magazines such as *An An*[173] and *Chere*[174]. To date, the magazines of *Mono, AXIS, Hanako*, and *Brutus*, chosen for this thesis appear to have featured little if at all in any other accompanying literature on Japanese magazines, despite their relatively large circulation, impact and popularity.

On Baudrillard and Bourdieu

Part of a generational wave of poststructuralist French philosophers, Baudrillard's thinking engages with the concept of a postmodern media-saturated world in which the consumption of signs come to replace that of reality and the 'real' order with simulations, leading to a state of hyperreality.

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[168] Moeran, 1996
[169] See Laurie Anne Freeman *Closing the Shop: Information Cartels and Japan's Mass Media*, (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press) 2000
[170] Reischauer, 1985; Tanaka in Martinez, 1998
[171] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 3rd Edition. (London and New York: Verso, 2006); also, Germer, Mackie and Wöhr, 2014
[172] Notably Rosenberger, in Skov and Moeran, 1995, Tanaka in Martinez, 1998
[173] Tanaka in Martinez, 1998
[174] Rosenberger in Skov & Moeran, 1995

During the 1980s his work was taken up enthusiastically in Japan, chiming with the hyper-consumption of the Bubble, before falling out of favour in the years of the Lost Decade.

Initially critiquing late-capitalist consumer society, using structuralist and pseudo-psychoanalytic approach of signs and the reading of consumer desire[175], Baudrillard builds on semiotic theories regarding the sign as marker and transmitter of meaning. Existing within a complex interrelation of meaning with other signs, they are equally affected by the manner in which they are presented, organised and consumed as much as they are produced, affecting Man as contextualised by this system[176]. From the 1970s onwards Baudrillard moves away from centralised agencies of oppression and alienation into a world of shifting mutable signs and simulations that gradually replace reality with a hyperreality that is more real than the real itself[177]. Attempts to provide alternatives as an escape from the system are defeated in an unending hall of mirrors of simulations that ultimately absorb all back in, something relevant to the shifting views of Japan's 1980s.

A contemporary of Baudrillard's, Bourdieu engages with the significance of the material and cultural world in the construction of the self through symbolic exchange. However, rather than semiotics, Bourdieu's work is rooted firmly in the methodology and research of sociology and anthropology, applying his findings to the extension of the capitalist system in the construction of the social. In the application of capital to the symbolic exchange values of culture, Bourdieu sees its use in the construction of social class with its implications on economic and social capital. Central to these ideas are the formation of the 'habitus' and 'field' as social constructs that make up society, 'symbolic' and 'cultural capital' as the valuing system of exchange that are used within society, and the struggle between classes. For Bourdieu, society is made up of a complex web of fields, each autonomous but interrelated, competing against one another in a dynamic relation of power. Within this larger social space of competing fields, people flow, using and transforming capital to establish their position in relation to one another in the field.

Distinction[178] explores how the logic of cultural capital is determined by the dominant class and imposed onto the dominated classes, the main purpose of which is to distinguish the divisions between the classes through difference. For Bourdieu, lifestyle is key to understanding class struggle for dominance, the adherence to a lifestyle an expression not just of inner personality and a sense of self, but through the articulation of taste, also a complex web of cultural knowledge, economic investment and social aspiration. Together these combine to demonstrate lifestyle as a

[175] Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths & Structures* (London: Sage Publications, 1998)
[176] Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, trans. by James Benedict (London and New York: Verso, 2005)
[177] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983)
[178] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2010)

manifestation of power relations to be used as much as economic or social capital in the struggle to define and distinguish class position.

It is this critique of the system of assumed meritocracy as a cover for imbedded elitism and the link between the reproduction of cultural capital and economic capital, that is relevant to studying the culture of the Bubble Economy as shifting dynamics of lifestyle, taste and cultural reproduction. Moreover, Bourdieu's methodologies of empirical research, reworking, and sociological and ethnographic study, especially in the application to the French bourgeoisie, act also as a template in the quantitative analysis of Japanese magazines.

Conclusion

In this chapter, are explored some of the contextual underpinnings to the culture of the Bubble Economy, including the economic and political landscape that led to its beginnings with the signing of the Plaza Accord in 1985. In trying to mollify international trade tensions, Japan started a chain of events that would see it create the largest economic bubble in its history. This had an effect not only on the economic and corporate landscape, but also on consumer culture, encouraged as it were to be a driver in a newly liberalised and globalised tertiary economy. As a result of these economic policies, Japanese society began to change, and lifestyle and leisure became a central narrative in the consumer culture of the Bubble Economy, going against a historic cultural link between work and Japanese identity, and instead creating a mythology for a new globalised and liberated consumer-citizen. A key demographic that typified this new citizenship were the *shinjinrui*, who as a 1980s-youth phenomenon, embodied the fizzy consumer-values of this period; the spirit of carefree consumption and leisure. However alongside them were other lesser-known modern Japanese youth cultures that would come to the fore in the unease of the 1990s.

Alongside the twinned cultures of consumption and leisure, was that of *kokusaika*, or internationalisation. As a government-inspired initiative that had both political and economic drivers, *kokusaika* quickly became open to different interpretations and applications, from economic and political to cultural and social. Set against this was the ideology of *nihonjinron*, or Japanese uniqueness, which the Japanese government used alongside to dampen down the cultural changes of *kokusaika* policies. However ultimately *kokusaika* became intertwined with *nihonjinron* as a marker not of Westernisation, but of a modern uniquely Japanese internationalisation in a globalised community of equals.

Central to the culture of the Bubble Economy was the relationship with work and the Japanese company, itself an emblem of the success of the producer-consumer economy, and which itself had

a distinct culture. Characterised by strong internetworked bonds of mutual responsibility and loyalty of Japanese community, the Japanese company operated within a context of a multi-layered *keiretsu* system of other densely-networked companies. Through the security of their networks, this system may have provided a safety-net from which Japanese companies could aggressively expand into the globalised market, fuelling the impression of a booming Japan.

At the forefront of company culture were the gendered roles of salaryman and office lady, embodying the new producer-consumer-citizen of Bubble Japan, and who at the forefront of the production and consumption economy, would be susceptible to the cultural changes that were taking place. Operating within the confines of the company system, the salaryman enjoyed unique benefits, such as lifetime employment, positive gender bias, and seniority progression. In return, he was expected to demonstrate utmost commitment, including long working hours and frequent work transfers. While this contributed to a perceived downside to Japanese working life, loyalty and a narrative of self-sacrifice for the wider community were an integral part of a reading of Japanese masculinity in the second-half of the twentieth century, that had seen the salaryman identity becoming intertwined with that of the hegemonic-masculine-producer role of legitimate Japanese male citizenship. However, although the successes of the Bubble Economy appeared to propel Japanese corporate masculinity even further onto the world stage, it also made more apparent the life-poverty of its salaryman participants against the abundant consumption around them. It is during this time that the salaryman narrative loses its heroism, its hegemonic status open to social and cultural challenges that develop once the Bubble ends. The Bubble Economy thus can be seen as a last expression of the corporate Japanese hegemonic masculinity that had dominated the latter-half of the twentieth century, before having to adapt to the challenges and changing perceptions of the 1990s and twenty-first century.

By contrast, the office lady had traditionally been a peripheral figure, both to the patriarchal dominance of the salaryman, and his counterpart, the *sengyō shufu* housewife. However, although designated a supporting role in the office, measures during the Bubble Economy such as the EEOL ensured that OLs were given a higher profile as contributing producers, and their disposable income and time meant they were ideal participants in the new consumer and leisure cultures of the Bubble.

Finally, this chapter explored the basic background to Japanese magazines in the Bubble, as one of the mediums through which the new consumer culture of the Bubble was articulated. This includes the change from post-war to 'information consumerism', and increasing segmentation and internationalisation of the market in the 1980s, leading to the development of magazines as lifestyle and consumer-guides. A brief exposition of the main theories of Baudrillard and Bourdieu was also given as context to their application to the material in the following chapters.

Chapter 2: Buying into the Bubble: Lifestyle, Design, Identity

This chapter will explore the role design magazines had in not just describing, but shaping and stylising readers in the Japanese Bubble. By comparing the two magazines, *Mono* and *AXIS*, it will argue that there were different agendas at play with different aspects of Bubble life promoted. As such this chapter aims to show how magazines could not just indicate the trends or aesthetics present in the Bubble, but also could be influential in the creation of identity through the consumption of goods and ideas.

Mono and *AXIS* – A Brief Context

Founded in 1982 by publishing house, World Photo Press, *Mono* magazine is a consumer-led design review magazine of everyday goods. Meaning 'thing' or 'stuff'[179], *Mono* is a lifestyle goods magazine with a biweekly circulation of 80,000. Originally priced at ¥650, this decreased to ¥480 at the end of 1987 as part of an overall redesign of the issue that included a resizing, reduction in pages, change of paper type, and redistribution of content and advertising[180]. Rather than design, *Mono* acts as a reviewer of consumer goods, encapsulating the mass-consumer market of the Bubble in a way that more elitist design magazines do not, showing everyday consumer design at the mass low-end of the spectrum.

By contrast, *AXIS* magazine concerns itself with the upper-end of design culture. Founded in September 1981 alongside the *AXIS* organisation and *AXIS* building in Roppongi, Tokyo, the magazine is part of a total design package that incorporates organisation, building, galleries, exhibitions and shops. Priced at ¥1200, it is the most expensive of all the magazines examined in this study, and with a quarterly circulation of 30,000, has also the smallest demographic and least frequent publications. This niche status may be attributed to its position as not only a design magazine, but also a company one, produced to showcase the company and its activities; its

[179] While there is no indication that *Mono* Magazine has any connection with the 1970s *Mono Ha* art movement, it does nevertheless point to a growing popular awareness of material culture that the *Mono Ha* movement appeared to pre-empt in its exploration of the interactions between materials, as well as the growing culture of consumption in Japan.

[180] While unclear for the reasons, this reduction in price and change in format coincides with the consequences of the post-yen revaluation that includes the brief recessionary effects in 1986, low interest rates imposed by the Bank of Japan to counteract the 1986 recession, and the higher value of the yen in international terms. However, this last point is unlikely to have been of impact on the magazine, due to its primarily domestic circulation. Instead the changes may be seen within the overall context of complying with general trends in Japanese magazine publishing for smaller, lighter (in weight and content), and more throwaway publications, as well as the increased competition in the magazine boom of this period.

promotional potential and international credentials further emphasised by its international outlook and accompanying English translation.

Both *Mono* and *AXIS* magazines' publication in the early-1980s were part of a growing trend in design and industry magazines that had been gathering pace since the 1950s.[181] However while prior to the 1980s the emphasis in design had been that of an industry-led approach,[182] the 1980s saw new titles reflect a corporate influence in design, for example the start of *Nikkei Design* in 1987, as part of the *Nikkei Inc.* group, one of Japan's largest business and economic media organisations. Alongside the 'design centres' and 'design laboratories' that were being founded within large corporations, design appears not only to raise its profile, but to reposition itself closer to business and the economy and becoming accepted by the establishment in the process. As such, *AXIS* is indicative of a new wave of design and lifestyle industries of the 1980s, in which the magazine was created alongside the *AXIS* design and exhibition spaces in a custom *AXIS* building, pointing to a growing professionalism and trend of design collaboration with industry.

Furthermore, accompanying the rising international profile of Japanese economy, industry and corporations, the 1980s also saw a flood of published literature analysing and promoting Japanese corporate management as the future of work organisation[183]. Riding this tide of popularity were self-published books by companies and leading corporate figures, examples of which include Sony co-founder, Akio Morita's '*Made in Japan*' (1986, 1987) and Mitsubishi's '*Japanese Business Glossary'* (1983)[184]. Typically published dual-language for a domestic and international audience, these publications could be seen as purely promotional functions intended to further the profile of Japanese industry as a whole. However, as Yoshino[185] suggests, these often strayed into *nihonjinron* territory, expounding in material such as Nippon Steel Corporation's '*Nippon: The Land and its People'* (1984) and Taiyō Kōbe Bank's '*The Scrutable Japanese'* (1988), expansions on Japanese national character that were used to explain to an international audience Japan's industrial and economic success[186]. It is against this background that we can see *AXIS* magazine as part of this promotional and potentially nationalist discourse within Japanese industry during the expansion of its corporate influence in the boom of the 1980s.

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[181] Alongside the boom in domestic consumption that accompanied the miracle economy, events through the 1960s and 1970s, such as the Tokyo World Design Conference (1960), Tokyo Olympics (1964) and Osaka World Expo (1970) also further encouraged the flourishing of the design magazine market in addition to the trends towards a more segmented specialist approach by the publishing industry.

[182] Characterised by titles such as *Design & Industry* (1971), *Industrial Design* (1977), *Process: Architecture* (1977), *E+D+P (Editorial, Design, Print)* (1979)

[183] Ross Mouer and Kawanishi Hirosuke, *A Sociology of Work in Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) pp.4-5

[184] Kosaku Yoshino, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan: A sociological enquiry* (London and New York: LSE Routledge, 1992) pp.172-176

[185] Yoshino, 1992, p.173

[186] ibid

Who were the Readership? Gender, Lifestyle and Quality in *Mono* and *AXIS*

As a lifestyle consumer goods magazine with articles ranging from survival guides to credit cards, *Mono* was designed to appeal to a young male audience. Part of 1980s-consumer goods culture its redesign in November 1987 emphasised its trend-led ethos. Meanwhile its price reduction from ¥650 to ¥480 reflects the fierce competition of the new men's lifestyle magazine market,[187] while *Hanako*'s arrival in 1988 priced at ¥260, heralded an even further depression of price as the boom in lifestyle magazines continued and the revaluation of the yen, low interest rates and the suppression of global commodity values made themselves felt.

Figure 1: Mono, Front Cover, 1985, before the redesign. Note differences in size and format. Mono Issue 44: 01/07/1985 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1985); Front Cover

Figure 2: Mono, Front Cover, 1987, after the redesign. Note differences in size and format. Mono Issue 92: 16/11/1987 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1987); Front Cover

Further to the reduction in pricing the magazine made other format changes, including a change in its page sizing and quality (matt and heavier page weight to glossy and lighter/thinner), a significant reduction in pages (198 to 158), overall content (160 pages to 128 pages of articles) and an increase in colour (from a total of 67 colour pages in 01/07/1985 to 129 colour pages in 16/11/1987 – Figures 1 and 2). Although at first glance advertising appeared to stay the same, as the total number of pages decreased, the overall percentage of the magazine devoted to advertising in real terms increased (7.6% in 1985 to 18.98% in 1987)[188]. What this suggests is that although the magazine became cheaper in 1987, it strategically improved on its appearance with glossy, thinner paper and more colour whilst at the expense of its content, potentially making it appear more fashionable,

[187] Such as with *Brutus* (¥550) and *Popeye* (¥330)
[188] See Appendix II, Mono Magazine Data, p. 158

dependent on advertising, and easily consumerable for its lifestyle-conscious but potentially time-poor targeted readership. Furthermore, with the reduction in price, pages and content the magazine not only appears less substantial than before, but also more easily disposable; something that became a recurring theme in the cash-rich, time-poor consumerist landscape of 1980s-Japan and echoing the more long-term trends within Japanese publishing itself.[189] Superficiality also becomes more evident in the issue feature themes as the Bubble starts, and where in 01/07/1985 the issue[190] featured survival isolationist equipment ranging from camping to weaponry, by the magazine redesign in 16/11/1987 the main feature article contained a consumer guide to credit cards[191]. Thus, by the end of 1987 *Mono* magazine had repositioned itself to a more popularist centre, focusing on themes of consumption, fashionability, lifestyle and disposability, responding to the boom in consumer values and increased competition in lifestyle magazines for men during the 1980s.

By comparison, *AXIS* magazine priced at ¥1200 was 2.5 times more expensive, and being a larger format with heavy, high quality glossy pages and cover, falls into the more specialised category of design (Figure 3 as an example). Of the issues studied, advertising made up only an average of 12% of the magazine, under half of the average exposure of advertising in magazines[192], indicating a higher dedication to content. Design-worthy topics featured in the magazine ranged from the effect of the digital on design, to foreign design policy and design education. Overall, perception of the magazine is one of quality, seriousness, and cutting-edge information whose rarity-value is enhanced by its price, relatively small distribution, and quarterly issuing. Adding to price and quality are also of other values of internationalism and modernity; implied by the featuring of both Japanese and non-Japanese design, the inclusion of an English-translation insert with every issue, the express intention of overseas subscription for a foreign audience, and the gender-neutral tone of the magazine focusing on design as a subject rather than consumer objects for a gendered market. Nevertheless, its subscribers as design practitioners and critics would most likely have still been more male than female, considering the gendered nature of work in Japan.

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[189] This was not just restricted to magazines, but Uematsu Toyoyuki formerly of Panasonic, describes how people changed their cars, tvs and stereos every few years for style reasons, and even had several tvs in one house. The architect, Sakakiyama Ken also comments on how the throwaway culture extended to construction and architecture, with ornament and inferior materials rife in the Bubble. (See Appendix I, Uematsu Interview, pp.23-39; Appendix I, Sakakiyama Interview, pp.60-76)

[190] *Mono* Issue 44: 01/07/1985 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1985)

[191] *Mono* Issue 92: 16/11/1987 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1987). Credit cards will be discussed in Chapter 5 in more detail.

[192] Appendix II, AXIS Magazine Data, p.190

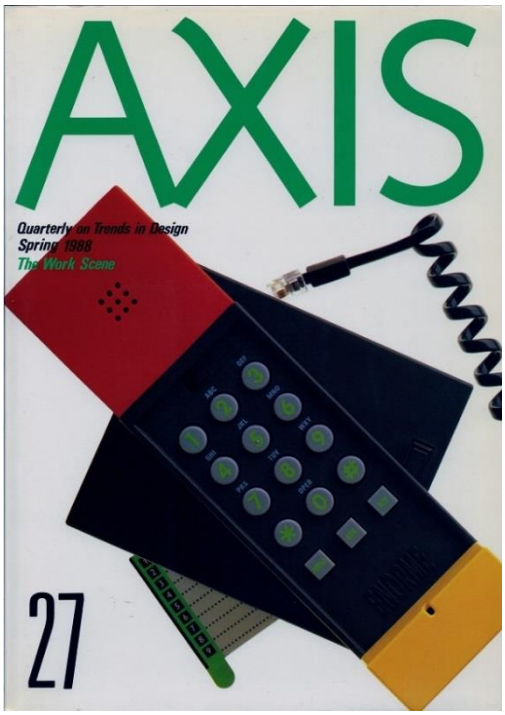

Figure 3: AXIS Front Cover, 1988 AXIS – Quarterly on Trends in Design Vol. 27: Spring 1988 – The Work Scene (Tokyo: AXIS Inc., 1988); Front Cover

In essence, *Mono* and *AXIS* represent two different ends of the design magazine market, and in doing so articulate their own mediated experiences of the 1980s and material "Bubble culture". On the one hand, *Mono* deliberately changed its format to keep pace with the domestic trends for faster, cheaper consumption, trend-awareness, disposability and superficiality, whilst also being part of the general global trend for men's magazines as a new market of lifestyle consumption. *AXIS* on the other hand aimed to facilitate a conversation about design for an informed and international elite, exploring issues of design, but with a subtext of promoting Japanese design and industry within a global context. With the consistent themes of quality and considered engagement with the wider world, juxtaposed against *Mono*'s themes of cheap fast lifestyle and superficial consumption, these two magazines show differing views of design in the Bubble that were at the same time legitimate and opposing.

Consuming Lists in *Mono*

With domestic consumption a cornerstone of 1980s government policy, the surge in lifestyle magazines was part of the overall boom in consumption that characterised the Bubble Economy. By 1989 gross consumer debt (excluding mortgages) had reached ¥9 trillion, accelerating to ¥67 trillion at the end of March 1991.[193] However more than merely facilitating the consumption of

[193] ¥445,000 per household (Christopher Wood, *The Bubble Economy: The Japanese Economic Collapse* (London: Sidwick & Jackson, 1992) p.37)

goods and services, magazines such as *Mono* created a whole culture around consumption, implicit in the way articles were organised and presented.

Broadly speaking the articles in *Mono* can be divided into two types: the 'list-article' and the 'discursive article', comprising of either articles that feature items in a list-format for easy but relatively prescribed consumption, or articles that portray culture in a more discursive and open manner. Whilst an arguably common practice in cultural production and discourse, it has significance beyond that of merely catering to the knowledge-base of readers, as the means by which the information is relayed indicates its intention and the purpose by which the receiver puts it to use. With list-articles making up nearly 63% of the magazine issue[194], it is the significance of the list that is key to understanding the consumption practices in *Mono*.

Following Baudrillard, list-articles come to signify the logical culmination of the process of fundamental impoverishment and alienation from objects, in which quantity replaces meaning in a system of mass-production. In this way, the excess and bounty of mass-produced goods and services portrayed in the endless list become an expression of the boundless possibilities and material availability of goods to the 1980s-Japanese consumer, invigorated by the enriched yen and booming economy. With land values rising fast, 'Many people were advised by real estate agencies and banks to realise capital gain by selling their houses and buying new, larger units by means of easy housing finance with low interest rates. Many followed this advice and also purchased cars, furniture, electrical appliances and clothing, often by means of consumer credit.'[195]

Moreover, Bourdieu would argue that sign-values are important in the determining of social status, allowing not only construction of being, but also determining position in a wider community through the acquisition of cultural capital. Seen in this light, lists and sets of objects have added importance, providing both the context that indicates to the audience the relative sign-values involved, and allowing order to be imposed on the unruly objects. Thus, if we examine the regular articles in *Mono*, we can see how the objects, initially bewildering in both type and quantity, through the list-format enable the reader to impose control, ordering and cataloguing for easier consumption into a personal world of signs, that also correspond to the wider context of the social world as depicted in the magazine. As such the article-as-list becomes a microcosm of the realities surrounding their readers, indicating through consumption a way in which order could be imposed on a new uncertain world in which Japan was felt to be changing into a dominant world power and its rich citizens, potential leaders of the first world.

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[194] List-articles: 62.65% average; discursive articles: 17.29%; advertising: 20.88% (Appendix II, Mono Magazine Data, p.187)

[195] Makoto Itoh, *The Japanese Economy Reconsidered* (New York: Palgrave, 2000) p.81

However, although seductive, the array of goods in the magazine masked one important factor: just as Baudrillard posited that the desire for an overabundance of objects was caused by a fundamental alienation from the object (which it could never truly fulfil), so the consumption encouraged by government was itself predicated on a hollow growth. As Ohtsu and Imanari[196] suggest, the sharply rising land and stock values alongside a complacency in the continuing growth of the Japanese economy encouraged increasingly extravagant consumer behaviour, facilitated by banks eager to spread their easy access of global credit, and companies wanting to offset their export slump by expanding their domestic market. Furthermore, developments in technology meant that a narrative of continuous improvement and update was being promoted by companies and marketing departments as a way of keeping current with the latest model[197]. Predicated on essentially an asset bubble this consumer behaviour was ultimately unsustainable when it finally burst in the 1990s.[198]

Nevertheless, the structure of these articles in *Mono* can inform on the general attitudes at the time towards the popular consumption of goods, showing not only what people were consuming, but how. For example, a closer examination of the 'list-article' shows two main types emerging; that of the 'feature-list' in which the objects depicted have a sign-value / cultural capital that is presented as higher than normal objects; and of the 'shopping-list' in which the quantity of objects appears key to encouraging consumption.

Of the 'feature-list' articles, these are typically of fewer pages (between 4-7)[199], but what they lack in quantity, they make up for in perceived quality, displaying large glossy colour images of objects that correspond to a consistent theme, presenting a care and consideration that overtly confers cultural capital. Offered up primarily for their sign-value over their use-function, the frequency of these articles portray a readership cognisant of the complexities of late-capitalist consumer culture – something resonant not only with Baudrillard's system of "complex motivations" [200] of sign and

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[196] Makoto Ohtsu and Tomio Imanari, *Inside Japanese Business: A Narrative History, 1960-2000*, (New York and London: M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, 2002) p. 245

[197] For more on the significance of an approach to the historical study of technology, and its relationship to a notion of continual technological progress and innovation, see David Edgerton, *Innovation, Technology, or History What is the Historiography of Technology About?* (Technology and Culture, Volume 51, Number 3, July 2010, pp.680-697, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010)

[198] In his interview, Sakakiyama Ken poignantly mentions how during the Bubble he went travelling to Australia and other places, not caring about expense because 'In Bubble he thinks maybe I can get a lot money after, more and more, so that's why he doesn't care why to spend money because he think[s] he can get money.' [translator's words]. (Appendix I, Sakakiyama Interview, p.76)

[199] Appendix II, Mono Magazine Data, pp. 157-188

[200] Few objects today are offered alone, without a context of objects which 'speaks' them. And this changes the consumer's relation to the object: he no longer relates to a particular object in its specific utility, but to a set of objects in its total signification… This is, then, no longer a sequence of mere objects, but a chain of signifiers, in so far as all of these signify one another reciprocally as part of a more complex super-object, drawing the consumer into a series of more complex motivations. (Baudrillard, p. 27)

object but also Bourdieu's writing on class and cultural capital.[201] Thus although the main narrative of the time was of national homogeneity[202], in fact through these *Mono* articles we can see how conspicuous consumption, tied up with the rhetoric of economic prosperity, could be used as a tool of opportunity in the economic boom for cultural and social leverage.

Cultural capital and sign-value however are not evenly distributed across all systems of objects, and this can be seen in the 'shopping-list' style articles such as *'Hotline'* and *'What's New'* that are included in *Mono*. Typically featuring an exhaustive multitude of objects in a list format, they span a variety of pages, from just 1 page each for the *'About Mono 100 [ ] Chapter'* and *'Reader's Present'* and 4 pages for *'Mono Shop'*, to between 12-27 pages for *'What's New'* and 32 pages for *'Hotline'*.[203] Although containing a bewildering array of objects that range from binoculars, t-shirts, popcorn and male grooming kits[204] to cars, cameras, AV items, office equipment and furniture,[205] the objects depicted are commonly of middling-value, their lack of significant cultural capital reflected in the sometimes monochrome articles, the small, low-quality, closely-packed images, and the listing of details such as retailers and pricing (Figure 4).

[201] This elaborate construction of objects into an entire system of 'complex motivations' is something that resonates with Bourdieu's writing on class; cultural capital associated with objects is tied up in a more complex system of economic, educational, and social capital between the classes, leading to the interrelated power plays between the classes in a society. As such, the sign-value demonstrated by the composition and arrangement of objects in the magazine, and in which cultural capital is so implicit, is only part of a wider relationship the audience has with the objects depicted, and which include other elements such as the economic value of the objects and earning potential of the audience, their relative educational level, the cultural capital of the magazine itself, and the social capital not just owning the objects but having the knowledge of the objects and trends may confer upon the reader. Thus the cultural capital gained from consuming the objects displayed in this way may not necessarily be purely altruistic or for entertainment value, but can also be seen as valuable capital that can be stored and later exchanged for increased social or economic capital through the display of educational or cultural learning, leading ultimately to increased economic gain through valuable networking and potential career opportunities implicit in this process. Plainly speaking, the magazine article in this case has another function other than to facilitate consumption, namely to provide additional culturally educational material by which the reader may add to an arsenal of knowledge to be used to gain advantage at a later date.

[202] This in itself was tied up with the ongoing *nihonjinron* narrative of economic, industrial and corporate greatness – more later in the chapter

[203] See Appendix II, Mono Magazine Data, pp. 170-186

[204] '*What's New*', *Mono* Issue 117: 16/08/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988)

[205] '*Hotline*', *Mono* Issue 125: 02/12/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988)

Figure 4: 'Hotline' article page, 1988 – example of a 'shopping-list'-style article.
Mono Issue 125: 02/12/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988), p.90-91

However, while this low-quality and monotonous presentation of objects appears at odds with the conspicuous consumption of the 1980s-economic boom, it could be argued that they are in fact necessary to create the very conditions for conspicuous consumption. Juxtaposed with the 'feature-list' articles they enable those goods to appear even more appealing, whilst at the same time aiding the satisfaction of desire through offering up cheap and plentiful goods for immediate and more realistic consumption. Moreover, reflected in the material chaos and abundance of the 'shopping-list' article is the feeling of abundance and variety that evokes the feeling of carnival[206]. This in itself is another kind of seduction that freed from the restrictions of economy or taste implicit in higher-status articles, creates a reversal of order, allowing the reader the freedom of non-regular behaviour that may be impulsive, and more likely to consume, thus unlinking the 'rational consumption' that marked the previous decades to the late-capitalist irrational and impulsive consumption that consumer economies depend on.

Thus, in *Mono* we see not only consumption being enacted, but a mix of different types of consumption strategies, from inspirational high-value items of significant cultural capital, to low-value goods that are presented for immediate satisfaction, threaded through with an appeal to the irrationality of late-capitalist consumer desire. Through these strategies not only a mix of readers and tastes are appealed to, but a whole social order is created by the hierarchy of goods and articles, in which individuals can align themselves with in their struggle for positioning. Thus, the consumer culture of the Bubble was not only the homogenous brand-conscious behaviour of *shinjinrui*, but

[206] Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan, Edition* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995) – Moreover, Ivy notes how this visual style of profusion is intimately linked with an aesthetic style and postmodern practice of Japan in the 1980s, used to articulate an identity that is its own. More will be discussed about this postmodern styling in the final chapter.

instead was a complex mix of tastes, aspirations and desires that together made up a system by which people could determine their own place in a hierarchy of consumption. *Mono* as part of 'The field of production […] enables taste to be realised by offering it, at each moment, the universe of cultural goods as a system of stylistic possibles from which it can select the system of stylistic features constituting a life-style'[207], and as such help shape lifestyles for a new consumer economy. At its heart these list-articles are about collecting, ordering and consuming as ways in which drives may be satisfied, and through which order may be imposed on a world full of frustrated desire. All of these strategies of consumption and display feed into a cycle of production and consumption, in which frustration and the empty satisfying of misdirected desires are the mechanisms by which the capitalist production system is kept running[208]. As Tobin writes on the 1980s-department store, 'These stores […] sell not just things but life-styles, what trendy retailers refer to as *mono igai no mono* – things that are not things. […] The central notion is to create an identity of one's own through enlightened consumption. One purchases not things in themselves but a lifestyle defined by things. The new ideal is the man or woman who is not self-made but self-consumed.'[209]

Fashion in *Mono*

While diversity is located in the regular articles, specific items are showcased in main feature-articles advertised on each front cover. Of these there are usually three, consisting of a main article of 25-35 pages in length, a secondary article spanning 9-19 pages, and a third article of 6-14 pages[210]. These cover articles are important, as they set the tone and style for the main concerns of the magazine, and do much to attract and retain readers, and legitimise the content and the magazine's own cache of cultural capital.

Of the 24 special-feature articles, 7 are on fashion items which makes up about a third of the special features.[211] However the majority are in the secondary and tertiary category of feature articles rather than billing as a main feature of each issue. As such, although fashion is evidently important enough to feature regularly and frequently, it is not important enough to command a leading space

[207] Bourdieu, pp. 227-228
[208] Baudrillard, p.27
[209] Joseph J. Tobin, Joseph J. (ed.) *Re-Made in Japan: Everyday Life and Consumer Taste in a Changing Society*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992) pp.23-24. See also Millie R. Creighton, *The Depāto: Merchandising the West While Selling Japaneseness* in Tobin, 1992, pp.42-57; also, Millie R. Creighton, *Maintaining Cultural Boundaries in Retailing: How Japanese Department Stores Domesticate 'Things Foreign'* (Modern Asian Studies, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Oct 1991) pp. 675-709, Cambridge University Press)
[210] See Appendix II, Mono Magazine Data, p. 159
[211] Although at 99 pages over 9 issues averages out as about 7% of the magazine and make up about 24% of the special feature articles as a whole over the range studied.

in the narrative of each individual issue, appearing only once as a main feature of 29 pages (on men's bags)[212]. Otherwise fashion as a subject is consigned to between 6-19 pages per (non-primary) article[213], and echoed by the lack of fashion featured in the more regular articles in the rest of the magazine. Additionally, of the fashion articles, it is not the main staples of apparel that are addressed,[214] but rather the peripheral items of fashion, such as coats, footwear, eyewear, and bags.[215]

From these observations, we can see that fashion, like the prominence of the articles in the magazine, is both peripheral and a constant, defined through accessories. Moreover, the articles mostly depict fashion in the form of a list/catalogue, featuring prices and stockist details alongside the images.[216] While there may be a preference by the magazine for fashion items that are more easily classifiable as 'things', as well as a move away from the territory carved out by men's fashion and lifestyle magazines such as *Popeye*, what is conveyed is that for the magazine readers, fashion occupies this contradictory position of being all-pervasive to be easily and enjoyably consumed, whilst also being only a peripheral accessory in the discussion and consumption of culture.

In a sense this is a perfect echo of the *shinjinrui* who encapsulated the consumer zeitgeist of the Bubble. Seen in this light, the presentation of fashion in the magazine becomes more understandable; the superficiality of consumer Bubble culture is more easily transposed onto the vagaries of fashion, further compounded by the focusing on accessories and placing in secondary or tertiary articles rather than headlining the magazine. There may also be a sense that fashion is still more appropriate for women rather than for men, something apparent by the headlining article on fashion in this series, *'The recent business bag anxiety'* [217] – a 29-page article devoted to the types of bags appropriate for the working man in different professions, and one in which fashion gains legitimacy only in the context of business and work. Interestingly, despite the majority of the article devoted to men's bags and associated professions ranging through trading company, advertising, and designer, the last profession featured in this article is the OL (Office Lady),

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[212] *Mono* Issue 119: 02/09/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988)
[213] See Appendix II, Mono Magazine Data, p. 159
[214] For example, shirts, tops, suits – although there is a 19-page article on trousers ('Bottom Style' Mono Issue 114; 16/07/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988))
[215] and of the regular issues, there is only one, 'Time Spec' that features fashion, and in particular watches, exclusively over 3 issues (*Mono* Issue 119: 02/09/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988); *Mono* Issue 121: 02/10/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988); *Mono* Issue 123: 02/11/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988)
[216] apart from 2 articles that provide a more historical and contextual depiction of types and brands of fashion items ('Trenchcoat Test', *Mono* Issue 109: 16/05/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988) and 'Bottom Style', *Mono* Issue 114; 16/07/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988)
[217] *Mono* Issue 119: 02/09/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988)

alongside the most expensive bags, indicating that OLs were seen as a significant consumer category, even in a male-targeted magazine such as *Mono*[218].

Nevertheless, despite the associations fashion may have with superficiality, illegitimacy and gender bias, its consistent presence among the *Mono* main articles is indicative as to the importance of fashion in consumer Bubble culture. In this we can see the commodification of the body, as described by Baudrillard, in which the body is transformed and offered up as both capital and the ultimate consumption object. Through this process the body is fetishized in order to provide another site for economic production, of which the selling of fashion is a large part[219]. In the economic fetishizing and deconstruction of bodies for capital gain, it has predominantly been women to whom this has been applied, as can be attested by the lucrative industries of fashion, cosmetics, advertising and pornography. However alongside the acknowledgement of the rising consumer power of women in the Bubble, there were also signs that men as consumers of their own bodies was on the rise, seen in the increasing popularity of male goods and services in the form of lifestyle magazines, cosmetics, fashion, and beauty salons.[220] Nonetheless, as is explored in the following chapters, women were still the preferred advertising tool in both gendered *Hanako* and *Brutus* magazines, and despite the rise of men's fashions, through favouring accessories over complete dress *Mono* magazine likewise was showing a partial rather than full-on consumption of the entire male body as fashion.[221]

However, more than the incorporation of the male body into the consumption process, goods used to adorn the body are one of the most intimate and direct ways in which taste and cultural capital may be performed.[222] Thus articles recommending top apparel accessories are not merely advisory lists promoting brands and capitalising on the increasing exploitation of male bodies during the 1980s, but serve to display items of cultural significance in which capital may be invested through the acquisition and consumption of cultural information. In this the magazine is also setting the agenda for the hierarchy of capital – that through the taste and discernment displayed the reader is informed of what is appropriate for the marking of and aspiration to class and social position. Thus, articles such as, *'Trenchcoat Test'* and *'Bottom Style'*[223], in addition to featuring expensive brands, styles and prices, incorporate a more in-depth context covering historical and popular

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[218] More on the OL will be explored in detail in the following chapter.
[219] Baudrillard, p. 135
[220] Laura Miller, *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary Japan: Dislocating the Salaryman Doxa*, ed. by James E. Roberson and Suzuki Nobue (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003)
[221] In this way it goes back to the issues of *mono igai no mono* – 'things that are not things' and the consumption of self through things, as well as Sakakiyama's comment about excessive ornamentation in the Bubble, and its all-pervasiveness. (Appendix I, Sakakiyama Interview, pp. 60-76)
[222] Bourdieu, pp.190-191
[223] *Mono* Issue 109, 16/05/1988 and *Mono* Issue 114, 16/07/1988, featuring trenchcoats and trousers respectively

cultural sources, from the development of the trenchcoat in the First World War, to the styles of trousers as worn by American actors such as Ginger Rogers and Gregory Peck. Furthermore, in the *'Trenchcoat Test'*, in addition to the large and glossy images and double-page spreads dedicated to historic brands, Burberry and Aquascutum, historical references are also expanded upon through the stylistic composition of the rest of the article, where branded consumer raincoats are modelled in black and white photographs of mature-aged Western models echoing those of European WW1 trenchcoat-wearing soldiers. From these articles, we can see that fashion items in this case are not just shown to be aspirational for the material qualities of styling, quality and price, but loaded with historical and cultural context, have the added quality of time, something both Baudrillard and Bourdieu identify as being a determining factor in the perceived value of an object.[224]

Finally, the 1980s were also known for the rising international profile of significant Japanese designers, the likes of Miyake Issey, Kawakubo Rei, and Yamamoto Yohji, who were shaking up the fashion world with designs that challenged Western conventions on fashion and clothing[225]. Furthermore, the availability of financing meant that Japanese companies were having an increased investment presence not only in land deals and companies abroad, but also buying up distinguished Parisian fashion houses and installing Japanese designers at their head[226], and major Japanese department stores such as Takashimaya, Mitsukoshi and Isetan were increasing their overseas presence in new locations in Asia and America. Meanwhile in 1985 a council of significant Japanese designers made up of Miyake, Kawakubo, Yamamoto Yohji, Matsuda, Yamamoto Kansai, and Mori, came together to initiate bringing international fashion to Tokyo, in an attempt to decentre fashion from the West and redraw lines of influence. In all of these events was an implicit questioning of the West's centrality to cultural hegemony and Japan's position on it in light of its new status as second-largest economy, and the centrality of fashion in a men's magazine about 'stuff' could thus be viewed as part of a general assertion of Japanese presence in international fashion.

Technological 'Things'

Among the main feature articles in *Mono*, second to articles on apparel are those that feature technology goods which, at 74 pages over 9 issues, average out as 5% of the total magazine.

[224] This issue of cultural capital acquisition and retro culture will be explored in more depth in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively.
[225] Kondo in Tobin, pp.176-203
[226] Kondo in Tobin, pp.178-179

Although this makes up 18% of the special feature articles by page number, if averaging by number of articles, it makes up 25% of the special features.[227]

Furthermore, these can be divided into two main categories: automotive vehicles[228] and consumer electronics[229]. Similar to the fashion articles, consumer technology does not command extensive page spreads, but instead their frequency is tempered by average article lengths of about 9 pages, with only one main feature article of 27 pages (on video recorders)[230]. This may appear surprising given the nature of the magazine as object-focused, its male readership, and the prevalence of the automotive and consumer electronic industries in Japan. However, what it does indicate is that while these items have a frequent and prevalent presence in the magazine in the secondary and tertiary special features and the regular articles, the focus of the magazine in its headlining articles for each issue appears not to be on the technological consumer items Japan is famous for, but a more nuanced mix of trends and goods.

Nevertheless, there can be seen in the articles the influence of Japanese industry; set out like consumer catalogues, the articles on the various items are full of Japanese domestic brands, as opposed to the Western fashion brands. Moreover, these are not known foreign luxury brands such as Porsche, Mercedes-Benz, Braun or Phillips, but keeping in line with their domestic origin, are more affordable and presented accordingly, with images close together and prices and details of retailers alongside.

While attributable to the interdependence of magazines with advertisers and industry, it can also be seen in the light of the market dominance of the Japanese tech industries, especially automotive vehicles and consumer electronics. Yamaha, Honda, Suzuki, Kawasaki, Sony, Maclord, NEC, Panasonic, Victor, Sharp, National, Toshiba – these are all major industry names prominently displayed on the goods featured throughout these articles, with few equivalent products by rival foreign companies. What this suggests is that for certain industries, such as luxury fashion, it was fine for foreign brands to penetrate the Japanese market, but for other home-grown industries such as electronics, this was not so easy.[231]

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[227] See Appendix II, Mono Magazine Data, p.159. In this case the non-special feature articles that compose the regular parts of the magazine are not included, as the items contained in these are so widely varying in nature and category as to obfuscate any meaning from their data – although it must be noted that in particular the regular article, '*Hotline'* consistently features a mix of automotive and AV consumer goods (among other consumer items) over an intensive 32-page black and white listing.

[228] Cars and motorbikes

[229] Cordless appliances, video recorders, AV equipment, and notebook laptops

[230] See Appendix II, Mono Magazine Data, p.159

[231] A large part of this may be explained by the protective Japanese market, dominated by domestic brands at the time and notoriously difficult for foreign companies to enter. Bearing in mind the huge trade deficit between the US and Japan, this was something the 1985 Plaza Accord tried to address in its revaluing of the

Abstraction and Impoverishment of Technology in *Mono*

Bearing in mind the dominance and protection of Japanese tech industries, it is unsurprising that the consumer-tech articles are dominated by Japanese brands. However, as the articles show, this was not a homogenous market of Japanese electronic goods and cars, but depending on the usage, differed in how they were presented and perceived. Of these are two main differences in style of presentation, split broadly along lines of utility and lifestyle. *'Car Accessories '88'* [232] for example, depicts over 6 pages, car exterior parts, steering wheels, and other motor accessories, displayed in row after row of small images accompanied by even smaller text on details such as price and model. With the reduced colour palette and lack of contextual embellishment, items are packed close to each other, and with only essential details necessary, organised for greatest ease of comparison.

On the one hand, packing in similar items for close comparison on print media is not an unusual presentation strategy, examples evidenced in a diverse range of mediums from trade catalogues to advertising posters. However, if interrogated further, this method of displaying the same object multiple times through different brands has at its heart mass-manufacture, through which production of endless multiplications of the same leads to an increasing abstraction of the object and eventual fetishizing and compartmentalisation. While Baudrillard, writing in 1960s France, saw this abstraction and fetishizing of the manufacture process in the objects themselves and man's relationship with them, it could be argued that, in the 1980s Japan of *Mono*, they are also reflected at the level of the print medium in which they are depicted. The items featured in '*Car Accessories '88'* [233] (Figure 5), all recognisable components of cars (steering wheels, hubcaps), are not necessarily shown in context, but are displayed cut-up and divided, separated and laid out like so many individual body parts in the process of being catalogued for easy unencumbered consumption. Furthermore, abstraction can be seen in the very subject matter of car accessories, rather than

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Japanese yen against the dollar, making it more competitive for US companies to trade in Japan. However, even with supposed official support for encouraging domestic spending on foreign goods, there were significant bureaucratic and cultural limitations making it difficult for foreign companies to gain a foothold in the domestic market; from post-war policies pursued by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) that restricted foreign imports, to bureaucratic red tape and a 'fragmented, highly personalised domestic distribution system… difficult for foreigners to penetrate' (Richard L. Carson, *Comparative Economic Systems* (London and New York: M.E. Sharpe Ltd., 1990) p.494)

'In 1984, after more than a decade of slow reluctant liberalisation, Japan retained formal import quotas on just twenty-seven import categories, most of which were farm goods and none of which were major industrial items. Japan had the lowest average tariff rate among industrial nations. Yet, per capita imports of manufactured goods were also among the lowest of industrial countries, and manufactures were an even smaller share of total imports than during the 1960s. In 1982, imports accounted for just over 6 percent of Japanese consumption of manufactures vs. 8.5 percent in the U.S., 23 percent in France, 26.5 percent in Britain, and 31 percent in West Germany. This is partly because MITI was able to supress imports with unofficial barriers, which preserved most of the large Japanese market for domestic firms.' (Carson, p. 494)

[232] *Mono* Issue 104: 02/04/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988)

[233] *Mono* Issue 104: 02/04/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988); pp.104-109

about the cars themselves. It echoes the *Mono* fashion articles, dealing not with the main body of fashion, but the accessories that though peripheral contain endless possibility for personalisation through the consumption and display of signs[234]. In this way, we see the superficial and disengaged consumption materialised in Ivy's[235] description of JNR's Exotic Japan campaign, in which disparate elements are violently cut-up and jumbled together in a postmodern assembly of disassembled parts.

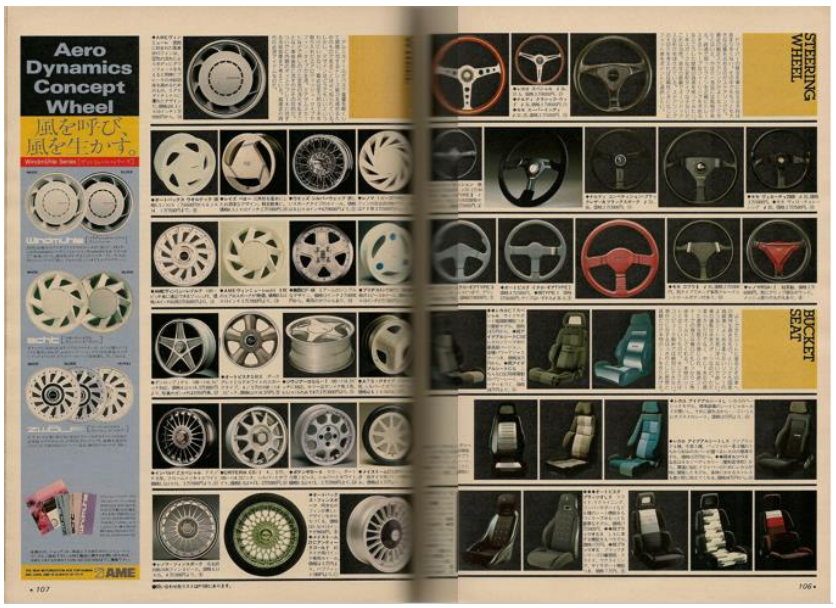

Figure 5: Disassembled and abstracted car parts in 'Car Accessories '88'
Mono Issue 104: 02/04/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988); p.106-107

However, although at point of consumption accessories may seem empowering, giving the user the ability to personalise their own object that otherwise would be identical to other products in that series, Baudrillard sees these inessential additions as something more sinister within the entire system of production; that which detracts from the functionality of the object as much as it comforts against abstraction, but which also props up the continuation of consumption whilst adding to the increasing poverty and restriction of the entire object[236]. In a sense this can be situated within a wider trend for individualisation and general unlinking of consumer items with situated context. As Itoh[237] notes, with the modernisation of the economy came an emptying out of domestic life as men and women were increasingly at work, with long commuting times and children occupied with extra-curricular activities. Due to this, individualism became part of family

[234] 'It follows that such connotation is allegorical in character. When a fixed structure is invaded by astructural elements, when the object itself is overwhelmed by a formal detail, the true function is no longer anything but a pretext, and the form does no more than signify the idea of the function. In other words, the form has become allegorical.' (Baudrillard, pp. 63-64)
[235] Ivy, 1995
[236] Baudrillard, pp.152-153
[237] Itoh, 2000

life, with the necessary accruements of individual-use consumer appliances such as CD players and telephones. It is this individualism that Yoshimi[238] observes in the advertisements of the 1980s, in which techno-advocacy as discourse of national excellence declined after the 1970s, instead replaced by a hybridity and transgressive quality that broke the connection between technology and a user's gendered role. 'Instead of the stress on the role of 'housewife' or 'engineer' there is a new focus on a 'technological' body itself moving all around the world.'[239] Thus this fragmented portrayal of technology in *Mono* becomes exemplary of the wider movement of individualisation and fragmentation of human relations and roles within the context of society, occupation and family. Instead this was to be furthered by the development of computer-aided design (CAD) which in the 1980s was just starting to take off.[240]

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[238] Sunya Yoshimi in Matthew Allen and Rumi Sakamoto (eds), *Japanese Popular Culture: Critical Concepts in Asian Studies; Volume I Japanese Popular Culture in the Twentieth Century*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2014) p.54

[239] Ibid – There is a famous Sony commercial in 1987, featuring a solitary monkey, as it listens to music through headphones from a Sony Walkman, perfectly epitomising this individualistic trend in consumer goods. YouTube, *1980's Sony Walkman Commercial from Japan* (3rd January 2012) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9O_cIm3nGw> [accessed 10th September 2015]

[240] Whilst there have been reservations throughout the 20th century regarding the ambiguous role mass manufacture has on the material world, from Walter Benjamin to Marx, it was the global development of computer technology and its commercial uptake in 1980s Japan that saw another change in the nature of design and production. With origins that can be traced to the Second World War, global developments in computer technology accelerated through the 1950s and 1960s, with more widespread commercial uptake starting in the 1970s following the development of the microprocessor. By the early 1980s Japanese companies were starting to design and manufacture their own computers, with milestones passed such as NEC's personal computers: PC-8801 (1981) and PC-9801 (1982), and Toshiba's T1100 laptop (1985). Although distribution and usage of computer technology may have varied among different companies and locations (many Japanese computers being created for domestic use and video games rather than business), there appears enthusiasm for utilizing this new technology for the production of design, or CAD (Computer Aided Design), and design periodicals as well as design competition entries around this time feature significant amounts of CAD-related design.

However, despite the zest for technology this shows, there were other aspects that could be seen as downsides to the tech-boom in computer culture, linked in no small part to the attitudes and culture of Bubble Japan. In an interview discussing the effect of CAD on design in Japan with Kyoritsu University lecturer and practising designer, Ootake, she determined that the main difference between herself as a designer and that of younger practitioners, was in the very approach to conceptualisation and model refinement that has its roots in training and tool-use. As a pre-Bubble trained designer, Ootake's approach was of a constant drawing and model refinement that used a feedback loop of hand and eye coordination. With the advent of CAD and availability of computers as design tools, she noticed less of the refinement process, and consequently more angular shapes, as the limitations of early technology were imposed on the form of the models. (Appendix I, Ootake Interview, pp.126-133)

While only anecdotal, in Ootake's example we can nonetheless see a long history of linking the human body with the material world, from the handling and mastery of tools to the experience of physical objects as explored by theorists from Heidegger to Baudrillard. Indeed, Baudrillard's premise that traditional tools were formed in conjunction with the human body, and whose usage implicit in form is seen lacking in the abstraction of modern objects, is something that can be seen in the advent of CAD on design practice; traditional methods of using human touch and sight to design are supplanted by CAD which, as a visualising substitute, provides yet another level of abstraction from the object, resulting in potentially more impoverishment.

Technology as 'Atmosphere'

In contrast to the above discussion on the abstraction and increasing individualisation of the object, the article, *'Latest Video Companion Book'* (Figure 6)[241] has a more complex relationship with the objects it features. Featuring over 27 pages all the different electronic consumer goods associated with video, although all the items are depicted as desirable, the article is clearly split into two stylistic halves – that of artful and stylised presentation [242], or of more consumer-friendly comparison[243].

Figure 6: Mono 'Video Companion Book' Issue, 1988, Front Cover
Mono Issue 127: 16/12/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988); Front Cover

In the first half, unlike the items in *'Car Accessories '88'*, products are not squeezed in close together on one page, but presented as either standalone or in a set with different but complementing items, each image dominating a colourful one or two-page spread in which an elaborately styled model is used to frame and contextualise the objects. True to postmodern style, the article colour palette includes hot pink, lemon yellow, and modernist white, used in vibrant colour blocks as backgrounds to the televisions[244], camcorders, radio cassette players, VHS players and other electronics featured, and the combination of the stylised (foreign) model, outlandish costumes, and solidly bright backgrounds are all used to give the featured consumer electronics an air of sophistication, internationalism, and fun futuristic appeal. In addition, by watching television sitting in a fashionably-designed chair, listening to music in an aerobics outfit, and in a two-page spread[245], playing golf while we, the article audience, focus on the television and camcorder recording and transmitting the image multiplied, the model is artfully coordinated to demonstrate, not necessarily how the equipment works, but rather by adding to what Baudrillard would call an overall

[241] *Mono* Issue 127: 16/12/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988) pp. 52-81
[242] *Mono* Issue 127: 16/12/1988 pp. 52-65
[243] *Mono* Issue 127: 16/12/1988 pp. 66-81
[244] (Sanyo, Victor, Panasonic, Yamaha) In interview, Uematsu also notes how tvs and videos were a growing market in the Bubble, causing Panasonic to focus on its audio-visual side, as opposed to its more well-established home domestic National products. (Appendix I, Uematsu Interview, pp.23-39)
[245] *Mono* Issue 127: 16/12/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988) pp. 56-57

‘atmosphere’, or the qualities inferred through a collective combination of signs, how one might perceive a life with the product[246] (Figures 7 – 9).

Figure 7: Seated figure watching television, demonstrating a lifestyle with things.
Mono Issue 127: 16/12/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988); pp.54-55

In order to understand these images, it must be remembered that these were all new items that were created in the individualism boom that was happening as people’s lives became increasingly fragmented. As Yoshino notes, the 1980s saw the rise of more hybrid and transgressive electronic consumer goods that focused on the individual body, moving beyond essentialist notions of home or country. Items such as the Sony Walkman, mobile phone, personal computer and portable game console, moved towards a globalised individual body, in which the essentialist link to Japanese technology was broken into the diasporic, and the body’s imaginary link to technology defined within the postmodern condition.[247] Moreover, interview subjects, Uematsu and Onai from Panasonic and Toshiba both note how the 1980s saw a shift in persuading consumers to adopt

[246] While Baudrillard considers ‘atmosphere’ to reside within a more materialist construction of space and feeling through objects-composition, other writers on the subject, such as Anderson (Ben Anderson, *Affective Atmospheres*; Emotion, Space and Society 2 (2009) 77-81: Elsevier Ltd, 2009), and Stewart (Kathleen Stewart, *Atmospheric Attunements*; Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 2011, volume 29, pp. 445 – 453), see atmosphere as more complex and nuanced beyond the material only. This may include Heideggerian concepts such as ‘worlding – an intimate compositional process of dwelling in spaces that bears, gestures, gestates, worlds. [Where] things matter not because of how they are represented, but because they have qualities, rhythms, forces, relations, and movements.’ (Stewart, 2011, p.445). Meanwhile for Anderson (2009, pp.77-80), atmosphere involves an essential ambiguity, where indeterminate and permeable boundaries of senses, objects and subjects create a turbulence, in which tension, fluid subjectivities are affected across human and non-human materialities.
[247] Yoshimi in Allen and Sakemoto pp. 55-56

multiples of the same product, moving from a 'monoculture'[248] to one in which diversification would enable greater consumption.[249]

Thus, the article becomes the continuation of this need to make sense of the modern but abstract technological object, whose function is predicated not on home or culture but on the individual. More than established objects whose visible forms are more easily and immediately understandable, these new consumer electronics need context to help make sense of them, hence the model actively watching the television, listening to the hi-fi stereo on headphones, and being videoed playing golf. Essential too are the groups of products displayed together as a set – interrelated as their functions are, together they give each other meaning and context. So where the camcorder by itself operates only in one direction (that of recording a subject), when linked to a video recorder and television[250] that displays multiples of the same image transmitted from the camcorder, the objects suddenly appear to be part of a family of objects, operating in multi-directional relationships that include the viewer, the subject, recorder, receiver and transmitter. In this way, the world of the objects opens up, and creates the possibility of a multiplicity of fragmented viewpoints that is intimately tied up with the interdependency of technology that is part of the postmodern experience[251] (Figure 8).

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[248] Interestingly, in terms of 'atmosphere' making, Healy (2012) posits that new technologies used in consumer culture such as air-conditioning, in fact create a kind of mono-culture, in which local traditions and peculiarities are eroded or fall into disuse. New technologies, by enabling physical mastery and independence over the environment, supplant local customs developed around the physical environment, leading to abandonment of local architecture, dress, furniture, products, and practices, and the 'thinning out' of places. (Stephen Healy, *Atmospheres of consumption: Shopping as involuntary vulnerability*; Emotion, Space and Society 10 (2014) pp. 35-43; Elsevier Ltd. 2012)

[249] 'Uematsu: Stereos and TVs the life is ten years, but [...] three or five years they get a new one for the new style. Bubble time people get two or three TVs in house. Before Bubble one or two. But in Bubble small one for children, small one for bedroom. Small for dining! Totalling five TV in house! […] For *pasucon* [computer], mobile [...] We found out which make a way to consume. So for example we make a separate eyeglass for studying, for playing, go for golf […] So people should go get many glasses! One of the starting points of Bubble. […] Find out opportunity, the reasons, why you change your glass? Because you are driving, you are cycling, you are at business! You have to change watch... what for? Driving, what for? Business? What for...? Leisure! […] Lots of ways to consume. Swatch, you know, swatch started that time. Two or three dials, but exterior changing, design changing. One day designer make one hundred design a day! For Swatches! Surface change, inside is the same.' (Appendix I, Uematsu Interview, pp.23-39)
Onai: This was a new liberty for Toshiba that study, how consumer think, and how consumers act, and what do consumers based on. Because I think [...] before 1980s usually Japan was a kind of monoculture society, so Toshiba and some competitors could produce offer [same?] one type value, just you know umm there was just […] people […] buy very functional expensive models, and people … buy more affordable products. The straight measure. But after Bubble the more the value consumers became very diverse, diversified. (Appendix I, Onai Interview, pp.97-118)

[250] *Mono* Issue 127: 16/12/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988) p 56-57

[251] 'Just as the various parts of an object's mechanism have structure, so the various technical objects tend, independently of man, to become organised by themselves, to refer to one another in the uniformity of their simplified praxis, and thus come to constitute an articulated order, pursuing its own mode of technological development, wherein man's control does not go beyond a technological control which may well ultimately be taken over by the machine itself.' (Baudrillard, p. 53)

Figure 8: Figure filmed playing golf in a multiplicity of experiences. Mono Issue 127: 16/12/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988); pp.56-

However aside from providing context and functional meaning to explain one another, there are other aspects to the composition of these images that have impact on its overall meaning, namely the use of the 'exotic' foreign model, exuberant clothes, props, and bright colour palette. If the need of the article was to provide context, why not (as in the case of many advertisements at the time) place the objects in an ordinary domestic setting with Japanese users? Instead the products are showcased in images that evoke, through the unspecificity of setting and 'hot' colours (Figure 7, 9), a modernity that is as bright in its optimism as it is in its colours[252]

Figure 9: Figure listening to music against a yellow background, in a 'family' of products Mono Issue 127, 16/12/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988) pp.58-59

[252] In this too, we can invoke Baudrillard's distinguishing of colours as being signs that are complicit in the creation of atmosphere, with colours taking on added implications of 'naturalness', 'functionality', and temperature 'hot' and 'cold', in addition to traditional positions of personal taste and cultural morality. (Baudrillard, pp.30-37)

It is in this subtext of modernity that we can see Bourdieu's concepts of capital and class distinction playing out; underlying the composition and stylistic theme of the article are nuances of education, aesthetic taste, and the avant-garde, all making a case for the distinction of class that through the magazine the reader is invited to partake in. Apart from the financial capital implied in the newness of the objects, the overall context of design in the objects and their framing both invites the reader to partake in a culture of signification, whilst also congratulating his ability to 'read' it correctly. For what separates those in the Bubble culture and those without is the ability to participate in a consumer middle class as much at ease with technology as with visual pop culture references. Indeed, on asking different interviewees on their impressions of Bubble style, they each gave differing answers that revealed more about their own position than definitively of the Bubble itself.

In the second half of the feature article we can see an initial continuation of this postmodern theme in the first three introductory pages that feature a mature bespectacled and moustachioed male Japanese model interacting with a television and video recorder.[253] However in an amplification of the abstracted context the products inhabit, the model is posed in bizarre situations at odds with his serious and dignified expression (watching tv with a giant toy rabbit whilst wearing pyjamas and striped dressing gown, and surrounded by loose potatoes[254]; being covered in masses of unwound video tape holding the same rabbit[255]; and being grappled by said rabbit whilst dressed in a tweed trilby, white gloves and argyle socks and examining a VCR with a magnifying glass[256]), all the while featuring the various headings: 'Original Couch Potato'[257]; 'Editing Freak'[258]; 'Legitimate Maniac'[259] (Figures 10-12). In all three scenes, the products (television, video recorder) are peripheral to the performance of the model, but unlike the previous section which is a direct selling of lifestyle, the context created is too bizarre to reflect any straightforward aspirational lifestyle desires. Rather by juxtaposing serious and playful elements together, these pages deliberately create a feeling of outlandish fun that evokes the feeling of festival, whilst still underscoring the serious quality of the goods through the dignified demeanour of the model and the use of words in the headings that indicate quality ('original', 'editing', 'legitima(cy)').

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[253] *Mono* Issue 127: 16/12/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988) pp.63-65
[254] Ibid p.63
[255] Ibid p.64
[256] Ibid p.65
[257] *ganso kauchipoteto* 「元祖カウチポテト」 Ibid p.63
[258] *henjuu furiku* 「編集フリーク」 Ibid p.64
[259] *shoutou maniakku* 「正統マニアック」 Ibid p.65

Figure 10: Figure watching television with toy rabbit and potatoes.
Mono Issue 127: 16/12/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988) p.63

Figure 11: Figure with toy rabbit tangled in video tape.
Mono Issue 127: 16/12/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988) p.64

Figure 12: Figure with toy rabbit inspecting a video recorder
Mono Issue 127: 16/12/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988) p.65

Combined with the last image of the previous section (a model in a gorilla costume operating a remote control at a video recorder[260](Figure 13), what we see here is not just the artful combination of elements evoking a postmodern lifestyle, but a playfulness and extravagance of feeling that has all its roots in the exuberance of the Bubble. Postmodern bright colours and the fun playfulness of these images reflect the celebratory attitudes in Japan's Bubble that caused young people to flock to party at discos, while the surreal nature of the oversized bunny and costumes gives it a hint of carnival that echoes the extreme and unusual situation that was the Bubble Economy. Indeed from the perplexed and serious expression of the model at the centre of these scenarios (in which the product is side-lined) we may even see the allegorical position of the average Japanese person caught in the Bubble; wearing the clothes, participating in the scene, caught up in chaotic situations, and yet, confounded and stunned by the strangeness and absurdity of it all.[261] Although postmodern, these aesthetics are also very much of the Japanese Bubble, making one consider perhaps if the postmodern and bubble economies are somehow linked. In any case, the style of this article invokes Yoshino's pertinent observation of transgressional advertising of the 1980s in which 'they are 'Japanese' yet they are not 'Japanese''[262].

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[260] Ibid pp. 60-61

[261] The phrase 「いけいけどんどん」 (*ikeikedondon*) is heavily associated with Bubble Japan. Roughly translating as 'more and more go', or 'go faster', this was seen to typify the feeling of the period – that of accelerating faster and further at a time when Japan viewed the 1980s not as necessarily unusual or a potential economic bubble, but as the natural progression of its advancements through the second half of the twentieth century, and one that would carry on, stewarded by a combination of its political and business leaders, companies and the hard work of its population.

[262] 'The advertisements in this period became more hybrid and transgressive. …These are not straightforward expressions of the national image equated with technological excellence. Rather, each of these advertisements negates any such equation. They are not expressing the 'ideal' of the American way of life,

Figure 13: Figure as gorilla operating a video remote controller
Mono Issue 127: 16/12/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988) p.60-61

Tensions in Technology

On a final note about consumer technology, it is important to remember that although Japan was in the midst of a domestic economic boom and lifestyle change that was reflected in its attitudes towards its consumer goods and leisure pursuits, this was not the only factor affecting its technology industry. In addition to the economic tensions that preceded the Plaza Accord, the 1980s were also characterised by international and political tensions surrounding Japanese technology, particularly between the U.S. and Japan, exemplified by the 2 political crises of the FS-X fighter in 1985, and the Toshiba scandal in 1987.

After the defeat of Japan in the Second World War and the occupation by U.S. forces, U.S. policy towards Japan was of technological openness in keeping with its plan of aiding Japanese development in the face of tensions with the Soviet Union. Japan too had longstanding prohibitions against the export of military equipment, as well as commercial development interests that ensured the flow of defence technologies was one-way. By the 1970s however, in the face of Japanese economic and technological advances this relationship was beginning to be questioned, and by the

nor they are appearing as the side-liners that will make the Japanese technical excellence look even better. Rather they are playing the transgressional role, in that they are 'foreigners' yet they are not 'foreigners', and they are 'Japanese' yet they are not 'Japanese.'' (Yoshimi in Allen & Sakemoto p.53)

mid-1980s it came to a head with disputes over the new FS-X fighter plane developed by Japan in partnership with the U.S., the latter accusing Japan of withholding valuable technical information[263].

While the FS-X matter highlighted U.S. frustration with Japan in its unwillingness to participate in technical reciprocity, characterised by persistent attempts through the 1980s to open Japan up[264], perhaps the opposite could be said of the 1987 Toshiba scandal. In this case a subsidiary of Toshiba Corporation, the Toshiba Machine Company, was accused of selling machinery to the U.S.S.R., sparking an international investigation and political furore that culminated in Californian congressman, Duncan Hunter, standing on the steps of Washington on the 30th June 1987, and with four colleagues, denouncing Toshiba Corporation in front of a press conference before smashing a Toshiba radio-cassette player with sledgehammers[265].

Although the two techno-political issues appear to be unrelated, they contain within them certain features in common that may help to contextualise the technology of this period, and frame the Japanese consumer boom against the wider international climate. In the main is the issue of Japanese technology and the rights to this. In the first half of the 1980s, the U.S. viewed Japan as too closed in its sharing of technical information, and spent much time and resources trying to persuade and pressure Japan to share. Linked to this was the question of export, the Japanese economy and trade surplus with the U.S., which led to even more pressure to open up financially and the eventual signing of the Plaza Accord. However, by the late 1980s, Japan appeared far too liberal in its industrial and corporate relationships, marked by the U.S.'s concern over the selling of defence technology to the U.S.S.R., and the aggressive acquisition of businesses and assets by Japanese companies as they took advantage of their access to the finance markets to expand overseas[266]. In both cases, we can see a marked tension between Japan and the U.S., framed in the context of industry practices and trade tensions. Although domestically Japanese people were experiencing a consumer and leisure boom that was outwardly characterised by superficiality and celebration, this was bordered by international tensions with the U.S. and trade and defence

[263] Mark Lorell, *A Troubled Partnership: A History of U.S.-Japan Collaboration on the FS-X Fighter* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1996)

[264] A feeling echoed in the U.S. position to Japanese trade, bank liberalisation, and trade surplus that was integral to the Plaza Accord. Furthermore, this takes place against a background of intense high-technology trade competition between the U.S. and Japan, notably the semiconductor trade wars of the 1980s that was to affect the Silicon Valley and computing industry.

[265] Anna M. Warrock and Howard Husock, Summer 1990: 11-126-2: *Taking Toshiba Public (Tech Transfer and Politics)* (2015) <https://research.archives.gov/id/7283309> [accessed 05 March 2015].

[266] In June 1990, Japanese banks owned 12.4 percent of all American banking assets ($408 billion), and by June 1991 in California alone (where they had invested heavily) banks owned 24.5 percent of all banking assets, 35 percent of all commercial and industrial loans, and 20 percent of all property loans. Meanwhile in the same year Japanese businesses owned assets worth $65 billion in California. (Wood, 1992, pp.31-35)

technology issues on the one hand, and the threat of the Soviet Union and the Cold War on the other.[267]

At the heart of these tensions is the issue of Japan's rising industrial and economic status through the 1980s, in which its technology and economic achievements garnered admiration, desire and fear on different political fronts, leading to calls for both increased liberalisation and protectionism. During this time, there was intense international interest in the methods by which Japan had developed its industry to become the second largest global economy, resulting in a glut of books claiming that Japanese cultural values had created the perfect management system to carry the world through to the 21st century[268].

However, as Mouer and Hirosuke[269] note, much of the language used in these studies was essentially ethnocentric, couching Japanese management-styles as having derived from cultural remnants and feudalistic values, leading to a special sense of community and national consensus that were at the heart of Japan's economic success. At their root these held two levels of concern: the first was a mixture of condescending surprise at Japan's achievements, especially as a non-Western nation that had been defeated so severely only thirty-five years before, with a resentment at Japan's success which was perceived to threaten Western dominance. The second derived from a more widespread ideological interest in the capitalist competitiveness that had made Japan successful, and which in the light of the Cold War, helped mollify in part the anxieties about Asian dominance. Framed within this is an overarching nationalism that Yoshimi calls 'techno-nationalism' and 'techno-orientalism'[270]. Originating from the high-growth period of the 1950s, discourses of techno-nationalism became infused with the narrative of Japanese identity as technology was used to develop the country's industry and economy. However by the 1980s hostile reactions to Japanese technological and industrial success meant that technology became symbolic of a wider struggle between American individualism vs. Japanese collectivism, pioneering vs. precise applicability, in a change of events that saw Japan break the link between the 'modern West' and the 'pre-modern East', claiming modernity for itself.[271] As such Japan's success not only symbolised a potential economic and technological threat to U.S. industries, but as the first Asian nation to

[267] For more on the FS-X fighter, see Morris Low, Shigeru Nakayama and Hitoshi Yoshioka, *Science, Technology and Society in Contemporary Japan*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999) pp.107-119; Michael, W. Chinworth, *Inside Japan's Defense: Technology, Economics & Strategy*, (Washington, NY, London, Brassey's (US) Inc.,1992) pp.132-161; Steven, K. Vogel, (ed.) *US-Japan Relations in a Changing World* (Washington DC, Brookings Institution Press, 2002) pp.248-250. On more general US-Japan relations about technology in the 1980s, see: Vogel, pp. 239-258.
[268] Mouer & Hirosuke, p.253
[269] Ibid pp.3-5
[270] Yoshimi in Allen & Sakemoto p.37
[271] Yoshimi in Allen & Sakemoto pp.37-38

come to prominence in the second half of the twentieth century, threated the very dominance of the Western-centric narrative of modernity and ideological might[272].

Mono-Man as Sportsman

As outlined in Chapter 1, promoting lifestyle was a key part of government plans to develop the consumer economy, and of the lifestyle articles in *Mono*, a significant category to examine is that of sports. During the economic boom of the 1980s, in addition to its other 'booms' (the real estate boom, the stock market boom), Japan experienced numerous sporting booms, the most notorious of which was golf – during which golf club membership soared and memberships could be traded on the stock market[273] – but also included tennis, skiing, sailing and even paragliding[274]. If we examine just three of the most popular sports at the time, golf, skiing and tennis, we can see how in the popular newspaper, *Asahi Shimbun*, they all feature a significant spike in articles that did not plateau until the early-to-mid-1990s. While tennis and skiing appear to make considerable gains, increasing by about three-to-four-fold between 1987 and 1990, articles that mention golf increase by about 5 times, from 628 in 1987 to 3091 in 1991[275]. This is something echoed by increases in participation rates of these sports among men and women during this period.[276]

While seeking to encourage a consumer economy through products was both understandable and straightforward in terms of international and domestic economic policy, a leisure economy through sport appears less so. Leheny suggests that since the 1970s the Japanese government had equated appropriate leisure of its people as being another marker of national development, with specific reference to Western-derived leisure.[277] However more than this, Western leisure sports and

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[272] More on this topic will be discussed further in the chapter on corporate identity.

[273] Angus Lockyer, *From Corporate Playground to Family Resort: Golf as Commodity in Post-War Japan*, in Franks and Hunter (eds.), 2012 pp.284-305

[274] David Leheny, *The Rules of Play; National Identity and the Shaping of Japanese Leisure* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003)

[275] See Appendix III, Asahi Shimbun Data, p.291

[276] For men, participation rates increase for the following sports: tennis: 10.0 percent (1981), 12.8 percent (1986), 12.4 percent (1991); skiing/snowboarding: 9.8 percent (1981) 13.0 percent (1986), 16.5 percent (1991); golf: 15.2 percent (1981), 20.7 percent (1986), 28.0 percent (1991). For women participation rates increase for the following: tennis: 8.2 percent (1981), 10.8 percent (1986), 11.5 percent (1991); skiing/snowboarding: 4.5 percent (1981), 7.0 percent (1986), 10.7 percent (1991); golf: 1.6 percent (1981), 3.5 percent (1986), 8.2 percent (1991). (*26-25: Participation Rate in Leisure Activities by Type and Sex (1976 – 2006)*, Statistical Survey Department, Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/26.htm> [accessed 23/01/2017])

[277] '…the Japanese government already had accepted that leisure could be another area for state intervention in citizens' lives, in order to promote the national interest, broadly understood. Leisure thus stood as something that was partly public, not entirely private, and therefore something that the government could and should be examining. …And to a government obsessed with economic development, placing economic growth as its postwar raison d'être, there were few options for judging the right way for people to enjoy their leisure time other than to look at what the more advanced countries – the more developed people – were up to.' (Lehney, 2003 pp. 177-178)

activities had the added benefit of commercial and cultural potential that was relevant to the consumer desires of the Japanese 1980s.

For example, examining the 1988 *Mono* magazine special feature on golf[278] (Figure 14), we can see that the 27 pages do not just cover specialist golf products or design, but include 6 pages on golfing fashion apparel and interview pieces with Japanese golfers, 2 pages on female golf-playing Japanese university students, 4 pages on golf accessories, 2 pages on a comic/manga golf story, 3 pages on a 'hole manual' [golf course guide], 4 pages on golf clubs, 2 page spread on golf balls and brands, and a 2 page spread on appropriate transport to golf, featuring a car and moped with space for a golfing bag[279]. While Lockyer explores the considerable corporate and investment opportunities that were present in the 1980s golf-boom[280], what this *Mono* article shows is how golf could be an entire lifestyle (Figure 15), accompanied by its own cultural narratives in the form of fashion, personal experiences and testimonials, accessories, transport, locations, gaming strategies, and even fiction.

Figure 14: Mono Golf Issue, 1988
Mono Issue 117: 16/08/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988);
Front Cover

Figure 15: Pages showing golf as lifestyle in Mono.
Mono Issue 117: 16/08/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988) pp.128-131

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[278] [ゴルフに大接近 / 紳士のゴルフ遊戯学　/ 見せます！これがモノ．マガジンのゴルフだ] (*Gorufu ni dai sekkin/ shinshi no gorufu yūgi-gaku/ misemasu! Kore ga mono. Magajin no gorufuda*) '*Golf is getting near / Gentleman's golf school / Look! Here is Mono Magazine golf*' (*Mono* Issue 117: 16/08/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988) pp.128-155)
[279] See Appendix II, Mono Magazine Data, p.164
[280] Lockyer, in Francks and Hunter (eds.), 2012, p.292

However, even though there was the considerable corporate influence on golf in the Bubble, from its use as corporate entertainment to the fantastic investment opportunities implicit in its membership schemes and speculative land development[281] – seen in the wider cultural narrative of the idea of sport, it is in its elitism that something more fundamental was underway. For Bourdieu draws a correlation between the effort and emphasis put into self-presentation of the body and efforts put into class distinction; that through the presentation and reading of one's own and others' bodies, a subject can display his or her investment of time and capital, and from which one could reasonably expect a real material or symbolic return. This is especially true in labour and social relations where physical appearance has a tangible professional value, such as in front-facing service industries, but also to a lesser extent in everyday professional interactions at work[282]. Thus the body becomes a vehicle for displaying and acquiring capital, and in the same way as material goods are used and owned, becomes alienated from the self, an asset to be crafted, deployed, used and consumed by the self and others.

One of the ways in which the body acquires value is through the crafting and honing through exercise. Unlike the enforced use of the body through labour, which is a sign of domination and necessity, the exercised body has different values; those of self-imposed resilience, asceticism, self-discipline, and most importantly, the luxury of leisure time that indicates disposable economic capital. While the lower classes have to engage in enforced physical labour that produces bodies of strength and stamina, and the middle classes by contrast inhabit physical presentations that indicate indolence and non-physical labour, Bourdieu identifies another class that for whom the aim is to produce a 'liberated' body created along the principles of health and leisure pursuits. In this, sport plays a key role, shaping bodies through practices that imply a freedom from economic necessity and constraints, as well as 'liberated' from coarser, baser desires more associated with the classes with less educational capital such as laziness, greed and instant gratification.

The production of the physique through sport and exercise thus becomes another practice whereby class difference can be articulated and performed, and it is in this we can see another motivation for Japan to invest so heavily in the cultural concept of sport as a leisure pursuit, particularly modern Western-derived sports with its implicit links to modernity, development and economic elitism. Likewise, the type of sport is also vital, not just in the type of body it produces, but in the investment of economic capital it requires. Not all forms of exercise are alike, but instead exist in a hierarchy of practices that are legitimised by the requirements of the dominant classes. Key to understanding this hierarchy is economic capital, manifest in two ways. The first involves the amount of time and effort needed to learn the sport, indicating an initial high amount of educational investment that

[281] Lockyer, in Francks and Hunter (eds.), 2012, p.294
[282] Bourdieu, p.201

can later be traded for social and economic capital. Activities that require much skill and learning are more prized than those which are easier to grasp, with the greater amount of skill indicating not just an economic and cultural investment in time and education, but also in the ascetic dispositions the dominant classes use to distinguish themselves from the labouring – that of self-discipline, imposed self-denial, and uniqueness. The second manifestation of economic capital in sport is through the actual physical and material access to participation; that is through equipment, clothing, location and organisation. The actual costs of participating legitimately in a sport through the requirement of paraphernalia can act as real economic barriers to certain groups, as do access to designated grounds, clubs and transport.[283]

Indeed, the very type of sports identified by Bourdieu – individualistic and requiring investment in learning and participation – are present in the article, *'Outdoor Sports Goods '88'*[284]. After the initial 7 pages on physical training, the following 22 pages feature a detailed range of sports gear that in itself panders to the consumerist theme of Bubble cultural participation, arranged around the categories of: cycling, skate-boarding, horse riding, skiing, jogging, golf, shooting, tennis, scuba diving, 'dinghy' - sailing, jet-skiing, canoeing, hot air ballooning, paragliding, sky-diving, and ultra-light plane-gliding[285]. In all of these we can see an assumption of expensive investment into either equipment or access to facilities as a requirement for participation, and in its composition of catalogue-like lists of prices and images, shows a practical consumer-directed purpose that emphasises its legitimacy as practice.

However, of all elite sports it was golf that became synonymous with the Japanese boom, underlined by the rapid development of golf courses and resorts both within and outside of Japan. Japan's Resort Law of 1987 opened up land for development, and by 1994, Japan had 2000 courses and 1680 square kilometres dedicated to golf resorts[286]. It is in this nature of development in the golf boom, that we can see it taking on the form of the perfect sport upon which to demonstrate Japan's arrival and those of its citizens onto the world stage; requiring a high level of skill that indicates a commitment to training, it also had the prerequisite high costs of specialist equipment,

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[283] 'All the features which appeal to the dominant taste are combined in sports such as golf, tennis, sailing, riding, (or show-jumping), skiing, (especially its most distinctive forms, such as cross-country) or fencing. Practiced in exclusive places (private clubs), at a time one chooses, alone or with chosen partners (features which contrast with the collective discipline, obligatory rhythms and imposed efforts of team sports), demanding a relatively low physical exertion that is in any case freely determined, but a relatively high investment – and the earlier it is put in, the more profitable it is – of time and learning (so that they are relatively independent of variations in bodily capital and its decline through age), they only give rise to highly ritualized competitions, governed, beyond the rules, by the unwritten laws of fair play.' (Bourdieu, p.214)

[284] [アウトドアスポーツグッズ '88] (*auto doa supōtsu guzzu '88*) *Mono* Issue 123: 02/11/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988)

[285] See Appendix II, Mono Magazine Data, p.166

[286] Gavan McCormack, *The Emptiness of Japanese Affluence* (New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 2001) p. 89

expansive (and expensive to maintain) grounds, and club membership that was necessary to establish the position of being an exclusive leisure practice. With around 13 million golf players[287], the sport's popularity was a testament to its effectiveness as a cultural pastime, and golf as an expensive leisure practice was indeed one of the few sports that could embody the consumerist and status-hungry spirit of the Bubble, featuring on the one hand a whole culture of goods that demonstrated a lifestyle of leisure, wealth and refined skill, and on the other luxury property development and expensive membership whose very exclusivity added to its investment value.

On a more immediate level, golf was also hugely popular culturally, especially with the corporate salarymen of the Bubble, for whom golf was interwoven with corporate culture and a symbol of climbing the professional ladder. Though gathering pace through the late-1950s onwards, by the boom in demand in the 1980s, golf could be consumed via a range of activities and budgets, from golf manga and practice ranges for the mid-level salaryman, to the luxurious and corporatized play of private member golf courses that involved leisurely lunches and female caddies[288]. During this period while this was seen as more of a man's sport, women too were sold aspects of golfing culture, from golfing products and accessories to idealised fantasies of golfing holidays.[289]

The *AXIS* International Elite; Towards a *Kokusaika* Future

As a magazine, *AXIS* magazine differs from *Mono* magazine in many of its formal qualities, from price and paper quality to distribution and audience; quality and exclusivity in *AXIS* triumph over the temptation for popularity and mass appeal, and this attitude extends out to its content. Written in Japanese with an English translation insert, the bilingual contents show a mix of current trends, design news both at home and abroad, and specific cultural information through articles on specific companies and interview pieces. In keeping with its glossy format and up-market subscription, the subject matter within concerns itself with many examples of high-end design, and despite its international accessibility, the lack of popular material culture underlines its inherent exclusivity to readers with specialised interests and expectations of design culture.

On examination of the magazine issues 1988-1991, some specific categories can be identified through the varying focus of the articles. These categories include: the international article, whereby the global community is in some way invoked; the technical, in which technical aspects of design are discussed; more discursive articles on design as philosophy rather than just practice; the

[287] Ibid
[288] Lockyer, in Franks and Hunter (eds.), 2012, pp.284-305
[289] The relationship between women, golf and sport in general is explored further in Chapter 3.

Japanese design scene; and design education[290]. Unlike the lifestyle magazines of *Hanako*, *Brutus* and *Mono*, there are no opportunities for conspicuous consumption; rather the focus is on knowledge, keeping abreast of events and issues in design that have implications within a wider socio-economic space.

However, these types of articles are not necessarily evenly spaced out throughout the magazine, and on closer inspection it appears that some have more exposure than others, although how much depends on how they are measured. For example, if taking the articles as proportion of themselves, over the four quarterly issues of 1988, articles that have an international focus make up for the greatest proportion of the magazine (at an average of 29.87% of all articles). Articles that are concerned with design as philosophy come second (19.48%), technical design third (18.18%), and articles on design in Japan and design education lag behind at 5.19% and 3.89% of all articles respectively (and miscellaneous articles make up the rest, at 23.38%). Yet if approached measuring length of articles rather than just number of articles, we can see how the same data set shows us that though the preference for article type remains largely the same, the share of the magazine given over to it changes more dramatically. International articles rise to 49.14% of the magazine, with technical design making up almost a quarter at 24.79%. Musings on philosophical design drop to 9.4%, Japanese design and design education fall to equal levels of 2.99%, and miscellaneous articles make up only 10.68% of the magazine. Although there are variables such as special feature pieces and other issues in different years that may affect these findings, even taking these into account and expanding the range of issues studied (1988-1991), the proportion of types of articles averaged over the issues does not in fact alter much at all[291].

Unsurprisingly above all other types of article, the international in design takes centre stage in *AXIS*, echoing the international aspirations of its overseas subscription service and bilingual output. While lifestyle magazines were providing an internationalised consumer experience for their readers, by featuring articles exploring international design, *AXIS* represented a different type of internationalisation – not through consumption of goods or services, but through design culture. Regular articles such as 'Creative Trends', 'World Pulse', 'Topics', 'Design in Foreign Firms', and 'Design Works' all present findings from abroad, through of an array of international design and events, interviews and set pieces on specific design firms and individuals. 2 of the 4 special features in 1988 focus specifically on foreign design,[292] and even the articles that explore other areas such as design education or technology incorporate a majority of non-Japanese references in the form

[290] See Appendix II, AXIS Magazine Data, pp.192-196
[291] See *AXIS* Magazine Data, Appendix II, AXIS Magazine Data, p189-205 for more details
[292] *AXIS* – Quarterly on Trends in Design Vol. 28: Summer 1988 – *British Design Policy* (Tokyo: *AXIS* Inc., 1988); *AXIS* – Quarterly on Trends in Design Vol. 29: Autumn 1988 – *Design Across Oceans* (Tokyo: *AXIS* Inc., 1988). See also Appendix II, AXIS Magazine Data, pp.197-198

of authors, firms, products and designers. Implicit in these are certain hierarchies; most are Western, from America, Italy, France and England, with only one article featuring Malaysian craft. Japan is the only Asian country mentioned with any frequency, but even this is more likely in articles on craft, design philosophy, and Japan-specific industries such as consumer electronics, while new media technologies, furniture, luxury cars, architecture, small design firms, and exhibitions all consist of Euro-American examples. While this may show a bias towards Western hierarchies of design, it also enables Japan to place itself against the Western Other,[293] allowing readers to locate their design identity in an international context. Acting as a mediator of taste and taste creation, it becomes a gatekeeper to international design for the Japanese design community.

The intentions of the magazine in influencing the Japanese design landscape can be seen in the special issue of 'British Design Policy',[294] in which the editor lays out ambitions that include more than just influencing immediate design, but encompass government and national policy[295]. More than being a tool of consumption and lifestyle in the Bubble, design becomes posited as political and a key motivator for national development and industry, in which international standards are seen as fundamental to improving Japanese design.

Equally important is the presence of Japanese design in the magazine and in many of the articles, and by the next issue, Volume 30, Winter 1988, the special issue theme of 'Design Epicenter Tokyo' can be seen as a national (and regional) counterbalance to the 'British Design Policy' issue of the volume before[296]. Elements of this regionalism can be gleaned from the editor's introduction to the feature, revealing the surge in Japanese confidence that was focusing not just on learning and improving, but on establishing itself as a significant world power. Incorporating many aspects of popular *nihonjinron* rhetoric, it refers to Japan's economic strength and potential for world leadership, as well as the important role of culture[297]. However implicit in it and in the previous

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[293] Harumi Befu, *Hegemony of Homogeneity: An Anthropological Analysis of Nihonjinron* (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2001) p.5

[294] *AXIS* Vol. 28, Summer 1988

[295] 'We have chosen to focus on current British design policy because of the scale of the vision which it embodies: to increase and raise public awareness and understanding of design, to promote economic recovery; indeed, to transform the very structure of society itself. This ambitious project will involve, among other things, rethinking the nation's education system, encouragement of good design by industry, and provision within the national budget of funds for design grants. In Japan, as well, a similar case can be made for taking up design as a key element of national policy, and we hope that this look at the current state of British design policy will help focus debate regarding the policies, or lack of same, in this country.' (Eizi Hayashi, Editor's Note, British Design Policy, *AXIS* Vol. 29, Summer 1988:5)

[296] *AXIS – Quarterly on Trends in Design Vol. 30: Winter 1989 – Design Epicenter Tokyo* (Tokyo: AXIS Inc., 1989)

[297] 'Tokyo has only recently acquired a leading position in the world economy. Going beyond this economic strength, Tokyo has begun to move away from single-minded concentration on economics and is developing its cultural facilities… The principal goals of the production-oriented society have now been achieved, and the rapid shift towards information as the basic resource of society has brought us to the point where anyone can enjoy a "life of culture", however limited. Thus the very definition of culture has changed. What should be our referent in thinking about modern culture? Production levelled values to such an extent that fine arts

editor's note on the 'British Design Policy' issue are also elements of searching for Japan's place in the world, and of a belonging to an international community, rather than being apart from it as later *nihonjinron* assumptions about Japanese 'uniqueness' would attest to.

As covered, *kokusaika* and *nihonjinron* are rather nebulous concepts tricky to pin down, both sides of the same coin, and meaning different things to different people. However, in this case *nihonjinron*, yet to take on the culturally protectionist and isolationist tone of the years following the Bubble Economy, can be seen as a heady mix of cultural and corporate nationalism. Japanese corporate management, hailed through the 1970s and 1980s as a viable alternative to the failures of Western capitalism, based much of its distinction on inherent cultural differences. From observation of a culture of close-knit community ties and desire for harmonious relationships to the groupism and consensus-rule that dominated Japanese industry, *nihonjinron* became a way of dealing with the perceived threat of increased globalisation in the 1970s whilst also justifying Japan's growing economic and industrial success as inherent to the working practices and implicit ethno-centricity of Japanese culture.[298] In this way, at a time of Japanese economic and corporate dominance, *kokusaika* became the vehicle by which *nihonjinron* was promoted to the outside world.

It is in the publication of dual-language Japanese corporate manuals, guides and autobiographies from prominent figures of industry that we see 1980s-corporate *kokusaika-nihonjinron* manifest, and of which *AXIS* appears to be an active participant. For under the guise of promoting greater understanding and industrial cooperation, manuals such as Nippon Steel's *Nippon: The Land and Its People*[299] and Taiyō Kōbe Bank's, *The Nipponjin/The Scrutable Japanese*[300] were in fact veiled promotions of *nihonjinron* as explained through the perspective of the Japanese business community[301]. As Yoshino explains, 'What is characteristic about such literature is that the ideas of Japanese uniqueness are popularised in such a manner as to be used in a practical context of cross-cultural interactions in which the Japanese are expected to explain things Japanese to the non-Japanese.'[302]

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can no longer wield the power they once did. Liberated from the thrall of things, surely expansion in the concept of design is refashioning it as one of the constitutive elements of modern culture. For Tokyo to establish a position as a center of 20th century culture, great importance will attach to the kinds of messages it gives the world as an epicenter of design and disseminator of information.' Eizi Hayashi, *Special Report* (*AXIS* – Quarterly on Trends in Design Vol. 30: Winter 1989 – Design Epicenter Tokyo (Tokyo: *AXIS* Inc., 1989))

[298] Befu 2001; Yoshino, 1992

[299] Nippon Steel Corporation, Personnel Development Office, *Nippon: The Land and Its People*, 2nd ed. Tokyo: Gakuseishacited, 1984) cited in Yoshino, p.173

[300] Taiyō Kōbe Bank Ltd, *The Nipponjin/The Scrutable Japanese*, (Tokyo: Gakuseisha, 1988) cited in Yoshino, p.173

[301] Yoshino, p.173

[302] Ibid

Thus, in making reference to international design throughout the magazine, *AXIS* enables access to an international community in which design is the common language and basis of engagement. However, disguised by the aim of greater international cooperation and of learning from other design cultures, it also becomes the space in which Japanese design identity is articulated and positioned. Using foreign examples as a springboard for positioning at a time of economic dominance, embodied by its position as a tool of industry promotion, it deliberately places Japan alongside or at the centre of this design community. In doing so parallels can be seen with the attempts to conquer ground and retake the centre in the worlds of fashion[303] and technology, wresting primacy and the dominant narrative of modernity and high culture from the West.

Design Dialogues; Inclusivity as a Language in *AXIS*

Another distinguishing characteristic in *AXIS* is the dialogic style through which articles portray their subject matter. Rather than the prescriptive arrangement of information about products, services and events that characterise lifestyle magazines, *AXIS* articles feature mainly intense quality pieces of information about specific design, directly transcribed interviews, and designer-authored articles that input personal opinion about a subject. In particular, regular articles such as 'Design Economics', 'My View of Design', 'Corporate Culture and Creativity', 'New Craftsmanship', and 'Paradox in Design', all feature short intense essays and interviews that discuss design as a more abstracted concept – as practice or theory, rather than merely the presentation of new and interesting objects[304]. While not a category that the special features fall into[305], these types of articles discussing design as an abstracted culture appear with frequency throughout the issues, making up around 20% of the articles[306].

Through layout, style, and subject matter, we see a sense of inclusion and encouragement to participate in an ongoing dialogue about design. Rather than prescribing a list of approved and collated designs for readers to take in and passively consume, by exploring through interviews, opinion pieces and specific features on designers and firms, the articles open up design as a cultural form into which the reader can enter and participate. The opinions of authors and interviewees inform and allow the formation of readers' own opinions, the form of conversational discourse fostering a sense of inclusion in the reader.

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[303] Dorinne Kondo, *Re-Made in Japan; Everyday Life and Consumer Taste in a Changing Society* ed. by Joseph L. Tobin, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1992)

[304] See Appendix II, AXIS Magazine Data, pp.191-196

[305] These have more emphasis on the international and the technical, and a bit of Japanese design and design education. See Appendix II, AXIS Magazine Data, pp.197-198

[306] Although only under 10% of the average magazine issue if counting by page length (Appendix II, AXIS Magazine Data, pp.199-205)

Through this dialogic approach, design thus becomes a whole culture in which readers can participate rather than consume. Through presenting subjective opinions about design, it also informs about taste and taste-formation. In all these aspects of inclusion and participation can be seen elements of class struggle identified by Bourdieu; for implicit in the inclusionary style of the articles is a necessary initial exclusionary requirement, formed by the combination of high retail price of the magazine, high quality paper used, the international well-travelled nature of the articles, and the high-design language. As much as the trappings of golf or rituals of opera all these elements from the start mark out the initial exclusionary nature of this design culture, making it all the more special to be included in on the conversations taking place within. Unlike in *Mono* where the aim is laid out clearly through the advertising and blatant product-pushing that is as much business transaction as cultural, the aims of *AXIS* are not so clear – instead, with little to no apparent advertising and product marketing, the purpose of reading the magazine is one of knowledge acquisition, cultural capital and distinction from others.

As Bourdieu explains,[307] legitimacy is all important in the consumption and arrangement of works, and design thus becomes more than just a collection of everyday objects, but instead is the vehicle for the presentation of aesthetic choices that help different groups distinguish themselves through the display of taste. Design and the presentation of self through taste thus becomes a tangible marker of cultural development. While an important part of *nihonjinron* rhetoric is that of homogeneity and lack of class in Japanese culture, the 1980s saw a huge demand for luxury goods, riding on the capital gains made by rising land and asset values as well as the stronger yen[308]. In particular, the period was known for the popularity of luxury foreign designer goods[309], and the consumer demand for these goods show how if not class in the traditional sense, then distinction based on wealth and conspicuous consumption was being performed in the Bubble, breaking down the traditional Japanese concepts of equality into differentiated factions.

This struggle between the classes in spite of cultural notions of homogeneity is something briefly acknowledged in an interview with the creative writer, Natsume Fusanosuke[310] who simultaneously recognises the increasing trend for emphasis on external appearances as the new 'avant-garde', whilst also expressing his own disinterest in it[311]. In this claim and counter-claim to influence what

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[307] Bourdieu, p.32

[308] Itoh, p.80

[309] In interviews with subjects from Dentsu, and Matsuo, in describing the Bubble, they named-dropped various luxury brands (Tiffany, Louis Vuitton, Hermes, Rolex, Brooks Brothers, and so on) with ease, citing these as part of Bubble culture. (Appendix I, Matsuo Interview, p.14; Appendix I, Komatsu, Tamura and Sakaitani Interview, p.56)

[310] *AXIS* – Quarterly on Trends in Design Vol. 27: Spring 1988 – The Work Scene (Tokyo: *AXIS* Inc., 1988) p.17

[311] *AXIS*: There seem to be more and more people these days who are more concerned with form and appearance than with content…

stands out is the acknowledgement of the importance of trend-following and desire for upward-mobility as instigator of cultural change in Japan as much as anywhere else, as well as the struggle between Tokyoites and non-Tokyoites to occupy positions of authenticity within the city. Within this we can apply Bourdieu's aesthetic principles which, implicit in taste-formation, are dependent upon their 'legitimacy'. In order for consumption to be 'legitimate', it has to both consume allowed works, as well as in an appropriate manner. It is in this that *AXIS* comes in, for if legitimacy is conferred by the dominant classes, then the magazine that represents this, materialised through the voice of the designer, becomes the authority from which taste can be formed.

In his work, Bourdieu identifies different levels of classes, from working class and middle class, to the bourgeoisie and wealthy, each with their own relationship to aesthetic and cultural taste informed by relative levels of economic, educational, social and cultural capital. Yet there is one group who occupy an uneasy position in the shifting hierarchies; that of the taste-creators. These cultural catalysts are often intellectuals in the arts, who cannot claim the conventional rights to social dominance due to their low levels of economic and social capital, but through creative artistic endeavours possess high levels of cultural capital with which they can use to dominate and influence the culture around them.

The legitimacy of cultural dominance however, is based on a 'purity' and disinterestedness forsaking financial gain, in a pursuit of an aesthetic that has its roots in asceticism and the sublime, and another tool by which the dominant can prove their difference from the lower classes rooted and bound by necessity. Thus, while lifestyle magazines such as *Mono* purport to influence and aid 'lifestyle', their very integration with advertising and materialism disqualifies them from being legitimate vehicles for the aspirations of the dominant classes. Instead *AXIS*, with its lack of advertising, disregard for financial prudence, and its high-minded discussion of design in a 'purer' more abstract form, places itself firmly as the appropriate medium by which the dominant taste-creators can display their cultural capital, and through the consumption of its discourse, taking in of legitimate taste, and participation in taste-creation – allows its readers access to the dominant class itself. In this we can also draw parallels with the other autobiographical business publications that purported to communicate to the international community concepts around Japanese

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Natsume: I consider these people to be the "front-runners" of society. This kind of emphasis on external appearance is something I find in all of my friends whom I consider to be among the "avant-garde". On the other hand, however, I don't really care about these things. I'm not very aware of what is in style at any given moment. In Japan, it's not the native Tokyoites who are most aware of the fashion trends. In particular, people who grew up in the so-called "downtown" sections of Tokyo are out of place. This awareness of what is going to be "in" next is a reflection of the upwardly mobile aspirations of people living in the country. These people could be called victors in life because they come to Tokyo and make their dreams come true. The power of people seeking upward mobility is one of the driving forces of cultural change so of course I wouldn't criticize it. The accumulation that has resulted, however, is not what I would call "my Tokyo" anymore. People often ask me what the next trend will be. I'm not a member of the race that holds the answer to that question. It would be hard to call me avant-garde. (*AXIS*, Vol.27, Spring 1988 p.17)

corporate culture. For in the apparent openness and 'pure-hearted' intentions of cross-cultural communication, what was being enacted was a dominance of corporate literature, corporate culture and universal management systems, displacing the West to put Japan firmly in the centre of industry norms.

'Design Economics' and 'Corporate Culture and Creativity' in *AXIS*

AXIS as a medium for high-end design thus becomes a shortcut to participating in the tastes of a dominant class that transcends national and cultural borders. However, for all the emphasis on internationality throughout the magazine, the articles that engage in a dialogic discussion about design appear to use Japanese sources to the near exclusion of foreign input. While foreign events, design, designers and companies are showcased throughout the rest of the magazine, these discursive articles are mostly all Japanese-authored and feature Japanese designers, firms, design issues and points of view. It thus seems that though an international outlook was essential for keeping abreast of the design climate, comment and discussion it appears was reserved for the Japanese.

On the one hand this shows an encouragement and participation of Japanese design with current international trends and design issues within the context of an international community of design. On the other hand, the nature of the discourse displays a growing independence to the influence of the West, producing critique and analysis in relation to the social, industrial and economic issues specific to Japan at the time. Through this it expresses a growing self-confidence in articulating an independent path through modern design at a time when Japanese designers in fashion, architecture and product design were rising in international prominence. However, it must be remembered that this upswing in design prominence also benefitted from the encouragement of a domestic consumer economy through low interest rates, revaluated yen and rising asset values that provided the receptive and fertile ground for its own domestic design industry[312].

Key articles that embody these Japan-centric discussions are, 'Design Economics' and 'Corporate Culture and Creativity', that appear with regularity through the issues. Featuring interviews and opinion pieces from prominent Japanese designers, critics and company directors, these articles explore design in the context of Japanese industry, economy, and society. Common to all of these is a broad concern for design strategies, whether on a national, local, individual, or corporate scale,

[312] This is something mentioned by interview subjects in the design industry, who all remarked on the great demand for design work, catering to the new consumer markets of the Bubble, either directly in the large corporations or sub-contracted out to the smaller independent design studios. (See Appendix I, Various Interviews, pp.23-76; 97-155)

and their concern with Japanese business as implied by the series titles that marry the terms of design and creativity with that of companies and economics.

For example, in the issue, Volume 26, Winter 1988[313], a main contributor to the 'Design Economics' series, Nagasawa Tadanori, sets out a case for a complete overall design strategy that incorporates the social as well as the technical. Calling for a new system of design values for a 'new era', while framing it in the context of industry, Japanese prominence among the international community, and the path of the Japanese designer from college to companies, Nagasawa ties in design development with a linear view of national development in industry, economics and politics[314]. Design thus becomes politicised as a national project for development, drawing on the logical development of society in a new age of a 'knowledge economy' in which Japan can invest as a future world leader.

The linking of design with industry and business can also be seen in the following issue's 'Design and Economics' article[315]. Taking the form of an interview between Nagasawa and the designer, Sato Kozo, Sato's views on design's relationship with companies is clearly articulated, as is the important role companies have in setting comprehensive design policy. In particular, the importance of using effective design and data management in business, and smaller firms being more open to commissioning orders to outside designers is seen as a way in which modern Japanese businesses could adapt to and answer the changing demands of a new 'information society'.[316]

It is this desire for rethinking design practice that can be seen in the experiences of some of my interviewees, Sakai Naoki and Sakakiyama Ken. Sakai, in spite of his lack of connection to the car industry, was commissioned by the car manufacturer Nissan to design a series of 1980s 'Pike'[317] cars, the Be-1 (1986), and Pao (1987). Sakai, who had formerly made his name in textile design, was able to successfully transfer his skills to car design and later to product design, possibly indicating a

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[313] *AXIS* – Quarterly on Trends in Design Vol. 26: Winter 1988 – Digital Effect (Tokyo: AXIS Inc., 1988), p.17

[314] 'Design economics as a new discipline does not deny any of the existing forms of design, but includes all the traditional categories. Further, one of its goals is the establishment of new research into fundamental concepts in a [process] of value generation. The next epoch in the evolution of industrial society will be characterised by [a] knowledge economy. As we look to the start of the twenty-first century, design economics emerges as the economic theory for the new era.' (Nagasawa, *AXIS* Vol.26, 1988 p.17)

[315] *AXIS* – Quarterly on Trends in Design Vol. 27: Spring 1988 – The Work Scene (Tokyo: AXIS Inc., 1988)

[316] This notion of the 'information society' is not something new to *AXIS* but instead was a natural progression from the change in industrial policy since the 1970s. Following the recessions of the Gulf oil crises, attempts were made to reduce Japan's dependency on global oil by moving away from heavy industries, relocating production overseas and steering the economy towards knowledge-intensive industries less susceptible to oil shocks. It was this that contributed to the development of the Japanese technology industry and its innovations in 1980s consumer electronics, and which the interview subjects in *AXIS* are referring to. (Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Technological Transformation of Japan: From the Seventeenth Century to the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) pp. 209-228)

[317] 'Pike' was coined as a term meaning 'progressive' at the 1986 Tokyo Motor Show.

more fluid design environment developing in the Bubble Economy. Likewise, with business booming, not only did firms subcontract out much work but they were more open to cross-collaboration, and it was an opportune moment for small design firms to start up, such as with the case of Sakakiyama.[318]

Another way in which businesses were incorporating design change in corporate strategy was in the realm of Corporate Identity (C.I.). In the *AXIS* issues of 1988, C.I. is mentioned several times, and examples include a feature on the C.I. planning firm, PAOS[319] and discussed within the 'Corporate Culture and Creativity' articles, in which two reference C.I. extensively, and all four discuss the importance of their company and brand image with their respective markets.

In the 1980s, Japanese C.I. saw an intensification of brand consolidation and internationalisation in a process that had started with the 1970s-overseas expansion of Japanese industry.[320] By the start of the 1980s many of the major Japanese companies had already internationalised themselves with smaller companies following suit as they expanded through foreign investments in corporate buyouts and acquisitions. By the 1990s, as investments collapsed and businesses failed, many logos and brand identities disappeared from the C.I. landscape as companies were merged into larger, more stable entities.[321]

More than a branding exercise for companies, corporate identity was part of an entire move by companies to internationalise their brand and better integrate their expansion overseas, something reflected in the 1988 *AXIS* articles on PAOS[322] and 'Corporate Culture and Creativity'. Within these articles, C.I. takes centre stage in the discussion by companies Itoki[323] and INAX[324] about their recent C.I. program, overhauling their entire brands, including offices, showrooms and staff

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[318] Appendix I, Sakakiyama Interview, pp.60-76
[319] *AXIS* Vol.27, Spring 1988, pp.6-7
[320] C.I. has a long history in Japan, with early examples dating back to the Edo period. Since then branding and corporate identity have come to represent all types of companies across the industries, from areas in food, power and finance to pharmaceuticals, machinery and construction. Typically, these have changed along with the types of industries that flourished, with older industries displaying more traditional Japanese logos and newer industries more modern ones, the latter being especially true of younger companies that flourished in the 20th century alongside new technologies and electric consumer goods. Although over the years corporate logos changed according to the necessary refreshing of their brand, it was particularly in the 1970s that many large manufacturing companies oversaw a consolidation and rationalising of their brands, with companies such as Toshiba, Sharp and Panasonic taking on a simpler logo drawn along clean modernist lines and Western typeface, followed by smaller firms in the 1980s. This reimagining of corporate identity can be linked to the move overseas by Japanese companies as the 1970s recessions slowed the pace of their domestic market, pushing them to consolidate and internationalise their brands.
[321] Tetsuya Ohta *Changes in Logos & Trademarks in Japan* (Japan: Rikuyosha Publishing Inc., 1997)
[322] 'Our prediction for the fifth period in PAOS' history sees them helping Japanese firms deal with the many problems that present themselves in the course of internationalisation of activities from the point of view of CI.' (Nakanishi, *AXIS* Vol.27, Spring 1988, p.6)
[323] *AXIS* – Quarterly on Trends in Design Vol. 26: Winter 1988: Digital Effect (Tokyo: *AXIS* Inc., 1988) pp.17-18
[324] *AXIS* Vol.27, Spring 1988, pp.15-16

uniforms. From the emphasis on C.I. it is apparent that this was an important discussion topic within the design industry, highlighting the importance of investing in branding and identity as a corporate necessity. For in addition to overseas expansion, the need to expand the domestic consumer market as exports declined meant C.I. could be used as a way of maintaining and enhancing competitiveness.[325] This is something reflected in my Dentsu interview, where the boom in corporate rebranding was linked to the domestic trend for higher, more luxurious brands.[326] Uematsu moreover mentions how in the competition with Sony, the company brought in its overseas Panasonic brand to Japan to refresh its image where previously it had kept its overseas and domestic companies separate using Panasonic and National.[327]

Corporate rebranding was also good for company morale, from uniforms[328] to employee motivation, who in turn became company billboards for a new ethos of aspirational lifestyle.[329] However, as C.I. became connected to both satisfaction at work and lifestyle, it had at its heart a fundamental conflict. For in the intertwining of Japanese corporate management with cultural practice, economic success had directly fed into the *nihonjinron* narratives of uniqueness, reflected in the corporate literature of the time. In this way, a kind of corporate nationalism was emerging, in which excessive hard work and sacrifice were as much a part of the Japanese cultural narrative as lifetime employment[330].

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[325] 'As I mentioned earlier, our first objective was to bring about a fundamental change in Itoki's corporate personality in order to maintain and enhance our competitiveness. We wanted to create the image of a new Itoki and felt that a change in our corporate logo would [be] a good place to start…' (Mitamura, *AXIS*, Vol.26, Winter, 1988, p.18)

[326] Appendix I, Komatsu, Tamura and Sakaitani Interview, pp.40-59

[327] Uematsu: Yes. At that time in Japan all for that was National, and export model for Europe and United States was Panasonic. But in Japan we are strong, very serious competitive competition with Sony, so the excuse of market people National cannot stay, cannot fight, cannot compete with Sony because we produce rice cooker, we produce toilet washer. Sony is move just audio video, very sophisticated and the impression [...] become very big voice. So we decided to change for in Japan market, audio video products, change National to Panasonic. (Appendix I, Uematsu Interview, p.33)

[328] 'To assure the penetration of CI throughout the company, the first thing you have to do is change the attitudes of the employees. So we felt that changing the company uniforms would be a good place to start. I think that making the kind of uniforms that people can enjoy and be proud to wear is an important first step in refreshing people's attitudes toward the company where they work. The uniforms were designed by Junko Koshino and the effect on morale has exceeded our expectations. We've even decided to start a new operation that will advise other companies on their office uniforms.' *(*Mitamura, *AXIS* Vol.26, Winter, 1988:18). It is also important to note the role that uniforms play in many aspects of Japanese life, helping to identify and validate specific roles in Japanese society, with corporate culture in particular distinguishing its employees through the ubiquitous salaryman business suit, and the OL mandatory uniform. More about the relationship of the OL with her uniform is explored in Chapter 3.

[329] 'Our aims were to improve our corporate image vis-à-vis the public, to revitalise employee attitudes, and renew the overall mood of the organisation. We wanted to move away from the image of technician to one that focused on people's lifestyles and to develop products and services from this new perspective.' (Ina, *AXIS* Vol.27, Spring 1988, pp.15-16)

[330] Mouer & Hirosuke, p.69

Yet moving in direct opposition to this was the other theme of lifestyle and life satisfaction. As covered in Chapter 1, in the face of economic stagnation, encouraging a consumer culture through a lifestyle and leisure economy was a cornerstone of Japanese economic policy. Yet being able to access a quality lifestyle was based partly on the premise of free time, something already monopolised by companies in the cultural pact between employer and worker. Thus, here we see an ultimate conflict between the aims of a consumer lifestyle economy with that of corporate culture, which, at a time of corporate and consumer expansion, created a source of tension that had huge implications for cultural identity. It is this tension between two different types of Japanese cultural values that corporate rebranding was trying to resolve by linking corporate identity with lifestyle.

At its most clumsy, companies were attempting to cater to 'lifestyle' through simple consumption, with interviewees such as Ina Teruzo in *AXIS*, linking bathroom sanitary fixtures to consumer lifestyles. In his interview, he defines lifestyle as an environment in which the corporate, urban and domestic are made more beautiful and therefore more enjoyable.[331] However in this we can see how 'lifestyle' has been co-opted to serve capitalist aims of both consumption and production, enabling people to become happier (and therefore better) workers and consumers of goods. Likewise, the process of refreshing corporate identity at this time also embodied these capitalist aims: re-vitalising the company; reflecting a new consumer-lifestyle approach; and expanding the remits of a company to include international expansion. However, similar to 'internationalisation', 'lifestyle' was both a new and rather nebulous term coined in the 1980s that could be used in different ways. In terms of leisure for example, Leheny[332] has likened it to being 'space to do my own thing', and depending on the context, lifestyle could be used to refer to any number of things, depending on gender, age, and occupation. Bourdieu on the other hand sees lifestyle as related to class struggle and the different practices that classes engage in to distinguish themselves from each other in 'a system of classified and classifying practices, i.e., distinctive sign ('tastes')' [333]. Furthermore, lifestyles are the meaningful expressions of perceptions and practices developed by the habitus and performed in the social world, in order to express difference. As 'social identity is defined and asserted through difference'[334], lifestyles can be used as tools to create identities as

[331] '*In a word, it is 'creating more pleasurable lifestyles'. We see the creation and promotion of environmental beauty as our duty as a company. We define environmental beauty as compromising the elements of 'life', 'corporate', and 'urban' beauty. Thus our aim is to make the homes, offices, and cities where people live and work more beautiful and enjoyable places. This means more than just making attractive and functional products. It calls for viewing our products as a means to create a more pleasant and liveable environment for people, and basing our business decisions on this.'* (Ina, *AXIS*, Vol.27, Spring 1988, p.16)
[332] Leheny, p.5
[333] Bourdieu, pp.165-166
[334] Bourdieu, pp.166-167

constructions of value judgements and practices, in order to distinguish individuals and groups from each other.

It is this that makes sense of the significance of lifestyle in the Bubble period, becoming politicised in the struggle to assert dominance and legitimise claims to status. While Japan was the largest contributor to overseas aid and development, despite this it possessed much less political or cultural authority[335], and the comparative lifestyle quality of its people thus becomes another field in which to claim centre ground. Raising lifestyle quality can therefore be seen as integrated with the motivations of *nihonjinron* and it is this that is behind *AXIS* magazine's preoccupation with Japan's 'new lifestyles', and its 'new information society'[336].

With such ideas about Japan becoming a new 'information society', influenced by new ways of consuming information and ideas, C.I. becomes a way for companies to engage in a total brand identity to communicate and engage with their changing market. Although already containing teams of in-house researchers and designers, the 1980s also saw many major companies starting up research centres into 'lifestyle', exploring the new ways in which Japanese consumers were behaving[337]. Corporations such as Toshiba, Panasonic, and Dentsu all had lifestyle research centres studying Japanese consumer habits, incorporating their findings into their design strategies that directly fed into product lines such as Toshiba's *'Off'* series of domestic appliances, designed and marketed to young trendy consumers.[338] While short-lived before their inevitable shutdown in the

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[335] Mitchell W. Sedgick, *Globalisation and Japanese Organisational Culture: An ethnography of a Japanese corporation in France* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007) p.49

[336] *The advent of the information-based, international society that everyone is talking about is contingent upon continued developments in digital technology.* (*AXIS* Vol.26 Winter 1988:7)
Society has generally begun to acknowledge the importance of design in the last few years as it deals with the fundamental and large-scale changes in patterns of consumption accompanying the transition from an industrial to information-based society. This information society is defined as 'that social organisation which promotes the general development of the creative intellectual powers of its members'. Just think, we have reached a stage in history where society's fundamental organising principle is the provision of the means for enabling people to use their creative and intellectual powers. One consequence of this is that design is recognised as an information source. (Sato, *AXIS* Vol.27, Spring 1988, p.14)

[337]Both Professor Uematsu of Panasonic and Onai from Toshiba mention the penchant for lifestyle research centres among the big electronic manufacturing companies, paying for research from abroad, and setting up the centres all over fashionable areas of Japan. Toshiba for example, had a 'life culture laboratory' in Oyama, Tokyo, while Panasonic had one in Harajuku, Tokyo. (Appendix I, Uematsu Interview, pp.23-39; Appendix I, Onai Interview, pp.97-118)

[338] 'Off' was Toshiba's range of new 'lifestyle' consumer household goods. Moving away from older styles of domestic consumption, the Off range (as in 'off-centre' from the normal) portrayed itself as part of a complete lifestyle of sophisticated living. Onai from Toshiba noted how not only was it directed specifically at young people, but also designed by young men and women, who imbued it with unusual properties of size, shape, colour, and placement (for example, he notes how the air conditioner was placed near the ceiling rather intruding out of a wall as was conventional then. Now placing air conditioners at ceiling level is standard domestic practice in Japan) (Appendix I, Onai Interview, pp.103-104)

years after the Bubble, these lifestyle centres signalled a new creative approach to design and lifestyle that flourished in the culture of the Bubble.

Society as Design in *AXIS*

In the *AXIS* issues, 'society' is often evoked alongside design, giving the design process meaning and context, and a new society is envisioned to accompany the changes in technology and patterns of behaviour that are a result of the booming economy. However unlike in popular lifestyle magazines[339], it is not so much the everyday individual 'lifestyles' of normal people that are used to frame design in *AXIS*, but the more all-encompassing and grandiose 'society', with its connotations of positive Japan-affirming globally-leading *nihonjinron*.

In this promotion of the Japanese corporate-cultural narrative, we can see design and *AXIS* being co-opted as a way of positioning Japanese creativity and taste into not just cultural capital, but national and corporate capital in the furthering of international interests. For example, in the Spring 1988 issue of *AXIS*, Volume 27, an interview with the director of the Japanese C.I. design firm, PAOS, Nakanishi Moto'o reflects on the developments in Japanese industry, economy, culture and society in an international context – offering a view of the transcending link between corporations and society, companies' responsibilities to wider society in terms of shaping everyday lifestyles, and their need to create and develop a social identity as well as physical one[340]. Framed in the context of a cultural market, the pervasiveness of the corporation in everyday life is summed up by the term 'corporate citizenship' in which companies have a requirement to include personality and identity into their corporate strategy as much as product development for the benefit of their customer-base, who identify with the company in much the same way as they do as citizens of a country. While of course this is the opinion of one creative company director, the rhetoric used around nationhood is an echo of other writings about Japan in this period, in which nation is often twinned synonymously with corporation, most notably in the phase 'Japan Inc.'[341], and in the hostile

[339] See *Hanako* and *Brutus* in the following chapters

[340] *Nakanishi: In countries like Japan and the US where major corporations have a tremendous influence on society and people's lifestyles, they transcend their roles as economic organisms, and are deeply rooted in the material, service-oriented, intellectual, and psychological aspects of people's lives. Those corporations that can also act as cultural entities come to take on a sort of corporate citizenship and face the need to establish a corporate identity that is the source of all their activities as a manufacturing, economic and cultural organisation. …corporations are now faced with the need to create a personality of their own vis-à-vis society, and to establish an objective position for themselves. This entails at the same time both an expansion in scale and market share – the physical side of things – as well as the social aspects of their existence as well. … Today, there is a lot of discussion about the 'hollowization' of industry, and the future of Japanese industry is uncertain in a lot of ways. Looking at things from a historical perspective, I don't think that it's possible to move ahead without passing through this stage.* (Nakanishi in *AXIS* Vol.27, Spring 1988:7)

[341] Curtis Andressen, *A Short History of Japan: From Samurai to Sony*, (Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2002) p.137

observations of the overseas acquisitions of Japanese corporations as a 'Japanese economic invasion'[342].

However, seen in another way the interview with Nakanishi can also be seen in the light of a natural development of its corporations, and a project of growth in line with its development of economy and industry. In this sense, Japanese design as a tool for corporate identity becomes not just a way in which corporations can further solidify their relationship with their customers, but also one in which economic growth can be maintained through the consumption of culture as developed by corporations. In other words, the growth of a company's products can be extended beyond the product's natural line through the projection of a strong company identity and brand that helps instil in consumers a sense of 'citizenship' to the company, much in the same way that nationhood does.

Thus, by linking the language of nationhood to corporate citizenship and identity, corporate strategies aimed at instilling consumer interest and loyalty in an intensifying competitive market could be said to be also furthering national economic strategies on an international scale. Just as Japan in the 1950s, '60s, and '70s looked to design in industry to provide economic growth through mass-production distribution and public consumption of products, so design could be used to continue mass-consumption through the development of cultural and brand identity, furthering the project for national growth.

Moreover, as Nakanishi goes on to explain, design as corporate strategy has implications beyond that of pure economic and industrial growth, but that which has the potential to affect international culture. In the interview, Nakanishi's views on Japan's industrial and technological development can be summed up by the understanding that Japan has dealt with the international community by absorbing and internalising foreign influences, the result of which has been technological and economic progress[343]. However, these views are also a call for a new Japanese approach to the

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[342] William D. Hoover, *Historical Dictionary of Postwar Japan*, Lanham, Toronto, Plymouth UK: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 2011) p.331. See also Andressen, p.169

[343] *Nakanishi: From a bird's eye perspective, Japan has followed a unique path in its development, absorbing foreign cultural and scientific influences and reworking them in a uniquely Japanese fashion. This means that it has, until now, practiced internationalization by internalization. Today, Japan is at a turning point, and how Japanese corporations ride out this period of change will be proving ground for the corporate world at large. After having achieved the goals of economic and technological maturity, from now it will be those firms that are able to build goals beyond these that will continue to grow. Until now, we have been guided by mainly considerations of economics and efficiency. In the future, however, a new system of values based on cultural considerations is needed to replace the existing economic and technically based one in order to break out of the present limitations.* (Nakanishi in *AXIS* Vol.27, Spring 1988:7)
Nakanishi: As I mentioned before, internationalization in Japan has until now meant the absorption of outside influences and techniques, while from now on it will take the form of outward expansion. (Nakanishi in *AXIS* Vol.27, Spring 1988:7)

international community, and for Japanese leadership and innovation in industry and culture as a way of progressing past economic and technical barriers. In this we recognise Yoshimi's [344] observation of a paradox within Japanese technology in the 1980s – that following the decline of essentialist views of technology within Japan there were attempts by top managers at companies such as Sony to emphasise the Japanese cultural 'essence' from which their products derived. Yet conversely designers within the same company were prone to admit that the styling of their products were the result of strong American and German post-war influences rather than Japanese traditional culture; and this is something echoed by my interview subjects regarding their own design training in which German modernist influences were key to their education[345]. It is in these examples we can sense a type of nationalism, using design as a tool for not just economic or corporate, but cultural expansion, with Japanese design as part of a vision of Japanese cultural influence expanding outward to export to other countries, much in the same model as the Japanese economic plan of the previous decades.

Thus, Japanese design can be seen as both a tool for corporate and industrial growth, as well as part of a project for national cultural growth and international cultural expansion in preparation for global leadership. While this may be only one view of the possibilities of design for Japan in the 1980s at the height of its economic power, its overall tone of optimism about the future prospects of Japanese design and the ambitions of its reach is something that can be seen through many of the design articles in *AXIS* magazine. Likewise, the impression of Japan expanding beyond its early essentialist twentieth-century role from developing technological and industrial nation to economic and industry leader and then projected cultural and design leader in the twenty-first century, can be seen as part of a longer narrative of national development. In this, the grand narrative of design in relation to Japan's own narrative of economic development, while linked to its own specific

[344] Yoshimi in Allen & Sakemoto pp.54-55

[345] Ootake and Uematsu both refer to German modernism as significant influences in their training. (Appendix I, Uematsu Interview, pp.23-39; Appendix I, Ootake Interview, pp.126-133)

political, economic, industrial and cultural circumstances, is directly in contrast to the death of grand narratives that describe aspects of Postmodernity, as set out by Lyotard,[346] and Jameson.[347]

Published in 1979 and 1991 respectively, Lyotard's and Jameson's seminal works border the Japanese Bubble era, and in some aspects, echo some of the changes that were happening in Japan at the time. New technologies, especially in the area of mass-communication, computer science, communication design and global travel were making sweeping changes in Japanese society, as was late-stage capitalism, rampant corporatisation and personal consumption. The rise in corporate identity as featured so frequently in *AXIS* magazine, is a prime example of Jameson's argument of corporate entities encroaching into the cultural sphere, affecting change in the narrative of customer identification towards corporate citizenship and unrooting them from the larger narratives of community and historicity.

However, despite these similarities between Lyotard and Jameson's postmodern and social changes in Bubble Japan, there are also some conflicting paradoxes. In particular, they relate to the idea of the death of the meta-narrative in which communities are unlinked from their own history due to the machinations of corporate capitalism (Jameson), or in which communities reject the grand narratives for the more tailored pluralities of smaller multiple narratives, or micronarratives, which

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[346] Characterised by technological developments, social changes, and perceived disillusionment with preceding modernist experiments, the second half of the twentieth century experienced changes related to what has come to be known as the postmodern. Spanning the areas of art, architecture, music, literature, design, philosophy, critical theory, and socio-political and cultural studies, Postmodernism and Postmodernity were movements and observations that focused on the fractured nature of society and technology as well as embracing the multiplicity of experience, whilst rejecting the totality and single-point reference of Universality as a concept. In 1979 Jean-François Lyotard published *The Postmodern Condition: A Report of Knowledge* in which he argued that Postmodernity could be simplified down to the rejection of overarching meta-narratives, or grand narratives, liberated as it were by the development in technologies and science since the end of the Second World War. Instead the rise of smaller narratives would be seen as more suitable to the self-fashioning and understanding of society and social changes, providing a plurality of equal viewpoints that was a more suitable approach to the new technological means of communication developed in the forms of mass media and computer science. (Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (Theory & History of Literature)*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984)

[347] The political theorist, Fredric Jameson on the other hand, views the postmodern condition as being a result of late-stage capitalism rather than technology. Working on a primarily historical basis, Jameson posits that the scepticism towards metanarratives is the result of the conditions of late capitalism's modes of production on intellectual labour, and as such is an expression of this experience. Additionally, in contrast to Lyotard's view of small narratives as being the preferred expression of social construction in an environment of technological mass communication, Jameson sees this as the blurring of discourse into a homogeneous whole, and argues this to be the result of corporate capitalism's encroachment into the cultural sphere rather than of technological and social change. Finally, for Jameson defining characteristics of postmodernity include a crisis in historicity and the development of pastiche, in which due to the un-anchoring of society from its historical and ideological roots, society moves from parody and its implied comparative judgement to social norms, to pastiche, a collage and juxtaposition of unrooted, ungrounded values. (Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (Poetics of Social Forms)*, (London, New York: Verso Books, 1992))

though often conflicting appear to fit the uncertainties of postmodern life better than an overarching universal concept (Lyotard).

For in contrast to these views, the articles in *AXIS*, *Mono*, *Hanako*, and *Brutus*, all point to almost an excess of certainty and confidence in Japan, the Japanese economy, and the destiny of the Japanese people. Rather than unsettled by the rapid developments and changes in technology and financial landscape, the mood of the Bubble is one of embracing change and revelling in an environment appearing to make good on the promise of post-war Japan – that of the continuing rise of the Japanese people from the ashes of defeat to a global acknowledgement of industrialised arrival. While new mass-communication technologies or the development of late-stage capitalism are, according to Lyotard and Jameson, meant to lead to the unfeasibility of grand narratives, in the case of 1980s Bubble Japan it served to compound a meta-narrative further – that of nationhood, validation of a cultural identity, a cultural system of work, systems of use, and Japanese economy, manifesting in the positive reinforcements of *nihonjinron*.

Thus, while 1980s Japan, flush with newly-liberalised credit, was able to surround itself with the latest in postmodern architecture and design, and new technologies were enabling its citizens to organise their lives along new postmodern lines of internationalism and plural lifestyles of leisure, it was also still fiercely engaging with an ongoing grand narrative of its own national destiny. However, this in itself can be viewed as a paradox that could only exist within a postmodern environment; for in its challenge to the dominance of modern Western global narratives, the rise of a Japan that could lead the international community is a discourse that could only happen in the context of a plurality of co-existing narratives. Similarly, the plurality with which Japanese people were able to adapt their lifestyles to suit their changing tastes, in which Western and international pursuits were enjoyed in conjunction with Japanese cultural and national values and identifications, was a possibility that could only be facilitated by the Bubble Economy and the opportunities it brought about.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen how *Mono* and *AXIS* magazines were at the forefront of the consumer magazine boom in Japan in the 1980s, aligned as much to industry and corporate business as to design and consumer goods. *Mono* magazine adopted popular trends in consumer culture in becoming more superficial, glossy, fashionable, and disposable, while *AXIS* had its own agenda of mediating the international whilst pushing for the interests of Japanese design and industry on the global stage.

These strategies of consumption and nationalist corporatist agendas can be seen in the composition of articles of the magazines. For example, articles in *Mono* are typically arranged in two different formats, of the list and the discursive article, both of which play into consumer strategies of displaying abundance, inspiring desire, imposing order, and encouraging consumption through easy facilitated acquisition and irrational consumption. All these strategies feed into the cycle of consumption and cultural acquisition that go into not just the production of capitalist economy, but also in the development of lifestyle in which being is not defined necessarily by actions but things, enabling it to be made and therefore self-consumed.

A prime example of this can be seen in how fashion is portrayed in *Mono*. All-pervasive but limited to accessories and other peripheral fashion items, it encapsulates the nature of consumer culture in the Bubble, in which its constant presence indicates its centrality to the economy and mainstream culture, whilst also being superficial and disposable in its importance and status. However, the increasing profile of fashion in the magazine reflects that of its rise in the Bubble, and especially men's fashion and beauty, as a new consumer market. In this the magazine acts as an important mediator of taste and information in which the acquisition of fashion as cultural capital is not just restricted to women, but open to its predominantly male audience. Furthermore, with the development of Japanese fashion and its increasing prominence in international circles, the prevalence of fashion in *Mono* magazine reflects the destabilising attempt by Japanese fashion to decentre the West's cultural hegemonic status and assert its own distinct identity.

Like fashion, technology also features prominently in *Mono* articles, especially automotive vehicles and consumer electronics. Here too the forces of consumption influence the nature of the articles, which are both superficial and all-pervasive, whilst also presented as abstracted and decontextualized for easier individualised consumption. In this and in its portrayal of objects as a nuanced range of trends and goods, the articles follow the decline of techno-advocacy in exchange for transgression and hybridity that followed the 1970s in the discourse of national culture. Furthermore, the portrayal of technology has a role in the imagining of postmodern lifestyles, in which following the fragmentation of context and the individualisation of the body from the essential to the diasporic, the abstracted forms of consumer electronic products become diversified and re-contextualised to create new references of imagined possibilities. In this postmodern context, implicit knowledge is key to understanding the images, a pact between image and audience which is necessary to access the lifestyles promised by the booming economy. Deliberate strategies within this are that of playfulness, the surreal, festival, transgression and absurdity – all of which echo the unusualness of the 1980s in Japanese 20th century experience, as well as that of the postmodern, in which the self becomes aligned with the unfamiliarity of the Other.

However, technology during this period was not comprised only of consumer lifestyles, but was bordered by more external tensions, in which the U.S. was attempting to liberalise and open Japan's technology, industry and economy to the international community, whilst simultaneously pressuring it to be closed to trade and exchange with the Soviet Union. In this can be seen not just the conflicting pressures on Japan to both liberalise and recognise protectionist allegiances, but also that of the wider struggle between a Western-dominant narrative and that of needing an alternative capitalist ideology that was going on within Western thought. Here Japan becomes embroiled in the discourse of ideologies, where its techno-nationalism, tied up with its narrative of national and economic success, as Japanese collectivism becomes positioned in opposition to American individualism. In this way, Japan, by breaking with the narrative of the pre-modern East, creates an alternative capitalist democracy that directly threatens the hegemony of Western-centric dominance of modernity and ideological leadership.

A final prominent category in *Mono* magazine is that of sport, in which modern Western sports take centre-stage. In this is not just the presentation of the sports, but importantly all the consumerist paraphernalia surrounding it, from guides to brands, clubs and accessories, to interest pieces on participants, strategies and even fiction, showing how sports were being subsumed into the lifestyle project. Other writers have explored this boom in modern sports, as linked to nationalist as well as economic and corporate agendas. However, further to this, the implication of skill, exercised physique, specialised equipment and grounds, and restricted membership meant that these modern sports were more suited to the investment and elitist development of Japan's cultural and economic narrative in the Bubble than more traditional ones within Japanese culture. Golf in particular represented a vast potential not only for social and corporate elitism and advancement through its exclusivity and the implication of cultural capital, but also of economic rewards through investment in property development and revenue in club memberships and equipment sales.

Following on from this concept of elitism through participation in modern sport, is *AXIS* magazine, catering to an educated and international elite through the medium of design as culture rather than just consumer lifestyle. The presence of the international throughout the magazine fulfils different agendas, from creating an experience of internationalised culture for the readers, to creating a hierarchy of countries. In doing so the magazine places itself as gatekeeper to taste creation and international design in which Japan is placed not only against the Western Other, but also within the hierarchy of Western and non-Western countries. Moreover, other motives of influencing Japanese policy can be seen in articles that examine foreign design policies on a national scale, in which Japan looks to international examples as a way of comparison and belonging. In this it goes against later concepts of *nihonjinron*, in which Japan sees itself as separate from the rest of the world, instead rather using the internationalisation of *kokusaika* as a way of promoting Japanese

culture and interests to the outside world. Other publications on Japanese management and culture appear to support this reading of an outward-looking nationalistic policy, of which *AXIS* can be seen as part of, in which Japanese industry, fashion, design and technology were attempting to positon themselves into the centre of the dominant narrative of global culture and modernity.

One of the ways in which Japan was positioning its centrality to the narrative of international design, was through discursive articles in which Japanese designers and opinions make up the majority. Through discourse and inclusion, Japanese readers were being invited to take part in the international conversation on design, rather than being prescribed to as consumers. Furthermore, by featuring mainly Japanese opinion, it was privileging Japanese discourse over others, especially in articles that relate design to economics, culture and society. In this, we can see the development of a national strategy of industrialisation, with design taking a prominent place in the next stage of change to an 'information society'.

This development of the 'knowledge economy' was making itself felt not only in the new openness of industry to outside designers and subcontractors, but also in the development and use of Corporate Identity (C.I.) in the rebranding and expansion of companies. By refreshing a company brand, C.I. was being used to both help internationalise the company and appeal to domestic consumers, as well as to promote a new sense of idealised lifestyles that was predicated on consumer aspiration and the international. With the promotion of a consumer society, this had created a dilemma whereby cultural practice had become unlinked from a national agenda of industrial and economic success, the more relaxed ideology of leisure and consumption directly opposed to the narratives of hard work and self-sacrifice. By combining lifestyle to corporate identity, and reframing it within the context of economic development, this was a way in which the tension between these conflicting cultural identities could be diffused.

However, while serving basic economic aims, consumer culture as lifestyle also served not only consumption but also production aims within the capitalist system in which aspiration and material satisfaction helped to generate better productivity and increased turnover of goods. Moreover, lifestyle, in its vague and multiplicity of definitions, could be used in the furthering of the national project of cultural status, in which 'life quality' of its citizens was as much part of a *nihonjinron* promotion of Japanese global ascension as its economic drivers. It is this that was behind the trends for new corporate cultural research centres into consumer lifestyles that flourished in the late 1980s, and which indicated a new creative approach to Japanese society and work that had its brief renaissance in the Bubble.

Consumer culture in the Bubble was thus presented through *Mono* using late-capitalist practices of fragmentation and abstraction, and performed through the technology and the body. Furthermore,

examining *AXIS*, we have seen how design can be co-opted for corporate and national interests, which against the backdrop of the Bubble Economy, took on the form of 'corporate-nationalism' that was becoming a dominant narrative within *kokusaika* discourse. Finally, despite containing many of the recognised traits within postmodernism, paradoxically the Bubble Economy further bolstered Japan's meta-narrative of national destiny, going against one of the main features of postmodern theory.

Chapter 3: Women, Work, Lifestyle

As the Bubble brought opportunities for reshaping economic, corporate and national values for a new international context, a highly visible demographic making use of the changes were young working Japanese women. Popularised as the '*onna no jidai*' or women's era[348], the 1980s were marked by the resounding phrase, 'Girls, be ambitious!'[349] The decade was also when the new women's magazine, *Hanako* was founded, in which travel and entertainment were its focus rather than the traditionally female-gendered interests of fashion and housekeeping, marking a new era in which women's consumption was placed centre-stage.

Hanako Magazine

First published in 1988 by Magazine House, *Hanako* is a popular women's magazine catering to the typical young working woman ('office lady'). As a lifestyle magazine for the Tokyo/Kanto region, *Hanako* lists detailed consumer information such as trendy areas, products, fashion, travel, shopping, gifts, restaurants, bars, cafes, and food. With a readership of around 300,000, it has the widest circulation of all the magazines in this study, and enjoys widespread popularity and influence, as noted in several studies on magazines and advertising.[350] Furthermore, as Rosenberger[351] notes, magazines play an important role in women's lives, working not only as prescriptive guides that aid women's journey through life and society, but also by presenting alternative images of lifestyle, provide a respite from the normal order. These included images of new liberated and self-oriented 'images of sociality', that incorporated representations of freedom, individuality, leisure,

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[348] Holthus in Wöhr, Ulrike, Barbara Hamill Sato, and Sadami Suzuki (eds.), *Gender and Modernity: Rereading Japanese Women's Magazines* (Kyoto: International Research Centre for Japanese Studies, 1998) p. 144

[349] This derives from the popular television serial, *Nonchan no Yume* (1988) which featured a central female protagonist, re-cast in the traditional male heroic role (Harvey, in Tobin, Joseph J., *Re-Made in Japan; Everyday Life and Consumer Taste in a Changing Society* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992) p. 145)

[350] Merry White, *The Material Child: Coming of Age in Japan and America*, (New York, Toronto, Oxford, Singapore, Sydney: Maxwell Macmillan, 1993) for example, notes how magazines such as *Hanako* have a trickle-down and trickle-out effect from their primary readership, to younger age groups and readers from outside the Kanto area wanting to keep up-to-date on trends in the capital, and Skov and Moeran (2009), citing Kinameri and Ezaki (1989) note how readers have even been seen clutching copies of *Hanako* abroad as their alternative tour guides. 'The fact that readers have been sighted carrying their copies of *Hanako* in New York, Hawaii, Hong Kong and other places they visit (on average they make two trips abroad each year) has even led to advertising inquiries from companies located in these tourist centres.' (Kinameri and Ezaki 1989, p. 269)' (Skov and Moeran, 2009, pp. 65-66)

'In the spring of 1990, *Hanako* listed eight pages of restaurants that serve tiramisu, an Italian confection, and after that listing, everyone, even Kentucky Fried Chicken and Baskin Robbins, came out with their versions of this sweet.' (White, 1993, p. 115)

[351] Rosenberger in Imamura, pp. 20-28

international sophistication, high status, and heterosexual attractiveness outside of marriage, playing on the growing consumer culture of individuality that marked the changing ideologies of the 1980s.[352]

Figure 16: Hanako, 1988, Front Cover Hanako Issue 29: 22/12/1988 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1988); Front Cover

By presenting consumption as an individual pursuit, women's magazines reflected the dichotomy of women's situations, providing an outlet from the social and familial pressures while playing on the tensions between home and work to encourage subscription to the status quo within a system of capitalist consumption. Of all groups, it was women in their twenties and early-thirties who were most receptive to messages of consumption and self-enjoyment, and magazines for this group offer liberation through leisure activities, cultural products and higher status through international sophistication. Although ultimately, they uphold and reinforce conventional norms, by focusing on the tension between freedom and marriage these magazines ingratiate themselves with readers, appearing to promote and voice women's personal struggles. *Hanako* can thus tell us not only about the superficial consumer choices of young working women, but also something of their struggles outside that sphere in their daily lives. Consumer choice as a strategy and ideology is a practice that offsets the difficulties faced by the magazine's readers, and provides the illusion of freedom through the use of consumption as transformation and viable alternative to the established order.[353]

[352] (ibid; Tanaka in Martinez, 1998)

[353] It is important to note however, that although women were present, and indeed an increasing demographic in the creative industries (for example, between 1985 and 1990, women authors increase from 7,371 to 9,371; reporters/editors increase from 16,287 to 20,235; artists 6,858 to 9,901; photographers from

Women and the Leisure Economy

In 1989 *Hanako* was in its second year of publication, and a closer examination of the series[354], shows that a significant part of the magazine is made up of advertising. At an average of 64.5 pages, advertising space makes up 37% of an average issue. While typical for Japanese women's magazines of the time[355], with over a third of the magazine being allocated to advertising it is clear that the consumption was an important part of the magazine strategy, and in line with general trends in magazine publishing.[356]

Advertising aside, at an average of 63% the rest of the magazine is allocated to articles (or 109 pages per 173 pages) that are further divided up into smaller sub-categories, the largest of which is travel at 29.5 pages per issue on average. Following this there is a relatively even split between the areas of food, fashion, going-out, and entertainment news (around 15 pages per issue). Articles on current events and products are relatively similar and smaller (around 8 per issue), and the smallest or least frequent articles are of interiors, cars and fitness activities (making up just under 3 pages per issue altogether, or 1.38, 0.9 and 0.66 respectively)[357].

Meanwhile, as outlined in Chapter 1, between 1985 and 1990, young women's wages had increased by around 19.03 percent, from an annual average of ¥4,128,600 to ¥4,914,600[358], while living at home with their parents, young women's income was almost entirely disposable; interview subject, Matsuo, for example, mentioned how she only gave a token ¥30,000 to her parents.[359] Moreover, between 1986 and 1991, time spent on tertiary activities per week had increased from 5.36 hours to 5.44 hours, and time spent on secondary activities such as work and commuting, had decreased

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5,879 to 7,773 and designers 51,257 to 68,916), they were still very much a minority in comparison to men's participation. Thus, while in 1991 female reporters/editors numbered 20,235, male reporters/editors numbered 69,528, and compared to 7,773 female photographers, there were 55,408 male photographers. This indicates that even in women's magazines such as *Hanako*, the content within would have very much still been directed by men working behind the scenes. (*26-19: Persons Engaged in Culture-Related Occupations (1920 – 2000)*, Statistical Survey Department, Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/26.htm> [accessed 23/01/2017])

[354] 21 issues: 31 – 76, (Tokyo: Magazine House) 12/01/89 – 07/12/89

[355] Tanaka (citing Koide (1992) in Martinez, 1998, p. 115) puts the amount of advertising in 1980s Japanese women's magazines at around 40%.

[356] Tanaka for example notes how Japanese magazines incorporate heavy advertising, bolstered by the presence of 'covert' advertising in the form of sponsored editorials and articles with hidden advertising messages, and 'tie-up' advertisements (Tanaka citing McCracken (1993) and Koide (1992) in Martinez, 1998, p. 116; also, Clarence-Smith in Cox (ed.) 2008, p. 61)

[357] See Appendix II, Hanako Magazine Data, p.213

[358] *19-36: Regular Employees of Contractual Cash Earnings, Scheduled Earnings and Annual Special Earnings by Sex and Age (Enterprises with 10 or more Regular Employees) (1985--2005)*, (Statistics and Information Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/19.htm > [accessed 23/01/2017]
See also Appendix IV, Japanese Women's Statistics, p.320

[359] See Appendix I, Matsuo Interview, p.9

from 7.54 hours to 7.46 hours[360]. While this may appear a small change, it is this coupled with the relentless promotion of leisure and consumption in media such as *Hanako* magazine that give the overall feeling that the Bubble was a time of consumer abundance and opportunity.

Furthermore, what can be taken from the overall composition of the magazine is that rather than culture, products or world events, leisure activities such as travel, shopping, eating, drinking, going-out and general entertainment are the focus for *Hanako*'s readership. Although Japanese women's magazines have been described as generally prescriptive[361] through this emphasis on leisure pursuits it appears that contrary to female magazine readers as passive consumers, young women in *Hanako* were presented as active outgoing participants in the consumer leisure boom of the Bubble. Moreover, this is something echoed by the type of images in which Japanese women appear in the magazine, for although a third depict women as working OLs (36.8% of images), the rest depict women at leisure, roughly equally divided up into glamorously appealing images (18.6%), women in outdoor sporting leisure (18.4%), and non-sporting leisure (26.3%)[362].

Of these consumer interests, it is travel that commands the greatest amount of space, forming the core of the special features and providing the theme to each issue. Of the regular general articles, although individually smaller, the leisure activities of food, fashion, going-out and entertainment collectively outnumber even travel, making up roughly another third of the magazine at a total of 58.41 pages, or 33.76% of an average issue. The small amount of space remaining allocated for current events, products, interiors, cars and fitness activities, indicates that current events and surprisingly material culture are less visible than the leisure activities of eating, drinking, shopping and travelling.

However, although leisure activities were evidently popular, it is notable how these are all restricted to consumer activities, while cultural and current events are notably lacking. In the push to encourage a domestic consumer market, Rosenberger[363] cites numerous government papers that emphasise women's importance in promoting leisure and consumption in an era of trade frictions, from government-supported cultural centres and study groups to deals on national railways and airlines. However, unlike the housewives behind the consumer boom of the miracle economy, it was young working women who were the new consumers with the disposable time and money to spend on the new leisure opportunities of the 1980s. Often living at home, young

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[360] *26-27: Average Time Spent per Day on Activities by Type of Activity and Sex (Weekly Average) (1976 – 2006)* (Statistical Survey Department, Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication), <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/26.htm> [accessed 23/01/2017]
[361] Tanaka in Martinez, 1998, p. 117-123; Clarence-Smith in Cox, pp. 51-57
[362] See Appendix II, Magazine Comparison, p.301
[363] Rosenberger in Imamura pp.18-19

women received considerable spending money, with an average allowance in 1989 of ¥65,000 per month, and 1984-1989 saw increasing numbers setting up independent homes with friends, rising 16% for those under 30, and in single households women's expenditure rose 12.2.% in the same period.[364]

Furthermore, placed against the national discourses of hegemonic citizenship that promoted the professional full-time housewife as the partner to the salaryman,[365] while the former occupied the domestic sphere and the latter the workplace, the young single working woman of the 1980s who both produced and consumed occupied a different role – that of the consumer-citizen. As such she embodied a potentially new form of female citizenship based on the principles of globalised capitalism in which her welfare was directly linked to the corporation instead of the father/husband; an ideology linked to capitalist consumer/producer rather than state-supporting citizen. Moreover, she not only was able to move seamlessly between the domestic and work sphere, but also was highly visible in public space outside of work, enacting her citizenship in the new outside spaces of the consumer-sphere.

For young unattached women, seen as inessential supporting players in the main narrative of national production and economy, were the perfect vehicles to take on the new strategies of individualistic consumption that would drive the consumer economy. Unlike men and their narrative of heroic self-sacrifice, or mothers and their responsibilities of family and nurturing, young women lacked mature adult status and were free to indulge in 'selfish' leisure pursuits such as shopping, travel and entertainment, incorporating the ideology of individualism through consumption. Furthermore, effectively shutout from work and financial independence through the limitations of a rigid hierarchy, leisure and consumption provides one of the few areas that women could search for freedom and individuality.[366]

However although created by the developing individualistic lifestyles of urbanisation and embraced by producers of consumer goods, these values of lifestyle and leisure are ultimately at odds with Japanese values of groupism and collective responsibility, with Western-influenced pursuits of leisure being potentially selfish and independent of others.[367] Thus the 1980s saw Japan struggling

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[364] Rosenberger in Imamura, p. 30

[365] In which she incorporated the 'good wife/wise mother' ideology of nurturer/provider (*ryōsai kenbo*) to his breadwinner/producer husband/father (*daikoku-bashira*). (Dasgupta in Germer, Mackie and Wöhr, 2014, pp. 256-257)

[366] Rosenberger in Imamura, p. 30

[367] McVeigh, Brian, J., *Life in a Japanese Woman's College: Learning to be Ladylike* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997) p. 58

with the concept of 'individualism', with a particular Japanese meaning becoming distinct from Western interpretation and its problems associated with Western capitalism.[368]

It is this contradiction of individuality with social responsibility that is at the heart of women's relationship with consumption through these magazines. Production-oriented government policies contradict the consumption-oriented self-centred images in magazines, and although they overlap, the roles of consumer and citizen prescribe different social orders based on different values. Some of these images also question the roles of women in the household, with 'Visions of pleasure, freedom, sexual attractiveness, and international sophistication conflict with female citizens' duties to reproduce and produce on both sides of the home/work divide.'[369] Confusing and conflicting, government policies simultaneously promote the positions of nurturer and low-level worker to women to promote high economic growth, while women's magazines promote the idea of play and the fulfilment of individual desires based on concepts of individuality, freedom and international status to sell goods and encourage consumerism. This is indicative of the duality of position that women have to occupy and perform – that of home-maker and low-waged worker, and free, leisured consumer, and one which echoes the duality of domestic and work space that women occupied.[370]

However, by encouraging women to play and consume, Rosenberger suggests that women's shift between home and work is made more palatable and co-opts or undercuts women's second-class citizenship at home and work with first-class position as consumers of goods and leisure. By encouraging staying at home as nurturer and having a life outside the home through work and activities, the government creates tensions for women which it then resolves by offering up consumption and the notion of independence. This keeps women motivated as a flexible secondary labour force that does not challenge the dominant paradigm.[371]

Duties, Barriers, Benefits

In order to understand the reasons behind women's consumption in *Hanako*, we need to contextualise it against the employment practices for young women in the 1980s. In 1986 the

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[368] Tanaka in Ben-Ari, Eyal, Brian Moeran, and James Valentine, *Unwrapping Japan: Society and Culture in Anthropological Perspective* (Honolulu and Manchester: University of Hawaii Press and Manchester University Press, 1990) pp. 78-80

[369] Rosenberger in Imamura, p.37

[370] Rosenberger in Imamura, p. 12

[371] 'It fits with women's responsibilities as citizens because it fuels economic growth and comforts international competitors, yet distances women from economic and political control except as consumers.' Rosenberger in Imamura, p.19

EEOL[372] was intended as an answer to international pressure for gender equality and fears of a labour shortage in light of Japan's expanding tertiary industry and declining birth-rate.[373] Although seeking to encourage women into the workforce, in reality the combination of the ineffectiveness of the EEOL and company practices moving to counteract any gender parity, meant that for the majority of women work was restricted to full-time lower-waged clerical work, from which early retirement was strongly encouraged upon marriage or later maternity. In this the EEOL can be seen as an extension of the conventional use of women's partial and low-waged work to support and maintain existing systems of male privilege.[374] Moreover, rather than levelling the field for women,

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[372] Equal Employment Opportunity Law – see Chapter 1

[373] Mary C. Brinton, *Women and the Economic Miracle: Gender and Work in Postwar Japan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, and Oxford England: University of California Press, 1993) p.234

[374] Since the mid-1970s the economy had consistently looked to its flexible low-waged female workforce to support its rapidly expanding industries. While the highest number of working women were in their 20s, the next age-group to benefit were women in their 40s, in the so-called M-curve of women's employment. However, it was generally only the first group who worked in offices in full-time employment, as the second group were generally re-entry workers with childcare/family commitments and therefore were part of the part-time low-waged labour force.

However the EEOL is a contentious policy, with some (Ohtsu, Makoto and Tomio Imanari, *Inside Japanese Business: A Narrative History, 1960-2000* (New York and London: M.E. Sharpe, 2002) pp. 227-228) seeing it as having some moderate success in enabling highly motivated women to progress into careers, while others (Mouer, Ross and Hirosuke Kawanishi, *A Sociology of Work in Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) p. 134; Iwao, 1993, pp. 179-180) see it as only of limited success and having different impacts depending on the circumstances of the individual; and some even see it as not having had an effect at all, or even worsening the environment for women's work in general, taking into account the steps companies took to counteract the effects of the EEOL in order not to effect the status quo (Brinton, p. 230; Rosenberger in Imamura, p. 15).

Anticipating the implementation of the EEOL in 1986, major corporations were initially keen to hire well-qualified female graduates in order to project a positive public image, and with a strong economy, the labour market was favourable for newly qualified graduates of both sexes (Kurotani, in Kawano, Roberts, Long p. 100; Nakano in Kawano, Roberts, Long, p. 170). This may have given the impression that the EEOL had an impact on women's employment, and indeed there is evidence to show that women's employment increased significantly through the 1980s and into the 1990s ('In 1973-96, for instance, women's employment in Japan increased by 8.94 million (from 11.9 million; an increase of 75.1 percent), while men's employment increased by 8.10 million (from 24.3 million; an increase of 33.3. percent). Thus, in percentage terms, growth in women's employment was more than twice that of men. As a result, the proportion of women employed against men employed increased from less than one-half in 1973 to two-thirds in 1996. It is clear that women have come to represent an increasingly important source of wage-labour in the Japanese economy.' (Itoh, 2000, p. 62)).

However, Itoh notwithstanding, as explored previously in this thesis (see page 46, footnote 110), women's participation in the labour workforce was more complicated than just a steady rise, with a marked increase between 1980 and 1985 (from 37.7 percent to 51 percent of labour), but with an overall increase in workforce (nearly doubling between 1980 and 1990), by 1990, women's participation decreases to around 40 percent, even as their numbers go up. (*19-2: Population 15 Years Old and Over by Labour Force Status, Five-year Age Groups and Sex (1920 – 2005)*, (Statistical Survey Department, Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications) <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/19.htm> [accessed 12/02/2017])

Thus, these factors were only temporary conditions that disguised a corporate system based on the duality of either high wages, favourable working conditions, employment stability, job security, equity and access to corporate structures and rules, and chances for career advancement – or low wages, poor working conditions, variability in employment and job stability, and little access to promotional advancement. (Kurihara citing Lam (1992, p. 32), 2009, p. 52) Instead the recruitment of women was used to continue and stabilise the internal structure of the corporate system that faced pressures of a lessening of available senior management positions, an aging population and slowing of job growth. Exempt from the seniority system, women were

it appears that the EEOL provided the impetus for more formalised, though coded, gender-segregated working, and in 1987 only 1.3% of professional track employees were women[375]. Even when women were on the professional track, they encountered gender bias in the form of resistance from male colleagues, being overlooked for company training or job rotation, and hostility from other women on the clerical track[376], showing that formal policies on gender equality were difficult to implement in the face of ingrained cultural bias. Furthermore, in addition to cementing informal gender bias into strategic and formalised structures, in the debate surrounding gender equality leading up to the EEOL, many protective measures for women at work (such as limiting overtime and allowances for menstrual time off) were repealed[377], thus showing how in some cases the EEOL was actively detrimental to women's working conditions, leading to some stripping of former protections for women that were based on gender-bias.

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little threat to the overall system and provided cheap and flexible labour that masked the problems of Japanese corporate management. As the Japanese tertiary industries developed, women, as a secondary and cheaper labour force stepped in fill in the shortfall, and by 1990 63.8% of working women were working in the tertiary industries, the majority of which were in clerical positions, benefitting in part from the technological innovations in information processing and ME automation that changed the labour skills landscape. (Iwao, 1993, p. 160; Ohtsu & Imanari, 2002, pp. 225-226)

[375] (Kurihara (citing Lam 1992, p. 131) 2009, p. 60). While large corporations were eager to be seen to promote equality in their workplaces, smaller companies were less so, and in the run-up to the EEOL defensive policies were implemented among companies seeking to mitigate the potential disruption of gender equality on the status quo of Japanese corporate practice. This resulted in the creation of a two-track employment system of *ippanshoku* (general track) and *sōgōshoku* (professional track), streaming new recruits. While seemingly professionally defined, these were in practice gendered career tracks, with women almost exclusively placed on the general (clerical) track, and the men on the professional track. Moreover, of these choices, in 1989 only 3% of all corporations offered both options to female employees. Among the larger companies of more than 5000 employees, this proportion translated to 42%, especially in financial and insurance-related firms, however many businesses offered only one of the two tracks, some limited the integrated track to only graduates of certain subjects, and some offered the chance to switch later on under certain conditions (Iwao, 1993, pp. 179-180); Brinton, 1993, pp. 233-4; McVeigh, 1997, p. 194).

Other informal measures aimed at dissuading female candidates for professional-track positions included holding separate hiring days for men and women (McVeigh, 1997, p. 194) and an active bias against hiring university-educated women, seeing them as being older than their college-educated counterparts and therefore likely to leave the job sooner in order to get married, or for the professional track, as a source of tension in the office and a waste of company training (Smith (in Martinez, 2014, p. 15); Brinton, 1993, p. 223, p. 234). This last point is of particular relevance, as women were often dissuaded from going to university, seeing it as more of a hindrance on their employment and marriage prospects (Brinton, 1993, pp. 233-234), and in 1980 82% of all four-year university students were men, while 90% of all two-year junior college students were women (Tanaka in Ben-Ari, Moeran & Valentine, 1990, p. 86). However, although beneficial for women applying for the clerical track, through this process of educational self-selection, many women were already disqualified from even applying to the professional track or indeed switching to it at a later date. In this way, a lack of sufficiently high educational qualifications would mean that women were effectively shut-out from professional career track jobs, and thus the seniority-based higher wages, job security and other benefits of 'corporate-welfare' as permanent and invested employees. (Brinton, 1993, p. 146)

[376] (Kurotani, in Kawano, Roberts, Long, 2014, p. 98, p. 100); Brinton, 1993, pp. 164-167

[377] Brinton, 1993, p. 230

Researchers such as Lo[378] and Ogasawara[379] have conducted extensive ethnographic surveys of the daily working lives of Japanese Office Ladies in late-1980s and early-1990s, noting how OLs were generally restricted to menial office tasks and administrative duties.[380] According to a government White Paper, in 1989 women's average tenure in the same firm was 7.2 years[381], and although their average pay would start off initially at 90% of men's, it decreased to 60% as men progressed in their careers[382]. In general, their role can be seen not only as an extension of women's traditional domestic role, but also as one aligned with that of being a supportive player and nurturer to men's primary role as producer and breadwinner. As such it falls within the wider cultural and corporate ideologies of Japanese groupism where strong hierarchies make themselves felt upon individuals within the group through prescribed and clearly defined roles.[383] In this the logic of knowing one's correct role is linked to the recognition of legitimate adulthood in society, while conversely an ignorance or flouting of the rules can indicate immaturity and unreliability.[384] Furthermore, with harmony and consensus being key to Japanese corporate management, the acceptance of low wages, low-level responsibilities and temporary status meant women did not generate tension in the office.[385]

While discriminated against, researchers have noted how the majority of Japanese women were also resistant to a career-track job. Despite their lack of access to career stability and higher wages, women often expressed relief at their exemption from responsibilities, recognising the hardship of men's lives in the corporate system, and indeed often pitying them[386]. However, it must also be remembered that women, whose primary role was still thought of as being a nurturer at home,

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[378] Lo, 1990

[379] Ogasawara, 1998

[380] These included preparing the office for the arrival of other members in the morning by boiling water for tea, switching on lights and appliances and wiping down surfaces; serving tea or coffee to the men; clearing up and washing utensils, surfaces and ashtrays, responding to the men's requests; running errands, delivering packages, messages and telephone calls; administrative paperwork; answering phones; and keeping track of and replenishing stationary and minor bookkeeping for the office expenditures.

[381] Mouer & Hirosuke, 2005, p. 133

[382] (Iwao, 1993, p. 190; Mouer & Hirosuke, 2005, p. 133) – In addition to the financial incentives provided by tax breaks for women to become housewives (see Rosenberger, in Imamura, 1996, p. 18), there was added pressure for women to leave as they got older, receiving the notorious *kata takaki* (tap of the shoulder) when they reached their late twenties, by a corporate system based on seniority wage increases and keen to keep female employee turnover high and wages low. (Ogasawara, 1998; Creighton in Imamura, 1996, p. 194)

[383] The OLs in Lo's study for example indicate their understanding of and commitment to their role in a greater social context as part of a larger network of relationships called *shigarami*. Similar to *amae* in which duties are performed out of obligation to a specific superior, *shigarami* is part of a larger obligation to existing work relationships, and is a strong motivating force for OLs to continue in their work roles. (Lo, 1990, pp. 48-49) Similarly McVeigh (1997, p. 48) makes links between the cultural heightened awareness of sympathetic interactions (as *omoiyari*) with the clear designation of roles and a responsibility to enact it correctly to demonstrate commitment to the group.

[384] (McVeigh, 1997, p. 52)

[385] (Iwao, 1993, p. 156)

[386] Ogasawara, 1998

were still required to fulfil their domestic duties of housework and family commitments, and work was either seen as a waystation on route to marriage, as future *sengyo shufu* or housewives, the salaryman's natural counterpart[387], or later as addition and not alternative to their household duties. With limited state provisioning and men's help in the home, women's social conditioning to accept the status quo and lower waged work[388] coincides with the complexity of women's choices that comprised not only of work but also domestic commitments, making women choose one over the other in a society where welfare is determined through corporate engagement[389].

However, although initially disadvantaged, women's status changes as they progress through their lives. Initial low-status is exchanged for higher as they marry and take on greater importance in the home, transferring their position in the workplace for higher status in the domestic sphere. This is increased as they become mothers, and often reflects the professional status of the working husband, explaining why women appeared less invested in pursuing a career and happy to give up their jobs on marriage.[390]

Instead, displaying a 'scepticism about the type of life working men lead'[391] and unwilling to struggle in a rigid patriarchal system, women on general track saw their work as only supplementary to their life-course, and taking into account their short tenure before marriage and domesticity, aimed to enjoy themselves in activities outside of work. A 1989 survey found that the primary reasons for young women working included to earn spending money (57%), to save money for the immediate future (54%), and to broaden their perspective and make friends (38%)[392]. During an interview with a former OL in the 1980s, Matsuo Mika, she indicated numerous times her unwillingness to work hard, and moreover felt great pressure to enjoy herself before marriage.[393]

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[387] (Iwao, 1993, p. 156, pp. 187-191); (Brinton, 1992, p. 92).
[388] Brinton's (1993, pp. 187-8)
[389] See also (Kurotani, in Kawano, Roberts, Long, 2014, pp. 101-102); (Iwao, 1993, p. 158) and (McVeigh, 1997, p. 193). Rosenberger notes that in a bid to improve equality with the EEOL, there were government pension reforms in 1986, discontinuing programs that benefitted women on part-time work, and thus encouraging full-time work for women over a longer period of time. (Rosenberger in Imamura, 1996, pp. 14-18) – However, with tax policies and income inequality still skewed in men's favour, as well as a lack of proactive encouragement for women to enter and stay in full-time work, these were only superficial measures and actively disadvantaged women, as they were only of benefit once in full-time work and able to keep pace with work and family commitments.
[390] Kurihara (2009, p. 57); Moreover, as Iwao observes, 'Japanese women have a tendency not to make an issue of equality when they do not feel that their individual situation is impaired. Equality as a noble principle to be championed is one thing, but the task of pouring tea is another and not an issue upon which they are willing to disrupt office harmony.' Iwao (1993, p. 203)
[391] (Iwao, 1993, p. 187)
[392] Survey for the Prime Minister's Office, 1989 (Iwao, 1993, p. 166)
[393] See Appendix I, Matsuo Interview, pp.2-22

Researchers have noted[394] that this issue of leaving and the necessity of securing a suitable marriage partner put much pressure on young working women in the workplace, and was identified as a source of underlying tension both individually and within the groups studied – that in addition to having the perceived disposable income to spend on the consumption of leisure, there was also an understanding that this financial independence was short-lived, and there was a pressure to enjoy oneself before marriage. It was this tension between work and eventual marriage with its implicit retiring to the domestic sphere that is implied in the consumer enjoyment of the *Hanako* readers, and which in turn echoes the observation[395] that women's magazines play on the tensions between work and home, created by the culture of flexible, short-term insecure employment.

As such, rather than concentrating on a career, clerical-track women were more likely to take into account a whole criterion of factors at the workplace, including fringe benefits, work atmosphere and after-work activities, as well as good reputation, recreational facilities and congenial colleagues who may be potential husbands[396]. In light of their short tenure, gender discrimination was less of an issue, although same-sex gender parity was more important, with tensions arising between women of different professional status as the effects of the EEOL and labour shortage made themselves felt on the employment landscape. In particular, Iwao notes that working conditions were of great importance to OLs, who, being more prepared to quit or change jobs, ensured a certain amount of care and consideration from their male superiors in placating them and creating a pleasant working environment.[397]

As such, '[w]omen tend to make full use of the benefits to which they are entitled, systems such as flextime, recreational facilities owned by the company, and paid holidays'.[398] This issue of time is important, as men's working hours were extensive and were said to not have a life outside of work. Thus mitigating the demand for the EEOL were mixed feelings about gendered work and the far from ideal lives that men lived, with women concerned about the impact of it on their free time for housework and leisure.[399] In their study, both Lo and Ogasawara describe OLs only working their

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[394] Ogasawara, 1998; Lo (1990); Bishop, 2005; Brinton, 1993

[395] Rosenberger in Imamura, 1996, p. 19

[396] Iwao, 1993, p.168

[397] Iwao, 1993, pp.166-167 At a time of labour shortage, this explains Ogasawara's account of OLs' power with male colleagues in a Tokyo bank, as well as accounts by my interview subject, Matsuo Mika, whose experience of being an OL at Matsushita HQ in the late 1980s included being indulged by male bosses on numerous occasions.

[398] Iwao, 1993, p. 207 – Although it must be remembered that this only works if most of the employees are male and work regular hours and overtime, meaning that tolerance for this is predicated on a system of men's overtime and dedication to work, as much as women's exclusion from it

[399] Brinton (1993, p. 232) Furthermore there was popular belief that women were in fact 'puppeteers' of men, utilising their status as investors of human capital to control men's wages (Brinton 1993, p. 233). This is something echoed by my interview subject Inoue, who in reply to the question of what he thought of women working, replied: 'Women didn't work!' (See Appendix I, Inoue Interview, pp.89-96)

required hours, unless requested by the men for extra help, and indeed killing time gossiping and eating snacks if close to the end of the work day.[400] Matsuo too, in recounting her experiences in the late 1980s cites the many liberties she took during working hours, from going home early in anticipation of an oncoming typhoon to napping with a hangover in the company's onsite doctor's surgery[401]. In addition to these personal accounts the taking of liberties with time and work are reflected in other popular mediums of the period, such as the manga, *OL Shinkaron*[402], where the OL characters are often depicted 'playing the system' by calling in sick, going for a cup of coffee in work hours when supposedly on an errand, and in one scenario, hiding in the toilet for the last few minutes of the working day rather than starting a new piece of work (Figures 17, 18). While giving the image of OLs an endearing mischievous and very human quality, these accounts also imply a freedom among working women that derives from their very exclusion from managerial track careers and thus positions of responsibility.

Figure 17: OLs taking liberties in the office in OL Shinkanron
Akizuki, OL Shinkanron, 1999, p.109

Figure 18: OL avoiding work in the office in OL Shinkanron
Akizuki, OL Shinkanron, 1990, p.5

[400] Jeannie Lo, *Office Ladies Factory Women; Life and Work at a Japanese Company* (New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1990)
[401] See Appendix I, Matsuo Interview, pp.2-22
[402] Risu Akizuki, *OL Shinkanron* (Japan, Kodansha, 1990); Risu Akizuki, (translators, Jules Young and Dominic Young) *OL Shinkanron* (Survival in the Office: The Evolution of Japanese Working Women) Vol. 1 & 3 (Japan, Kodansha America Inc., 1999)

It is this relative freedom from the pressures of work that enable the women in addition to their consumer power as disposable income earners, to have the time to enjoy the leisure activities demonstrated in *Hanako* magazine. For freedom through a lack of access to meaningful work can also be seen through the lens of Baudrillard's theories on production; by being barred from participating in the system of production in any meaningful way, Japanese women were able to by and large keep hold of that which becomes increasingly rare as the system of mass-production and consumption advances and labour and things become cheaper – that of time. Thus, the young women working in the 1980s could use their lack of investment in the workplace to leave work on time, afford to be ill, and take their full amount of holiday to enjoy themselves in the leisure opportunities of the Bubble, as opposed to what the men had to suffer at the workplace in order to build on their careers.

Furthermore, we can see the OLs' relative freedom with time as politically expedient. For despite calls by the Maekawa Reports of 1986 and 1987 to shorten working hours, changing the culture of extensive overtime and corporate responsibility that governed the working environment of Japanese companies was difficult for male employees, especially in the environment of economic boom. However, for Office Ladies with no careers to field, it was much easier to take full advantage of this directive, potentially making up the numbers of workers the working directive called for.

However, it must be remembered that this freedom from working responsibilities was a situation unique to young women in good office jobs and secure in their premise of being able to leave their jobs for marital domesticity. In this arrangement, they were free as single women from financial worries that included building a career and saving for a mortgage or pension. With many continuing to live with their parents, they were also freed from the pressure of rent and bills. An independent income could therefore be spent at their discretion.[403]

Freedom to Disagree

While undoubtedly women's liberties at work were predicated on exclusion from responsibility, it was also dependant on the goodwill and toleration of their male superiors. *OL Shinkaron* for example often portrays male workers as helpless in the face of the exuberant OLs and their dynamic irrepressible energy, and threaded through accounts of working OLs is the resignation of the men in allowing OLs what they want to do. This illustrates an apparent contradiction in which, while

[403] See Ogasawara (1998) and interview with Matsuo (Appendix I, Matsuo Interview, pp.2-22); Although this does not mean that this was replicated across the board, and Lo's (1990) research of OLs in Brother Industries in Nagoya shows how the OLs (and most other female employees) had a highly-restricted life living in boarding houses on site, living within a curfew-system designed to keep their suitability as prospective and respectable marriage partners intact.

being marginalised and subject to gender discrimination, working practices also created a situation by which women could display relative agency in an environment where they had little investment.

This meant not only being able to take free time to do what they liked, but also to have the freedom to express their opinions and challenge anything they found disagreeable. Compared to their male counterparts invested in the competition of career progression in the Japanese corporate system, accounts by Ogasawara[404] and Matsuo demonstrate instances where women openly complained and made their displeasure felt to the men when feeling aggrieved about a situation[405]. Moreover, not only were women able to express their thoughts more freely than the men, but sometimes the top management found their opinions and ideas fresh and useful.[406] OLs were thus able to use their lack of investment in the workplace to subvert it where they liked, and indeed there are indications that the good opinion of women was seen as more important than the Japanese corporate structure would suggest, with indulgent male bosses making allowances for women where they would not for the men.

Accounts by Matsuo, Ogasawara, and even the manga *OL Shinkaron*, show how OLs were vital to the smooth running of the office, from organising the paperwork, translating and helping to maintain good relationships between businesses[407], to influencing the careers of the men who were

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[404] Ogasawara's (1998, pp. 114-138) account of OLs shows how they were able to show their dissent in small numerous ways that subverted even as they continued in their duties. This depended greatly on their treatment by their male colleagues, and while favourable men received helpful and considerate efforts in their work for them, male bosses who inadvertently angered the OLs would receive only the minimal effort, ranging from being unhelpful and deliberately ignoring work, to outright refusal and enacting of *sōsukan*, a collective cold-shouldering.

[405] Matsuo Mika for example, although on the whole respectful and uncritical of her former company, in the below account displays her forceful nature when pushed, unafraid and unwilling to hide her open displeasure at the inconvenience of working in her uniform in the summer months.

Matsuo: We always put on a uniform, a Panasonic uniform, and even summertime season, always long sleeve, and jacket, and tight skirt, and walking back with high heels. It's the style you know, so we have to do that. And the air-conditioning office right, so no need to half-sleeves, always with long sleeves. But [conspiratorial hushed tone] one day I have to carry the big luggage to the next building, other men go out, so only me, I have to move the deliver, and with the long sleeve in the summer season. And I deliver the carry with me? So hot! And after working, come back to office… I really pissed off you know! [laughter] Take off my jacket! [more laughter] 'Noooooo…, what kind of…' I really pissed off, take off my jacket. Long sleeve. 'Why I have to wear long sleeve? I have to be in air-conditioned room only!' Everybody 'Oh, sorry for you, take a ice tea' [sympathetic voice] take care of me… [laughter] So funny but… that's another time. (Appendix I, p.10)

[406] Iwao (1993, p. 208) – (Although not so their immediate superiors having to facilitate office harmony and maintain order. As the Japanese corporate system depends on group harmony, the willingness of individuals to supress their feelings and immediate desire for expression was a key part of this strategic practice. However increasing numbers of women at work were, in addition to exposure to foreign alternative business practices, gradually challenging this norm (ibid))

[407] Matsuo: Ok, um, I'm in the overseas division, specially for the IMP projects, the International Market Place projects, and mostly translation of the documents, and also making a contract, and translating the contract into Japanese and English. My boss trained me how to make business letters, so I very much learned how do I write business letters in English, and also be familiar with the shop market from overseas, keeping discussing and join the party together to keep a good relationship with them, and we, after the opening of the IMP building, all of us round and round the building, say hello, and have any questions, or any complaints, just ask

assigned to manage them as a test of their managerial abilities. For in the extensive training process of the professional-track, men were rotated frequently between different departments and offices to receive experience of all areas of the company. General-track women by comparison were often the stable and constant presence who built up detailed knowledge of the day-to-day working practices of the office, and to whom men had to defer in order to get their work done. Adding to Ogasawara's account of OLs relative organisational power in the Japanese office, the interview with Matsuo uncovered additional and highly skilled work from the translation of contracts and writing formal business letters to ensuring the smooth interpersonal relations between company and clients through personal contact, implying that the OLs in Matsuo's role seemed to be the lynchpin around which the running of business operated. Furthermore, in addition to their administrative power, OLs were also able to wield political power through their influence on the career prospects of their male colleagues, and especially male managers sent to manage them, through open critique without fear of reprisals[408]. This is illustrated by the manga, *OL Shinkaron*, in which the different tactics used by a male career-track employee on job-rotation (Figure 19) demonstrates the pressure felt by male employees to impress the women of the office, with the tacit knowledge that this was all part of men's training by his superiors.

Figure 19: Young salaryman struggling to impress on transfers in OL Shinkanron
Akizuki, OL Shinkanron, 1999, p.56

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them. But always they are so very kind to us because we are Panasonic Group's employees right? So just buy me a cake, some tea for free, when I go to shops you know? I can join? Some good dishes? Or have a good cake? I got some weight. (laughing)
Ying: In your workplace, the women were doing the paperwork? (Matsuo: paperwork yes) And the men were doing a different work? (Matsuo: Saleswork or planning) And did you have to follow your male colleagues when they ask you to do things?
Matsuo*:* Yes yes. Co-operate together, move together. Also support the both in catering, or documentation.
[408] Ogasawara (1998) – Of course Lo's work on Brother Industries in Nagoya does mention how OLs often married other male company employees, and the fact that Matuso herself married a Panasonic employee shows that women did not feel completely alienated, but instead had a vested interest in supporting the company. Nevertheless, when it came to their own personal work, there was a kind of freedom of feeling that enabled OLs to take small liberties, daring their managers' wrath, and also enabled OLs to have a freedom of expression in displaying opinion and even open disapproval about the systems and people they worked with.

Gifts, Treats, Compensations

However more than merely allowing women to take small liberties in the office and relative freedom of expression, the importance of women's cooperation in the office made it necessary to placate them with active expressions of appreciation. Men were expected to buy gifts for women in the office, from the obligatory *omiyage* return gifts from business trips, to regular treats and snacks, often in the form of local foodstuffs such as pastries, cakes, fruit, crackers, tea or chocolates.[409] This was echoed by my interview subject, Matsuo, fondly recounting not only the extensive gift-giving she experienced as an OL in the 1980s, but also the constant payment for her food and entertainment by the men.[410] In light of their lower-waged status, these treats were taken as welcome tokens of appreciation that smoothened office relationships, and as Lo[411] notes, when having to pay for themselves, the OLs practiced frugality, bringing packed lunches or buying food from shops to eat in the office. It must be remembered however that this practice not only benefitted the women, but the giving of gifts, favours, and free meals and drinks is a way of fostering bonds between individuals and reemphasising the shared nature of community.[412] In this way, the gifts and paying for women allowed men to not only contribute to the continuation of harmony in the workplace, but in creating bonds of reciprocal obligation and the recognition of status, reconfirms and thus reproduces the structure of the established hierarchy.

It is this practice of women's 'privilege' in the Bubble Economy, through the benefits they accessed in work, leisure and society at large, that framed against the system of work we can see it for what it is. For although women's much touted opportunities to enjoy the leisure activities in the bubble were portrayed as the embodiment of the new freedoms, lifestyles and power of Japanese women, as a privilege it was based on the gender-discriminatory and unequal system of work in which they operated. The disadvantages women experienced as they started their experience of work were masked by the supposed benefits of men placating their low personal investment and disinterestedness.

Seen in a wider sense, although women appeared to be enjoying themselves and in doing so accessing all the leisure benefits of the Bubble without having to work, this in fact hides a real disparity between their enjoyment and benefitting from the real gains of the economic boom. For exempted from the responsibilities of work, women were also denied access to a career and the benefits a secure position, from guaranteed lifetime salary and higher wages to social standing

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[409] Lo, 1990, p. 44; Ogasawara, 1998; Millie R. Creighton, *'Sweet Love' and Women's Place: Valentine's Day, Japan Style* (Journal of Popular Culture; Vol. 27, Issue 3, (Dec 1993) pp. 1-19, Wiley Periodicals Ltd.)
[410] See Appendix I, Matsuo Interview, pp.2-22
[411] Lo, 1990, pp. 44-45
[412] Kurihara, 2009, pp.156-160.

among peers. This lack of labour and capital value thus translates into a lack of stake in the overall production economy of society, and by extension not having the claim to legitimate citizenship in a capitalist system[413] – something more tangibly felt in the exclusion women also had to the other benefits of the Bubble, such as inability to invest in property or assets, not being part of the financial system, nor being able to gain access to private and exclusive membership clubs where men would network to gain social standing. Instead in lieu of real capital, women's social capital was funnelled through men, and their subsequent ability to profit from a marriage partner of high financial, social or cultural capital, hence the importance of marriage among the young women employed in companies.

This exclusion from the systems of meaningful work, the production economy and the mainstay of the Bubble Economy is reflected in the type of leisure articles in *Hanako* magazine, for although there are abundant articles on leisure, these are skewed towards activities conducted outside home and work. Articles on products, interiors, design, current events, politics, the economy, and culture are far fewer in number, reflecting their readers' lack of agency in these areas. Unable to invest in a career, assets and without a home yet to furnish, the avenues for consumption of culture and things were actually very restricted. Instead in *Hanako* we see a real limiting of consumption to those intangibles of experience-based leisure, and where women were actually not able to invest in anything concrete, consumption becomes a metaphor for their lack of real participation in society, a token offering rather than anything of substance. As such the young women's colonising of public space is in fact a marginal advance, having primacy in neither the housewives' domestic sphere nor the salaryman's workplace, the intangibility of the consumer realm provides only temporary respite.

Additionally, there are wider implications for women's lack of access to the concrete structures of economic life as reflected in the nature of their earnings. For unlike men's earned capital, denial of access to the overall production economy meant that women were also limited in their ability to participate in the investment opportunities of the Bubble, including stocks, shares and property. Likewise, with such a small window of single adulthood, women felt the pressure to enjoy themselves before leaving work for marriage and domesticity. As such women's economic capital can be potentially seen as wasted capital, its value transient, of little transferable ability, and thus of no greater use to the wider strategic picture of national and international economic development. Instead the main value women's economic capital does appear to have is in its transference into consumer culture, becoming in this sense entirely disposable. In this way women's capital, like their labour, can be seen as co-opted by society in pursuit of the objectives of the consumer economy

[413] And this is something women struggle with generally, alongside the elderly and children, all of whom historically have struggled to legitimise their claim to citizenship in the face of their limited contribution in a system of capitalist production.

without having to give away any formal concessions. In both instances informality and the lack of official access to systems is key, with women's labour helping to support the men and prop up the structures of business and industry without the requisite increase in wages or stability. In this way their economic capital was used to grow a consumer economy as directed by government policies on leisure, lifestyle and a desire to informally reduce Japan's trade surplus, without risking the more valuable men's economic capital that could be more productively spent on national projects of economic development.

It is with this in mind that women's position as perceived beneficiaries of the Bubble Economy as consumers and workers can be reframed[414]. Whilst enjoying greater flexibility of time and disposable money, ultimately this could only be translated into the enjoyment of limited options created by the greater inequalities of the working environment. As such accessing the luxuries of time, leisure, and being treated by the men in the working environment becomes more than just proffered placations to ensure the smooth running of departments and appeals to the women's soft power. Instead they become necessary compensations to be taken by women as trade-offs for the acceptance of limited roles in the workplace and the real economy of society, but that which do not make up for the fact of their overall disadvantages in the system of production.

Moreover, informal practice of gendered benefits as compensation also reinforces the inequalities of the system itself. Predicated on the widespread acceptance of these as part of women's due rights, and in recognition of their disadvantage in the employment and economic system to which they were excluded, nowhere is this more apparent than in the misuse and liberties taken with time. In the system of capitalist production, as time becomes exchangeable for labour and thus is subjected to commodification, so time becomes a precious resource, and one that women had in more abundance than men. Just as men had more economic capital than women, so women had non-working time that they could spend on leisure. In addition, although men had the capability to lavish material gifts on to the women, importantly time was the resource that women could control, dictating not just how they could spend their leisure time, but also manifesting in the use of their time at work, and illustrating the lack of control the company had over their female workforce

[414] This is something that came up anecdotally with interview subjects, not only with Matsuo, in describing how much OLs like her enjoyed themselves in the 1980s Bubble, but also with some of the men, such as Inoue, who when asked what he thought of women working in the Bubble, replied that 'women didn't work!', indicating a belief that women as a whole were living a life of ease. Ogasawara too outlines how 'OLs are one of the richest groups in the society', able to spend almost all their earnings on luxuries due to living at home, as well as spending much of their leisure travelling abroad, or being invited to numerous parties and social events. (Ogasawara, 1998, pp.56-57) Overall this paints a picture of women being perceived as participants of enjoyment rather than contribution, with an emphasis on OLs as those with particular access to avenues of leisure and fun without yet the responsibilities of adulthood.

Thus, having the time in which to participate in the leisure options that the Bubble has to offer becomes not just indicative of women's lack of meaningful participation in work, but also can be read as active compensation for not being allowed to participate in said work. Furthermore, as an articulation of the autonomy that women had over their own time, the prescription of leisure can also be seen as a way of providing activities and a measure of influence over women's free time. However, this logic of time as compensation for economic and industry exclusion is not necessarily applied to all leisure pursuits equally, as demonstrated in *Hanako* magazine. While some activities are highly visible and prolific throughout the various magazine issues such as shopping, travel, eating, drinking, going out and entertainment, other leisure activities are in the minority. Some such as interiors and cars are areas of less relevance to young women not yet home nor car owners (although there are small articles that do cover cars and interiors, demonstrating a certain level of interest). However, it is the small amount of space allocated to areas such as current events and sport that show how divided leisure is along lines of access[415]. For where time and superficial disposable income are the only requirements leisure activities are offered in abundance, but where significant economic power or possession of assets are the requirements for club membership, influence or ownership, the reality is that options for these were much less obvious in *Hanako* magazine.

Framed against this working context, the fun and frivolity of the leisure pursuits in *Hanako* magazine can thus be seen as more than just superficial and commercial women's interest topics. Rather than merely a naked appeal to the new consumer power of women bolstered by the EEOL and buoyant economy, implied in the very nature of the magazine was an allowance of women the time and agency to pursue leisure that was denied the men. This was simultaneously predicated on women's exclusion from professional-track work that was at the same time placatory, allowing women enjoyment in much the same spirit as facilitating the smooth running of the office. Just as it was important for companies to provide additional benefits in the form of facilities, clubs and activities for the enjoyment of their female clerical staff, so the wider extrapolation of this in terms of leisure on a national scale can be seen in lifestyle magazines such as *Hanako*, in which the wide availability and variety of leisure options enabled women to feel included in the benefits of the economic boom of the 1980s, whilst also ensuring their continued cooperation in maintaining the status quo of female low-waged, low-status work to that of men's high-waged, long-term careers.

[415] Sport and fitness only make up an average of 0.66 pages per issue in *Hanako* magazine – the smallest recorded category (see Appendix II, Hanako Magazine Data, p.213)

Appearance, Work, Dress

However, although leisure was the underlying premise of *Hanako* magazine, this was only part of it; how leisure was presented to readers, and more importantly, how the readership was situated within that leisure is of equal importance. If we examine the frequency of images of Japanese women (foreign women being exempt for the purposes of this study as too Other) we can see that of these, 62% are from advertisements while 38% in articles. With such a large proportion of the magazine given over to advertising, this suggests that Japanese women were depicted to themselves more as general vehicles for consumption than as cultural or noteworthy specific entities/facilitators with their own agency.

The association and valuing of women on appearance alone is nothing new, and evidence of patriarchy permeates all aspects of women's lives, even in environments such as women's magazines where men are assumed to be absent at point of contact between image and audience. In this women's experiences of work were also similarly prescribed, with strict requirements on appearance where education and skills were less important. In their role receiving guests and serving in menial duties, women were meant to be front-facing for the company, able to 'present a culturally condoned front (*omote*) of comforting 'femaleness' to customers and clients'[416]. Known colloquially as 'office flowers' women's decorative qualities were to be valued as much as their administrative skills, with an emphasis on brightening up the office with their presence.[417]

Compared to their male counterparts in the ubiquitous salaryman suit, women were judged to more exacting standards, abiding by rigorous standards of uniform and etiquette.[418] In essence, the OLs were taught that they were 'a walking billboard' for the company,[419] or in other words their bodies co-opted for company use as valuable assets. Moreover, in addition to women's bodies, the language of democracy and nationalist discourse becomes appropriated for capitalist production, with women's menial duties in keeping the workplace clean and pleasant, greeting guests and organising men's affairs couched in terminology that elevates it to cultural production.[420]

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[416] Brinton, 1993, p. 152; McVeigh, 1997, p. 62.

[417] McVeigh notes the ideal OL qualities being 'clean, elegant, moderate' alongside terms such as *kagayaku* (to shine, sparkle, be radiant), *akarui* (cheerful, bright, sunny), *sawayaka* (refreshing) and *haki haki suru* (smart, quick, brisk) (McVeigh, 1997, p. 158)

[418] In her research on working in Japanese department stores in the 1980s Creighton (in Imamura, 1996, pp. 202-203) describes the rigorous standards of uniform and etiquette the women had to abide by, from accessories and stockings to make-up and hair.

[419] McVeigh, 1997, p. 158

[420] McVeigh (ibid) notes that the uniform is portrayed to OLs as an important marker of equality (as *tōitsubi* – "the beauty of uniformity"), as well as being important in a rigid cultural system of strict rules and roles for all participants.

National discourse on women's appearance is something that can be seen in other areas of women's work and dress, namely in their requirement for etiquette training; interview subject Matsuo Mika described with pride the 12-month etiquette classes (3 months daily classes, 9 months weekly), mandatory for Panasonic OLs in the late 1980s (Figure 20). These included learning how to walk appropriately, polite business speech (*keigo*), tea-serving, reception skills, and how to present oneself to clients and in business meetings, and she even amusingly described in one particular case having to act alongside other OLs as a model, presenting a line of clothing for clients.[421]

Figure 20: OL Matsuo Mika receiving her graduation certificate from Panasonic etiquette class. Matsuo, Osaka, Late-1980s, Photograph

For their duties, appropriate presentation of appearance was key, and frequently during the interview Matsuo would emphasise how beautiful and elegant the OLs in her division were, suggesting they were chosen specifically for their good looks in relation to the demands of the job, with the more money a department generated, the more important it was to have attractive OLs to reflect the value of the clients and the work. For example, things specifically mentioned by Matsuo were how OLs in the property and investment division of Matsushita had the 'prettiest [uniforms] in the group's company. Because MID, Matsushita Investment Company spend so much money', were selected for their taller-than-average height, slimness, beauty, and were required to wear make-up as part of their job, 'Very important for business, no makeup, is *damme* [forbidden]. *Damme desu* without makeup.'[422]

[421] Appendix I, Matsuo Interview, pp.2-22

[422] Matsuo: Yes, yes, typical. And especially Matsushita centre company has original ladies' wear, using the most prettiest in the Panasonic Group. (Ying: Oh really? How did you know?) Other Panasonic Group told me

In this account of typical attributes required of OLs, we can see Smith's[423] observation that traditional feminine values of obedience, gentleness and charm coincide with the requirements of ideal marriage partners, and by displaying these qualities, not only were women ill-equipped for the serious struggle of the workplace, but essentially this femininity provided no threat to the dominant male order.[424] 'What will fit her for one ideal role by definition unfits her for the other.'[425] However, more importantly, these traditional feminine values are conflated with essential 'Japaneseness', and beauty and ladylike behaviour become the markers of a good Japanese woman that OLs are expected to perform.[426]

Thus, beauty and femininity, performed as much as embodied[427], were displayed through more than just appearance, but a behaviour mediated by a constant awareness of being seen by others.[428] In addition to appropriate speech, OLs' body movements such as gestures, walking, sitting, bowing, were all incorporated into learning how to appear through the body,[429] and lifestyle magazines were a key site from which they learned how to act and appear. Lo[430] notes how there were two main styles among the OLs of her study: that of the *ojōsama* style and the *burikko* style, both cultivated through intensive study of magazines.

Referring to a ladylike appearance, OLs favoured the *ojōsama* style as a marker of sophistication and upper class sensibility, delicacy, subtlety and sophistication often used to construct notions of Japanese respectable and desirable femininity.[431] However it must also be noted that the methods by which women were shown how to be sophisticated were primarily superficial and commercial in nature, as Tanaka[432] observes – that despite the use of 'intelligence' in Japanese advertising to

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that. They told me that your Matsushita Investment Company, MID, we call MID, group so pretty, mine so pretty uniform, yours is prettiest in the group's company. Because MID, Matsushita Investment Company spend so much money, and they also sell the property right? And guests have to spend so much money. That means we have to be more polite you know, to spend the big money, to be spent the big money to us right? So that's why we have to study more manners, and politeness, and also keep beautiful and working nicely you know? They are working nicely. Funny things you know, Office Lady working nicely, but…
Ying: So there was pressure to look nice? To stay slim?
Matsuo: Yes. Because we are selected, we are already selected you know? Mostly woman are slender, high, tall, higher than average, everyone so beautiful.
Ying: But every day for work, you felt you had to also put on makeup, and do your hair nice (Matsuo: Sure, of course, of course) because it was important for…
Matsuo: Very important for business, no makeup, is *damme* [forbidden]. *Damme desu* without makeup.
(Appendix I, Matsuo Interview, p.10)

[423] In Martinez, 2014, p. 19.
[424] McVeigh, 1997, p. 194.
[425] Smith in Martinez, 2014, p. 19.
[426] McVeigh, 1997, p. 83, p. 169.
[427] Kurihara, 2009, pp. 105-110.
[428] McVeigh, 1997, p. 168.
[429] McVeigh, 1997, p. 159.
[430] Lo, 1990, pp. 42-43.
[431] McVeigh, 1997, p. 82.
[432] Ben-Ari, Moeran & Valentine, 1990, pp. 83-87.

women, this strategy was largely limited to appearance and desirability, achieving high status through social capital, the consumption of culture and organisation of the household. This is something that can also be observed in the *Hanako* issues in which only a third of the images depict Japanese women as working OLs (36.8% of images), while the rest depict them in various states of leisure, of which 18.6% appear glamourous. Thus, we can see how despite the claims of *onna no jidai* (women's era) in respect to women at work and the EEOL, magazines were still reproducing the standardised tropes of women as more decorative than essential contributors to the production economy.

Burikko style on the other hand refers to an exaggerated and regressive form of femininity, in which by playing with concepts of cuteness through the collecting of toys and speech, childish stereotypes were played up to in order to create a sense of desirable innocence, primarily aimed at men.[433] This notion of innocence via cuteness in young women is particularly interesting for its dynamic as a modern Japanese form of adult femininity that, following its inception in the late-1970s, broke free from both the traditional housewife model and that of the sexualised Euro-American woman.[434]

Thus, as we can see, the relationship OLs had with their appearance and society was complex, negotiating the different territories of professional work, desirability for marriage, and femininity as dictated through cultural identity. While traditionally women were consistently being told to prepare for marriage and domesticity, working women were perceived as glamourous, respectable and refined with an access to a privileged lifestyle, especially OLs with their disposable income and time.[435] In this sense OLs were thus representing another kind of negotiated femininity within the realm of Japanese female identity – that of refined and respectable, but also professional and productive femininity.

In this way, we can view the corporate appropriation of Japanese women's appearance as one of two things. The first is a co-opting of women's bodies, as a collection of malleable parts that can be managed in order to further the aims of corporate capitalism whilst providing little threat to the patriarchal system. The second is of a strategic renegotiation of Japanese femininity in which OLs represent a modernised and yet still Japanese form of femininity that is untainted by Westernised behaviour. For traditional Japanese forms of femininity such as being modest, demure and retiring are at odds with the practicalities of business, and yet Westernised forms of gregariousness are too Other in their outspoken directness. By being taught to be warm, charming and cheerful, OLs are

[433] However as Lo notes, many women were unable to maintain the pretence, dropping it and talking in loud voices, discussing news, fashion and gossiping about fellow male colleagues in their absence (Lo, 1990, pp. 42-45.
[434] Miller, 2006, pp. 24-26.
[435] Kurihara, 2009, pp. 110-111.

carefully renegotiating the boundaries of Japanese femininity in an attempt to resocialise it in the context of work.[436]

However, between the constraint and inconsistencies of appropriate corporate behaviour and more globalised messages of independence and individualised leisure, working women faced inherent contradictions, played out in lifestyle magazines as much as in the company uniform. In *Hanako*, shopping as a leisure activity is peppered throughout the average magazine issue, featuring not only in stand-alone pieces, but also as a significant activity in the travel and going-out special feature articles. Of these, fashion items such as clothes, shoes, bags, and the shops in which to buy them, feature with regularity, making up an average of 15.6 pages per issue (not counting those within the travel section), or about 9%, rivalling articles dedicated to food, going-out and entertainment[437]. While of course still playing up to gender normative tropes of female leisure as consumption of apparel (shopping), it also highlights how the body was also a site of contested territories of identity, culture, status and self-determination. For while Rosenberger[438] sees magazines, through their emphasis on appearance and body, as contributing to the reinforcing of women's biological determinism as homemakers and nurturers, I would argue the opposite. That in the expression of active and outgoing women, independent of men (and the magazine generally features few men), and forward-facing to the camera, 1980s images of women in *Hanako* were inspirational to their audience as renegotiated but still Japanese forms of femininity, possible in the new consumer spaces of the economic boom.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the body-con dresses so popular in the Bubble. Unlike the gender-challenging androgynous creations of Japanese fashion designers on the international scene such as Kawakubo and Yamamoto,[439] body-con dresses, taking their name from the popular body-conscious style, were tight, slinky numbers, designed to emphasise feminine curves. While to all intents and purposes they appeared to re-emphasise gender norms rather than break them as Kawakubo seemed to do with her designs, seen against the context of traditional requirements of Japanese femininity, the bright colours and boldly announced sexuality of the body-con style (so often seen on the partying disco scene) were a direct challenge and renegotiation of the modesty and demureness required of Japanese women – and in a sense more so than the self-exoticised repackaging of oriental mystique that 1980s international Japanese design seemed to invoke and the West so enthusiastically embraced.

[436] McVeigh, 1997, pp. 170-171.
[437] See Appendix II, Magazine Comparison, p.302
[438] Imamura, 1996, p. 20.
[439] See Kondo in Tobin, 1992, pp. 189-193

Thus, while the conditions in which women were performing gender and appearance, in both the workplace and in leisure culture through magazine and informal dress, appeared to induce even more gender-determining forms of femininity, these in fact can be seen as both opportunities for change and contestation for women. For though the company uniform and established modes of behaviour seemingly reinforced feminine norms of politeness and deference, these in fact masked the true renegotiation with femininity that women had to perform to be effective in a business environment. Likewise, the feminine and sexually mature female fashion in lifestyle magazines, alongside the *ojōsama* and *burikko* styles popular among young women, were in fact expressions of experimentation and playing around with traditional expectations of Japanese female behaviour.

While it can be argued that both areas still use and commodify the female body in the aims of capitalist production, the leisure opportunities in *Hanako* magazine thus occupy a dual position. At its most basic level, appearance and appearing in the promotion of leisure can be seen simply as an act of consumption in which women are encouraged to use their body as a vehicle for consumer and leisure culture. However, as an extra-curricular activity, leisure can also be viewed as an act of agency, in which the woman retakes control of her body outside the constraints of work and society. Eating, drinking, wearing revealing clothes and engaging in exuberant behaviour all become acts that go directly against traditional norms, paid for by the woman's own independently earned financial capital.

As a final note, Figures 7, 8 and 9 feature three advertisements placed in *Hanako* in 1989. Advertising for a job magazine called *Torabāyu*, they show three differing images of women encapsulating the changing dynamics of women's appearance and their bodies as sites for struggle. Figure 21 shows a career woman, dynamic and self-confident, her utterance 'If it is said "you are the property/asset of our company" I often wish to say such things as "hey, tea!"'[440] both expresses the ambition of women to be taken more seriously at work, and yet is also a criticism of the existing Japanese corporate culture in which she questions the company's commitment to gender equality, challenging it through demanding tea and mocking its application of the term 'asset' to women.

[440] '*Kimi wa wa ga sha no zaisan da' toka icchatte, 'oi ocha' nante yoku iu yo nā*
「キミは我が社の財産だ」とか言っちゃって、「おいお茶」なんて よく言うよなあ。
Hanako Issue 48: 18/05/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989) p. 36

Figure 21: Career woman in Torabāyu advertisement
Hanako Issue 48: 18/05/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989) p. 36

In the second advertisement (Figure 22) a worried young woman looks off-camera while the copy, articulating her thoughts reads, 'The changing room is the place to put away real intentions. It is my situation'[441], while the third (Figure 23) featuring a hyper-sexualised woman, confounds bias with the copy 'It has become apparent to me that I don't need to depend on my appearance for the company'[442].

Figure 22: Introspective woman in Torabāyu advertisement
Hanako Issue 47: 04/05/1989 and 11/05/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989) p. 148

[441]*Kōishitsu wa, onne o shimasu basho de mo arimasu. Watakushi no bāi.*
更衣室 は、ホンネをしまう場所でもあります。私の場合
Hanako Issue 47: 04/05/1989 and 11/05/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989) p. 148
[442]*Kaisha de wa, mikake ni yoranai watashi ni natteiru no da.*
会社では、見かけによらないワタシになっているのだ。
Hanako Issue 66: 28/09/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989) p. 127

While in some ways these could be read as a positive assertion about women and appearance as part of their economic value, the women's expressions and refusal to engage with the viewer through indirect gaze off-shot, underlie these with real ambiguity.

Figure 23: Defiantly sexualised woman in Torabāyu advertisement
Hanako Issue 66: 28/09/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989) p. 127

However, for a job magazine for young women, none of these images show the 'typical' OL corporate culture tried so hard to create, but instead display a diversity of experience in which the above statements about women's value, 'situation' and 'dependency' all speak to a greater awareness of emancipation and self-realisation as played out in the feminine space of the body. Meanwhile around them, women were still being labelled 'office flowers', controlled through standardised uniforms, corporate etiquette training, and ultimately through nationalist cultural definitions of Japanese femininity – all out of step with the modern debate on Japanese womanhood. While difficult to ascertain whether these advertisements are reflective of real OL experience, what they do in *Hanako*, the popular OL magazine, is articulate a different envisioning of OLs, indicating that more than just the superficial uniform-wearing, tea-making Office Lady, there were real women underneath who had to negotiate the complex environs of the workplace through their actions, manner and dress like anyone else.

Sporting Women

'Most golf and country clubs in Japan bar women from becoming members, while a few will allow women to play but only if a written request is made. As recently as 1987, a male judge granted a man a divorce from a religiously zealous wife, on the ground that she had been neglecting her housework.'[443]

[443] Tanaka in Ben-Ari, Moeran & Valentine, 1990, p. 94

The above observation tells us a lot about conventional attitudes towards women and sport; that sports, especially masculine sports such as golf, were for men, and women belonged indoors doing housework. Yet in *Hanako* magazine we find that although a relatively small part[444], sport nevertheless features regularly. Of greater note are the images of Japanese women engaged in sport, which make up around 18.4% of all images[445]. Compared against the articles on fitness, it appears that sport portrayed to women in *Hanako* was mostly advertising rather than article-led, and although not necessarily encouraged to engage with sport through articles, women were being sold it through advertising, imagined as active participants.

Although the 1980s are known for the economic upheavals of the Bubble Economy, during this time as part of the consumer and leisure boom was a sport and fitness boom. Following a political consensus in the early-1980s to reform Japanese society across multiple levels,[446] sport in Japan became increasingly privatised along similar trends in international sport. Undeveloped sports in particular benefitted from increased private investment, and between 1981 and 1991 sports clubs increased from 148 to 1468 – an increase of nearly 10 times, at a rate from over 30 established per year in 1982 to over 200 per year in 1991. Correspondingly market scale increased from over $2 billion to reach a peak of over $30 billion between 1982 and 1991, indicating the money to be made in this lucrative 1980s market.[447]

However, rather than targeting men, privatised sport was aimed at women, shedding traditional masculine associations to adopt a feminine strategy that linked beautification and travel with sport and fitness, and disseminated through advertising and fashionable commercial products.[448] Thus while ostensibly building on new trends for individuality and 'spiritual richness',[449] we can see how once again women's exclusion from official economic life was being utilised in the privatised commercial sphere for informal benefits to the consumer economy.

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[444] an average of 0.66 pages per issue, or round 0.38% of the total magazine (see Appendix II, Hanako Magazine Data, p.213)

[445] or an average of 4.33 pages per issue and 2.5% of the magazine overall (See Appendix II, Hanako Magazine Data, p.211)

[446] (and that gained pace with the neo-liberal economic policies of the mid-1980s exacerbated by the Plaza Accord)

[447] Takayuki Yamashita, *The changing field of Japanese sport,* in Maguire, Joseph and Masayoshi Nakayama, (eds.) *Japan, Sport and Society: Tradition and change in a globalizing world* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006) pp. 159-163

[448] Yamashita in Maguire and Nakayama, 2006, p. 164; Laura Spielvogel, *Working Out in Japan: Shaping the Female Body in Tokyo Fitness Clubs* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), pp.45-48, for example examines the rise of women's aerobics in Japan that started in this period as an American import, and cresting the wave of this fitness boom, aerobics culture in the 1980s incorporated the exoticism of foreign instructors and practices with the consumer lavishness of fashionable clothing, products, equipment and luxurious facilities.

[449] Yamashita in Maguire and Nakayama, 2006, pp. 162-164; Spielvogel, 2003 p. 41

However, images of women enjoying themselves in contexts outside of the traditional sphere are nonetheless acts of subversion, providing women with examples of how to resist social and familial pressures.[450] By incorporating the enjoyment from the images into their own lives and using consumption of goods and services to give the illusion of freedom, taste and a distinct identity, women reimagine themselves, challenging norms around their activities and leisure time even to the point of invading traditional men's spaces such as golf courses and bars. Thus, even though sport was being presented to women as commercial consumerist images, its presence was important as a way for women to redefine and resituate themselves as physical active beings.

This is something that is represented well in the spread of sports in *Hanako* magazine. Of all the sporting images, golf leads at 42.76% (although of course this translates to an average of 1.05% per issue). Following this, cars (13.19%) are the next largest category, and then dancing (9.89%), gym (6.59%), tennis (6.59%), swimming (6.59%), scuba diving (4.4%), sailing (3.3%), kendo (2.2%), cycling (2.2%), running (1.1%), jet-ski (1.1%), and horse riding (1.1%)[451]. While the actual percentage of space occupied in an average issue is relatively small, it tells us that women were being presented with a range of modern sports in which they were imagined as participating in[452]. Whether they were really able to varied according to the sport[453], with golf being notoriously difficult in terms of access to club memberships, while my interview subject, Matsuo, recounted fondly her experiences of using the Panasonic club facilities, that included tennis and even ski resorts[454].

In this it must be remembered that OLs were extremely privileged when it came to access to sport, as indeed most types of leisure. Rich in time and disposable income while lacking in responsibilities, they were an ideal market to take up these new forms of leisure that included not only activities, but also equipment, facilities, club memberships and fashion. Moreover, as company employees they would have access to benefits in the form of facilities, resorts, organised activities, and through their colleagues, networks of friends with whom to socialise, and in this way informally benefit from

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[450] Rosenberger in Imamura, 1996, pp. 26-27.

[451] See Appendix II, Hanako Magazine Data, p.229

[452] A government statistical survey on leisure activities for example, lists mostly 'modern' sports, as opposed to more traditional Japanese sports. These include: basketball, softball, volleyball, table tennis, tennis, badminton, golf, 'gate ball', bowling, fishing, swimming, skiing/snowboarding, jogging/marathon. (*26-25: Participation Rate in Leisure Activities by Type and Sex (1976 – 2006)*, Statistical Survey Department, Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/26.htm> [accessed 23/01/2017])

[453] While women's participation trendy sports such as tennis, skiing/snowboarding and golf increased, for others such as softball, volleyball, table tennis and badminton, all had a slight decrease. Moreover, although golf saw the biggest increase in participation (from 3.5 percent in 1986 to 8.2 percent in 1991), this was still a very small proportion when compared to men's participation (20.7 percent in 1986 and 28.0 percent in 1991) (*26-25: Participation Rate in Leisure Activities by Type and Sex (1976 – 2006)*, Statistical Survey Department, Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/26.htm> [accessed 23/01/2017])

[454] See Appendix I, Matsuo Interview, p.5

the economic prosperity of Japanese companies in a 'trickle-down' effect from corporate investment.

Furthermore, in the type of sports presented in *Hanako*, we can see the effects of globalisation and economic policy coming together. While surfing a trend, these sports also require both new equipment and extensive developing of land and facilities, coinciding neatly with the wider economic strategy of increasing consumer demand, reducing trade tensions and the trade surplus with Western economies, and opportunity for land redevelopment in the land and investment opportunities that economic liberalisation enabled.[455] In fact the sporting boom was so significant in Japan, that we even see advertisements using sport to sell relatively unrelated products. In some of the advertisements in *Hanako*, golf is used to sell items as diverse as make-up and rehydration tablets, showing that rather than wanting women to be active participants in its practice, sports that captured the popular imagination such as golf were useful stylistic vehicles to sell products to women.

However, although at one level this may seem like another way in which women's disposable income and time were being co-opted for use by wider economic demands, even while they were being excluded, seen in another light it was also part of a wider trend of women redefining themselves as liberated bodies. Miller[456] notes how the desire for self-improvement through fashioning and changing the body has changed directly through policies effected in the 1980s; that from a moral duty to the wider community, the encouragement for consumerism and individuality led to more materialistic desires for self-enjoyment, pleasure and competition in society. Moreover, while previous standards such as family status, abilities and character were part of the construction of ideal femininity, with the increased exposure to media and materialistic values, the body became increasingly important in the construction of identity.[457] Thus 'For women, new beauty ideals symbolise the collapse of the patriarchal cult of innocence and the expression of self-confidence and adult sexuality. For both men and women, new beauty work represents nonconformity and the

[455] The fact that popularity of foreign sports went wider than *Hanako* can be seen in the number of *Asahi Shimbun* articles of the period; between 1985-1998, while golf was the most dramatic – with articles more than doubling between 1985 and 1988, trebling by 1991 to over 3000 articles, before stabilising around the 2500-2800 article mark – articles referencing tennis and skiing also dramatically increased from 1987 onwards before slowing down in the mid-1990s. (See Appendix III, Asahi Shimbun Data, p.311) This is something echoed in participation statistics, with women enjoying golf going from 3.5 percent in 1986 to 8.2 percent in 1991, before levelling off to 5.8 percent in 1996. Tennis too increased from 10.8 percent in 1986 to 11.5 percent in 1991 before falling to 8.4 percent in 1996, while skiing went from 7.0 percent in 1986 to 10.7 in 1991 to fall slightly to 10.5 percent in 1996. (*26-25: Participation Rate in Leisure Activities by Type and Sex (1976 – 2006)*, Statistical Survey Department, Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/26.htm> [accessed 23/01/2017])

[456] Laura Miller, *Beauty Up: Exploring Contemporary Japanese Body Aesthetics* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 201-205.

[457] Miller, 2006, p. 27.

importance of the body and beauty in modern identity construction. Young people may simultaneously reproduce normative femininity and masculinity while contesting notions of ethnic homogeneity.'[458] As such we can see the sporting boom among women as the start of this redefinition of the female body, materialised in the fashion for not only body-conscious dresses, but also the highly sexualised female body of the 1980s, complete with bold make-up, accessories and aggressively powerful hair. Sport and fitness were the means by which the female became not only thin, but also fit, redefining herself in the process.

Travelling to Find Oneself

According to Tanaka,[459] women's lifestyle magazines from the 1970s onwards have been said to be responsible for the dramatic increase in travel amongst women, giving rise to the label the '*An-Non zoku*' (An-Non Tribe), named after the popular women's magazines, *An-An* and *Non-No*. While unclear as to whether women's magazines instigated the travel or merely catered to an existing trend, the 1970s and 1980s saw an unprecedented rise in Japanese outbound tourism, rising from 0.7 million in 1970 to over 10 million by 1991.[460] Furthermore, with numbers doubling between 1985 (5,516,000) and 1990 (10,997,000)[461], we can see how the largest rises happened during the economic bubble.

While building on the 1970s trend of rising wealth and influence of travel campaigns[462], the rapid increase in outbound travel in the 1980s can be attributed to a specific combination of economic factors and government policies. These include the convergence of official desire to reduce the trade surplus and offset the tensions between Japan and the international community, encourage an expanded consumer economy, the ballooning wealth of Japanese citizens and the sudden increase in international value of the yen – all of which created the perfect conditions for tourism to occur. Active government policy also encouraged Japanese tourism (the Ten Million Program that looked to increase outgoing Japanese numbers to ten million by the 1990s[463]), while the rising profile of travel was also reflected in the newspaper, *Asahi Shimbun*, with articles mentioning travel doubling between 1987 and 1988 from 1059 to 2137, before stabilising around 3000 articles in the

[458] Miller, 2006, pp. 204-205.
[459] In Martinez, 1998, pp. 116-117
[460] (ibid)
[461] Prime Minister's Office, White Paper on Tourism, FY 1991 (Summary), Tokyo, Government of Japan, Prime Minister's Office, 1992
[462] Such as the Japan National Railway's 'Discover Japan' (Ivy, Marilyn, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995) pp. 29-65).
[463] Leheny, David, *The Rules of Play; National Identity and the Shaping of Japanese Leisure* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003)

early 1990s[464]. In this way, we can see how travel transferred from being a leisure and lifestyle inspired government policy, to being part of active public discourse and participation.

In 1991 a government paper on tourism observed that in outbound tourism, men in their 40s made up the largest group (1.7 million and 26.2% of all male travellers) while women in their 20s were the largest segment (1.64 million, 39.8% of all female travellers), with sharp increases in the number of women travelling.[465] While doubtless the middle-aged men were on business, it is clear that young adult women made up a significant proportion of the tourism market. This is something reflected in *Hanako* magazine, which from its inception, was known to be a staple guide of information for its readers travelling abroad[466]. In the issues studied, next to advertising, travel makes up the next largest section and the largest of all the articles, and at an average of 29.5 pages per issue (or 17% of the magazine), it is nearly double that of the individual categories of food, fashion, going-out and entertainment and more than three times that of the smaller articles[467]. Many of these travel articles are prominent special features that are used to give an identity theme and special value for each issue, and although the articles are one-offs the overall topic of travel appears to be the foremost defining feature of the magazine.

Although young women were seen as the new emerging market in the 1980s that would help turn Japan's export economy into a consumer-led one, it was as early as the 1970s that young women were being targeted as the new market for domestic tourism.[468] In Japan National Railway's tourism campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s,[469] travel was reframed as desirable for young women, linking it to the notion of self-discovery and self-actualisation, as well as a burgeoning sexuality as a rite-of-passage to adulthood, all set against the landscape of travel as backdrop to the performance of the transformed self.

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[464] See Appendix III, Asahi Shimbun Data, p.315

[465] 'By sex and age, men in their 40s made up the largest group with 1.7 million (26.2% of all male travellers), while women in their 20s made up the largest segment with 1.65 million (39.8% of all female travellers). Although the ratio of male travellers is still higher (61.0% of the total), the ratio of female travellers has been rising gradually over the past 10 years.' Prime Minister's Office, *White Paper on Tourism, FY 1991 (Summary)*, 1992

[466] Skov and Moeran, 2009, pp. 65-66.

[467] See Appendix II, Hanako Magazine Data, pp.213; 225; Appendix II, Magazine Comparison, p.302

[468] Young women were seen as more receptive to the marketing message of travel, having not only the time and ease for travel, but also the inclination as those outside the rigidity of working society. Moreover, with their potential for future influence on family and men through soft power in the home, they were the ideal conduits through which the rest of society could be accessible. (Marilyn Ivy, 1995, pp. 37-38; Kelsky in Blake Willis & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008, p. 95).

[469] Ivy, 1995, pp. 37-38; Millie, R. Creighton, *Consuming Rural Japan: The Marketing of Tradition and Nostalgia in the Japanese Travel Industry* (Ethnology, Vol. 36, No. 3 (Summer 1997), pp.239-254, University of Pittsburgh Of the Commonwealth System of Higher Education)

However, an essential destabilisation was required for young women to desire travel,[470] and while useful for inciting wanderlust in young women seeking themselves, this combination of strategies – of inciting desire to discover one's own authentic being in the realm of the Other, whilst also viewing the home and the everyday as essentially lacking and inadequate in the task of self-realisation – may have found its flowering in the attitudes of young women in the 1980s. For in their desire to find fulfilment in work (whether through a career-track position or enjoyment of company benefits) and in their urgent need to indulge in goods, services and travel, young women can be seen engaged in the task of self-realisation that can be traced back to the advertising strategies of the 1970s JNR campaigns. This is also something articulated in the popular literature of the time, where in the novels of Murakami Haruki and Yoshimoto Banana, characters often travel round the country, their journey echoing their own metaphorical journeys of self-realisation and transformation, leading to, if not a state of liberty, then a coming into 'true being'. Just like the 1970s JNR 'de-advertising' poster landscapes that provide the unspecified backdrop to the subjects' own narrative journey,[471] the landscapes in these novels are also often vague and unspecified, providing the emotional colouring and opportunity for subjective experience to happen and being to appear.

However, not forgetting other more prosaic imperatives to travel, young women also had an urgency to their enjoyment that can be seen as essentially predicated on the unsatisfactory nature of the home. That before getting married and settling down, women were determined to enjoy themselves, and travelling for leisure becomes a vehicle for expressing physical as well as financial autonomy. Nevertheless, though appearing as a medium for liberation and self-actualisation through enjoyment, travelling for women, like other leisure available to them, was also framed by the limitations of their situation. Just as job-rotations and business travel were essentially denied them, so tourism was the only type of travel available to young women. Moreover, the essentially disposable, low-value and transient nature of women's capital, useless for long-term investments or projects, can be seen reflected in the ephemeral nature of their consumption – in the goods, services and experiences of small items, eating and drinking, and of which travel was another way in which women's labour could be used to offset the international trade surplus.

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[470] As Ivy (1995, p. 39) observes, in order to create this desire in young women to 'rediscover' themselves as new, authentic beings, there had to be an essential destabilisation in which the home and the everyday were to become the site of dissatisfaction and inauthenticity – that home itself was the place in which women were unable to fully realise themselves, necessitating travel as the means by which they would discover their true being in the eyes of the Other. Yet this process, in which desire for the authentic self is stimulated as both different from the everyday and situated in the Other, is never-ending, with the home that is 'both origin and final destination' (ibid) always different and therefore always dissatisfactory, leading to repeated attempts to find it in travel.

[471] Ivy, 1995, pp. 44-45.

The Eroticised Other

According to Ivy[472] implicit within the concept of travel is that of home, as both origin and destination, and where one allows the other to happen through a definition of difference. Between them they create a narrative in which the coming and going, leaving and arriving, articulates the essential loss at the heart of Japanese identity – the loss of the self into the Other, the ever-receding home as point of constantly deferred origin and destination.

While Ivy was writing about the JNR campaigns to increase domestic tourism through an auto-exoticised Japan, it is this struggle between Other and self that we can see in the treatment of the foreign and local in the *Hanako* travel articles. At first glance it appears that at a ratio of 17 to 10, the number of foreign destinations considerably outnumbers the Japanese places of interest. However, on closer inspection the number of pages dedicated to foreign and local travel are roughly similar, at 333 pages for foreign travel, and 305 pages for local guides, meaning that taken on number of pages alone, Japanese places rank equally to foreign ones. Alternatively, not all destinations are the same, with different levels of coverage given depending on the place, although Japanese places, though fewer in number, tend to have more pages dedicated to in-depth coverage. Finally, most of these destinations feature as standalone special features.[473]

Thus, characterising *Hanako*, travel becomes its unique quality, with destinations as special features setting the theme for each issue. The largest articles can range from 20-30% (38-53 pages) of the average magazine on number of pages, while the smallest can be as little as 1-2% (2-4 pages), and the spread between small (1-10%), medium (10-20%) and large (20-30%) are fairly evenly split among all the travel articles (around 7-9 articles per category). All travel articles also feature either in the front or middle sections of the magazine, and not at the back[474].

If we examine the foreign travel destinations, these can be further grouped into European (Paris, Milan, London), North American/South Pacific (New York, LA, San Francisco, Hawaii (Honolulu, Maui, Waikiki), Tahiti, Canada), and Asian (Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Macau). However, these destinations are not equally treated, with differences in size of feature varying with each location. For example, the cities of New York, LA, San Francisco and Paris are featured in the largest articles on travel at an average 47 pages per issue. Next are Thailand, London, Honalulu/Hawaii and Hong Kong, ranging from 21-38 pages, then Milan, Spain, Tahiti (13-18 pages per article), and finally Hawaii, Canada, Malaysia, Maui, and Waikiki (2-9 pages per article). The largest articles generally

[472] Ivy, 1995, p.31

[473] Although there are 5 issues where small articles about different destinations are combined in one issue, comprising either a mix of countries or foreign and Japan. (See Appendix II, Hanako Magazine Data, pp.221-222)

[474] See Appendix II, Hanako Magazine Data, pp.221-224

take centre stage at the front of the issue, while the smaller articles are placed in the centre of the issue. Here we see a hierarchy of countries taking shape, with the American and European cities of New York, LA, San Francisco, Paris and London commanding the most attention with the largest taking around 27% of the average issue, while generally smaller and warmer countries are given less article space, with the exceptions of Canada and Thailand (where Thailand features in a large article and Canada in a small one). The number of pages dedicated to each location is also significant, determining the amount of importance and focus that each place warrants in hierarchy directed to the *Hanako* reader; Paris and London for example both feature over two issues each, with a substantial number of pages (45 altogether for Paris, and 36 for London), whereas Tahiti, Maui and Waikiki are all contained in one issue, and number just 13, 3, and 2 pages respectively. Finally, while Western destinations outnumber the non-Western, at only 3 locations Asian places in particular appear to feature the least in the series[475].

At the most prosaic level, this can be seen as the consequence of the higher yen value on outbound tourism. Shopping was a significant part of the overseas experience for Japanese tourists, where expensive designer items could cost half that of goods in Japan[476] and the average Japanese person could indulge in pursuits and activities that would be out of reach at home, such as dining out in expensive restaurants, playing golf and staying in luxurious hotels.[477] Indeed the *Hanako* travel articles all without exception showcase an exhaustive panoply of shops, restaurants, bars and cafes, complete with detailed hand-drawn maps.[478] In this, as Tobin[479] observes, Japanese people were not only, in the case of Hawaii, experiencing the (Pacific) American destination, but also partaking in the overabundance of American conspicuous consumption, best experienced in the symbolic strongholds of Euro-American culture. Thus, travelling overseas in the 1980s with the higher yen enabled Japanese tourists to express their internalisation of Western, and in particular American, capitalism – of a wealth and success greatly improved from where one had started, and an unabashed enjoyment in the abundance of possibility that had to be performed in the capitals and with the branded products of the West.

Furthermore, the investment opportunities of the Bubble also made themselves felt on international Japanese tourism, with Japanese companies buying up huge numbers of overseas hotels, properties, shopping centres, and land for development into golf courses, theme parks and

[475] See Appendix II, Hanako Magazine Data, p.223
[476] Nitta in Tobin, 1992.
[477] Tobin, 1992, p. 167
[478] as described by Tanaka (in Martinez, 1998, pp. 116-117) of the magazines *An-An* and *Non-No* from the 1970s onwards
[479] Tobin, 1992, p. 167

resorts.[480] As a result Japanese tourists were encouraged to travel abroad and make use of these investments, and in the interview with Matsuo, she mentions how she was able to benefit from Panasonic's investment into the Prince Hotels chain, obtaining discounts and encouraged to stay there by her company[481].

However, in this commercialising of travel, with its Japanese-owned and visited facilities, prescribed guides and Japanese-serviced shops, is a flattening out of difference for easy consumption. Rather than the domestication of the foreign that Tobin[482] situates as a process within Japan, this is a negating of the threat of the foreign by making it managed and owned, even overseas. This process is repeated in the visuals of the *Hanako* articles, where despite the detailed guides, the cities and countries begin to blend into one another as an endless parade of shops and eateries, as a homogenous and differentiated Other[483] (Figures 24-25). In this we can see Ivy's[484] claim that in order to solve the problem of the foreign, it can 'only operate as a commodified sign of reassurance[…]because of its very threat – must be transformed into a manageable sign of order'.[485]

Figure 24: Paris as travel destination, ordered as a guide in Hanako
Hanako Issue 31: 12/01/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989); pp.22-23

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[480] Nitta in Tobin, 1992, p. 213.
[481] Although in another sense she was also restricted in her accommodation choice, and during interview Matsuo also expressed her frustration at being required by her company to stay at their Prince Hotels. Nevertheless, it was still seen as a perk of the job to be able to take advantage of Panasonic's investments into the hotel chain. (See Appendix I, Matsuo Interview, pp.2-3)
[482] Tobin (et. al, 1992)
[483] However, as Nitta (in Tobin, 1992, pp. 213-214) points out, this rampant investment into local communities with often little-needed resorts and hotels also created tensions, with claims that Japan was colonising through tourism and land development as much as through its exports and company buyouts. Moreover, although the frenzy of buying designer goods was undoubtedly doing its part to reduce the trade surplus at a macro level, with many of the goods manufactured in specific places in the U.S., Europe or Asia, the purchasing of these goods often may not have benefitted the local economy of the communities that the Japanese were visiting (ibid), showing that not all Japanese foreign expenditure was as beneficial to local economies as it first appeared.
[484] Ivy, 1995, pp. 2-3.
[485] (ibid)

Figure 25: More Paris shops, blending into homogenous shopping Hanako Issue 31: 12/01/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989); pp.24-25

In this commodification of the foreign, the flattening out of difference not only eases the process of consumption, but also creates a type of travel in which the searching for difference becomes the vehicle for the practice of easily interchangeable consumption. This spectacle of the same, as enacted through the magazine, is of endless variety and browsing in the way of the flaneur, a flattening or deadening of things and locations into a homogenised, pan-global, un-local experience of endless multiplicities.

While Baudrillard may argue that this flattening out of difference in consumer culture as travel is a way in which objects are essentially devalued, this may also be the reason why this type of leisure is suited to the *Hanako* demographic. For the ephemerality mirrors the instability of the young working woman's own financial capital as short-term and un-investable, and which in turn reflects the superficiality of their labour as interchangeable – a flattening out of women's human capital so to speak.

However rather than viewing this as a tragic indication of their circumstances, travel and consumption can also be seen as participatory and even as an act of defiance. For excluded from meaningful work and systems of social capital, rather than being consigned, the ephemeral can become claimed as the areas in which single young women could perform their autonomy outside the realms of home and work. At a time when Japanese men were prominent for their businesses and investments abroad, so young women could be seen as their overseas counterparts, interacting with the foreign as consumer tourists as much as the men were rich businessmen. In this way women were also participating in the foreign spending spree that characterised the Bubble Economy.

Moreover, in the event of late-capitalism where money is used to substitute for time and labour, and where money is abundant but time is limited, women's autonomy over their time could be said to rival that of men's financial wealth[486]. Thus, spending time (as well as financial capital), and especially spending it on non-essential and ephemeral activities and goods such as consumer tourism, in which nothing concrete is gained nor accumulated, could also be viewed as not only compensatory but rather the ultimate luxury to flaunt in the face of men and their time-poor lives.

In their role as consumer-tourists, women were therefore able to perform and be seen as active and equal participants in the overseas economic activities of the Japanese Bubble, and in this way, regain a sense of autonomy from their disadvantage in the Japanese cultural system. In this process of display and performance we can see the legacy of the 1970s JNR campaigns that encouraged women to self-realise in the realm of the Other, and Kelsky[487] notes that rather than looking for it in the rural Japan of JNR's imagining, young women were in fact looking to the foreign, and particularly the West, as the locale of their self-actualisation. Set against the conservativism of the national/local, the West becomes the site of the modern with all the implied open opportunity for emancipation and self-expression. Meanwhile Japanese men, privileged by the system, come to symbolise the traditional and the foreclosure of internationalist transformation, and the West becomes gendered and eroticised, symbolising female emancipation, transformation, and libidinal fulfilment in a partnership of equals. Thus, while the JNR campaigns encouraged young women to find self-fulfilment and the promise of sexual awakening in rural, 'authentic' Japan, instead in the 1980s we see them seeking it in the foreign countries of the West, where in the unknown open possibilities of the Other their own otherness and marginality may be reframed.

It is therefore against these new eroticised attitudes towards the West as site for modernity and emancipation that the bias towards Euro-American cities in *Hanako* can be examined. However, cutting through this Western dominance in the magazine, according to Nitta,[488] 'Hawaii [was] the most popular foreign destination for Japanese tourists, followed by Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan. In 1988 over 1.3 million Japanese tourists visited Hawaii.' This marginalisation of non-Western countries despite their real popularity may be viewed in the context of attitudes created by the patriarchal/colonial gaze of the West, where minorities (non-white, female) are portrayed as exotic for the enjoyment of the (white/male) viewer[489]. As Tobin[490] notes, in the imagining practice of tourism the warm temperate islands of the Caribbean and Pacific are patterned after

[486] More on this is covered in Chapter 5.
[487] In Blake Willis, David and Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, *Transcultural Japan: At the borderlands of race, gender, and identity* (Routledge: London and New York, 2008) pp. 86-105.
[488] In Tobin, 1992, p. 204.
[489] Said, Edward W., *Culture and Imperialism*, New Edn (London: Vintage, 1994).
[490] Tobin, 1992, pp. 165-166.

the Mediterranean, in a colonising practice of constructing the tropics he terms 'tropicalism'. In this we can see Ivy's[491] observation that with growing Japanese affluence and access to the luxuries of the West, the less familiar non-Japanese Asia, Third World, and pre-war Japanese mass culture would come to symbolise the new boundaries of exotic.

While of course not white nor male, the emphasis placed on cities of the West in *Hanako* show how easily the values of the colonialist gaze can become subsumed into those of the colonising Japanese female tourist. Further to this hierarchy of importance of Western and non-Western destinations, the types of activities, goods and services associated with each country in *Hanako* also betray this pervasive view[492]. The cities of Paris, Milan, London, New York, L.A. and San Francisco are presented through guides showcasing cultural icons and internationally recognised brands and styles of products. Meanwhile Thailand, Hawaii, Honolulu, Maui, Waikiki, Tahiti and Malaysia offer mostly local products and services and places of natural beauty, where goods are seen to be the result of local systems of production rather than conceived brands or companies. This is something further emphasised by Miller's[493] observation that overseas tourism also became linked to beauty and spa packages, particularly to the countries of South Korea, Hong Kong, Hawaii, Phuket and Bali, the former two associated with traditional East Asian values and the latter as tropical paradises. In this way, the cultures resulting from the development of capitalist production are not only privileged as a result of their dominant economies, but also for their mass-produced goods and services that feed the system of production and consumption. Meanwhile the Asian-Pacific economies are portrayed as addendums to the system, exotic and of value for their natural resources (and by extension, women's beauty) and examples of local craftsmanship or site of production that, although enjoyable, add of nothing of real significance to the dominant order of advanced economic capitalist production.

However, in addition to the exotic almost fetishized attitude towards the non-West as locations of the natural, I would argue that for Japanese women the non-Western Other holds a more specific significance to them. That although not necessarily authentic (this being monopolised by rural Japan), the Otherness of the non-Japanese non-West is found in its exoticism of an imagined pre-

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[491] Ivy, 1995, p. 47.

[492] The exception to this is in the inclusion of Thailand, which is the only Asian / non-Western destination to be featured as a large special article at 38 pages and a front of magazine placement. While this could be explained by the general popularity of Thailand in general as a tourist destination, it is interesting to note Leheny's reading of the Ten Million Program as being a signal '…to Japanese investors a government commitment to promote outbound tourism, and it designated resources, particularly to Thailand, that would shift development priorities and strategies.' (Leheny, 2003, p.136). While this does not prove that *Hanako's* focus on Thailand as a significant travel destination is more than just incidental to these government policies, it is an example of the influence of governmental and especially the MOT and MITI departments in trends that make their eventual appearance in popular media such as *Hanako* magazine.

[493] Miller, 2006, pp. 198-199.

civilised idyll, in whose absence of a Japanese past or a modern West, women may also find emancipation from their own otherness and marginality.

The Exoticised Self

As Ivy[494] notes, culture industries such as tourism are predicated on the notion of loss, seeking to mollify the contradictions created by modernity felt through sprawling urbanism and encroaching technology. Galvanised by a sense of personal rupture it was this desire to regain authenticity that was channelled into the JNR's Discover Japan campaign, encouraging a rediscovery of the self as synonymous with the authenticity of rural Japan that could be opposed to the jarring artificiality of the modern and urban.[495]

However, with the increase in overseas tourism, this location of self-discovery had shifted from rural Japan to an even more extreme Otherness – that of the foreign Other, in which one's own otherness was more naturalised and less problematic. Thus, it can be argued that the morphing of the 1970s Discover Japan campaign into the Exotic Japan of the 1980s was in fact a logical step, one which had no choice but to turn Japan into the exotic, in order to rival the beguiling appeal of not just the foreign, but the international.

This is something we can see in the *Hanako* issues where Japan proves to be the exception to the dominance of pan Euro-American cities. With articles on local destinations rivalling those of foreign ones, Japan's treatment in the magazine appears to break out from notions of Western primacy to show Japan as having a consumer and leisure culture to rival those of Europe and America's capital cities, and one in which the wider economic aims of the consumer lifestyle were being articulated as domestic rather than foreign leisure.

However, on closer inspection it becomes apparent that apart from two extended articles on Japan's hot springs (46 pages), and overnight stays (65 pages), all the other articles cover sections of Tokyo, indicating a distorted view of domestic travel in favour of Japan's capital city rather than nationwide[496]. While taking into consideration the main Tokyo readership, it has the added implication of pitching the city and its districts against other major international cities, whether Paris, New York, Milan, or London, rather than in comparison with Asian counterparts closer to home. Rather than focusing on the localised goods and services that *Hanako* associated with other

[494] Ivy, 1995, pp. 10-12.
[495] ibid, p. 34
[496] See Appendix II, *Hanako* Magazine Data, p.224

non-Western destinations, Tokyo becomes comparable to cities of developed economies as places of shopping, entertainment and consumption of leisure (Figure 26). Importantly these articles do not include Tokyo museums or cultural sites of interest, unlike Paris or London, but more like the portrayal of San Francisco and LA, the Tokyo districts have the 'culturally odourless'[497] leisure pursuits of the modern and the international, in the form of sophisticated bars, restaurants, shops, hotels, cafes and jazz clubs. Even Japanese bars (*izakayas*) are framed within the context of the international and Other, in which Japanese derived leisure is one of many options for consumer enjoyment.

In Ivy's writing about JNR's Exotic Japan campaign[498], she observed it reduced Japan into self-exoticised fragments and objects for easy consumption, more postmodern superficial style than the 1970s promise of self-(re)discovery. This is something reiterated by Kurotani[499], who notes that in the Bubble, urbanised women saw in the traditional, not authenticity or cultural roots, but instead novelty and the culturally exotic. In the drive for consumption, 'traditional Japan' became repackaged for 'discovery' by younger unfamiliar generations, but as a sanitised version that could fit in better with modern glamourized expectations of the past. Presented as refuges against the fast pace of modern life, this self-exoticised redefinition of Japanese cultural practices as surface and style not only reflects the change of focus for authentic rediscovery of the 1970s to the discovery of the auto-exotic of the 1980s, but also the move from the rural distant past to the past as modernised and urbanised.

Figure 26: Shibuya, Tokyo, reimagined as a travel destination
Hanako Issue 45: 20/04/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989); pp.12-13

[497] Iwabuchi in Allen & Sakamoto, 2014, p. 26.
[498] Ivy, 1995
[499] In Kawano, Roberts, Long, 2014, p. 90.

It is this updating of culture and leisure as urban and glamourized that can be seen in these *Hanako* guides to Tokyo leisure, for sandwiched in-between the modernity of the Western Other, the exotic non-Japanese Asia, and the authenticity of Japan's rural landscape and past, it could be argued that modern urban Japan as destination and locus of self-realisation had little place to go. The Japanese urban landscape is thus reimagined as exotically international, embracing its otherness to create a distinctive style where the old nestles with the new, and while elements could be situated as either Japanese or foreign in origin it is this stylistic attitude of being able to embrace things equally as flattened commodities that suggests the local urban is the new exotic, but also in a way that is fundamentally Japanese.

By not following the modernity of the West or the exoticisation of Asia and the Japanese pre-modern past, 1980s urban Japan was, through creating its own style of assimilation and montage, articulating its difference from the Other as completely new and unrelated to anything that had come before[500]– the latest product of late-capitalist affluence, and from which other developing postmodern cultures and styles may cite influence as 'being like Japan'. As such, taking place in the new public spaces of consumer leisure, it was the affluent and time-rich *shinjinrui* who were the natives able to access this new language of Japanese postmodernity. Young women especially, excluded from the realms of work and home, could thus look to this exotic new Japan as another Other in which they could search for the resolution to their own marginal otherness.

The Internationalised Woman

In *Hanako* issue 42[501] is an advertisement for a company called 'Work'[502] (Figure 27). Part of a series of advertisements that were placed at regular intervals throughout the magazine in 1989, the advertisement announces it is for a 'job information magazine for young women'[503], and features a young woman, dressed in large glasses and white suit jacket. Situated within a city landscape whose urban busy-ness and modernity is conveyed by the blurred-out background and grainy monochrome, the woman is depicted as a working woman, her long hair (with fluffy, 'sticky-out' fashionable bangs), large chunky 'statement' metallic jewellery and shoulder bag proclaiming her sophistication and femininity as much as her working persona. Clutching a copy of the English-language edition of the international fashion magazine, 'Vanity Fair', this image of international

[500] Ivy, 1995, pp. 53-58
[501] *Hanako* Issue 42: 30/03/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989) p.58
[502] *Torabāyu* (とらばーゆ)
[503] *Josei no tame no shigoto jōhōshi* (女性のための仕事情報誌)

sophistication is underlined by the main copy, set in bold black type against a strikingly bright block of yellow, proclaiming:

'The globalisation wave,
Also came to me.' [504]

And in smaller type below:
'And, to you I want to say, 24/03 is the launch of Work "Special feature / report of foreign company business". Oh, hey, there is also a beauty salon feature/report in it.' [505]

Figure 27: Glamorous OL in advertisement, Torabāyu Hanako Issue 42: 30/03/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989) p.58

While deceptively simple, this advertisement is made up of complex layers about the working Japanese woman and her place in the new culture of work and business. Initially giving context to the image, the main copy appears to emphasise Japan's place as well as the woman in modernity and the international community. By describing the process of internationalisation as a wave, it focuses on Japan's positioning on the global stage where it joins the rest of the world in becoming global, and by saying that this globalisation wave has also come to 'me' it is positioning the (female) subject as not just a subject of Japan, but also included in the international community. The use of *katakana* script in ワタシ (*watashi* - 'I') and the casual language (た (ta)-form) is also significant as it portrays the woman as modern, personable and international[506], and not in her traditional role of home-keeper, nurturer, and maintainer of formal etiquette and traditional culture.

This is something that appears at first glance to be further supported by the smaller copy below, which seems to encourage women to proactively declare their desire to join the international community and the internationalisation process, and to portray them as working professionals

[504] 国際化の波は、ワタシにも訪れたのであった。 *Kokusaika no nami wa, Watashi ni mo otosureta no deatta*
[505] と、いいたいあなたに３月２４日発売のとらばーゆは「外資系企業特集」です。あ、それから「美容院特集」もありますよ *To, ītai anata ni san gatsu nijūyokka hatsubai no torabāyu wa Gaishikei kigyō tokushyū desu. A, sorekara byōin tokushū mo arimasu yo*
[506] *Katakana* is heavily associated with foreign-deriving words

knowledgeable and working within the 'foreign company business'. However, this effect is rather undone by the tagged-on reference to the beauty salon feature within the magazine, which, with its informal casual language and reference to the relevance of beauty salons as an equal concerning interest on par with foreign company businesses, repositions the female subject back to, not being an equal game player on the international stage, but one to whom beauty and appearance is just as important. While taking on the appearance of part of the sophistication of international femininity, seen in the context of the average working OL's office environment, it really is a re-establishing of the office patriarchy that posits the Japanese woman as more decorative and disposable rather than useful and essential.

Thus, in this advertisement we can see several layers of meaning taking place, in which femininity, the international and work all collide in the presentation of the Japanese woman. Tanaka[507] notes, the first half of the 1980s were defined by an increased presence of the international in Japanese magazines, in which Japanese editions of Western titles were launched[508], as well as foreign-sounding domestic titles[509]. While this may have been partly influenced by the increased segmentation of the magazine market, the internationalisation of magazine culture can also be seen as part of the *kokusaika* zeitgeist of the time. From its inception, *Hanako*, with its focus on outbound tourism, fits in with these wider trends for internationalisation, incorporated into its front covers that featured specially commissioned artwork by the Australian artist, Ken Done. Featuring a range of artistic subjects, from nudes and still-life to landscapes, the loose, free-flowing, Expressionist style of his vibrantly colourful sailing boats, fruits and beaches appear to capture the energetic and liberated qualities of international culture that was unabashedly positive and outward-looking to a more relaxed lifestyle of leisure and enjoyment.

It is this issue of the international brought up by the policy for *kokusaika* and threaded through *Hanako* magazine that is complicated for its female readers. As Ivy[510] has observed, contact with the foreign and indeed the modern had problematic issues for Japan, creating an anxiety and sense of loss that threatened to rupture its sense of self. Moreover, while internationalism may be understood as the mutual understanding and political and economic cooperation between different nations and cultures, in Japan internationalisation was rather less well defined.[511] Instead of starting from the standpoint of international understanding, the discourse on *kokusaika* was often set against national identity, the international placing the national into sharp relief. In this way, the international was used to help distinguish the Self from the Other in a nationalising

[507] In Martinez, 1998, p. 112
[508] Such as *Cosmopolitan* in 1980 and *Elle* in 1982
[509] *25 ans* 1980, *Lee* 1983, *ViVi* 1983, *Classy* 1984, *Sophia* 1984
[510] Ivy, 1995
[511] McVeigh, 1997, p. 65.

discourse that enabled Japan to imagine itself and resolve any sense of conflict.[512] Thus while McVeigh[513] identifies several strategies within the internationalisation discourse, only two of these were aimed at outside engagement, these being the acquisition of outside technological knowledge and overseas expansion, and to present an acceptable image of Japan to foreigners. The other strategies fulfilled more *nihonjinron* agendas, such as the construction and protection of a national and cultural identity through opposition that would enable the maintenance of social order, and even the presentation of Japan to foreigners was a way of promoting Japanese culture.

Accordingly, the widespread adoption and domestication of foreign-derived products and customs in Japan[514] can be seen not only as a consequence of the internationalisation policy of *kokusaika*, but also as part of a wider nationalist *nihonjinron* discourse on taming the otherness of the foreign. Through this appropriation, one escapes the trauma of a direct encounter with the Other, reconfirming the centrality of one's national identity. 'The ultimate goal of internationalisation is to transform the real into the imaginary'[515] Thus the consumption of the international practiced in *Hanako* through the display of goods, activities and travel can be seen as not only an internationalising discourse, but also a nationalising one, through which women were encouraged to either absorb and assimilate international culture as non-threatening, commodified aspects into Japanese consumer culture, or to reconfirm their Japanese identity through direct confrontation with the Other abroad.

Within the advertisement, a further marker of the international is contained within the advertised magazine name, *torabāyu*.[516] Meaning 'work' or 'to change occupation', the name derives from the French, *travail*, and is unusual for being a non-English loanword that is written in the *hiragana* alphabet rather than the *katakana* (the former being more used for Japanese-originating words, and the latter for foreign words entering the Japanese lexicon). While the different Japanese alphabets ostensibly distinguish between words of Chinese (*kanji)*, Japanese (*hiragana*), and foreign (*katakana*) origin, Stanlaw[517] notes how not only have a large number of foreign loanwords entered the official and everyday Japanese culture, but that they have become assimilated to the point of inhabiting a range of practices[518]. These include direct loanwords (where original meaning and form

[512] Ivy, 1995.
[513] McVeigh, 1997, p. 67.
[514] Tobin et al., 1992.
[515] McVeigh, 1997, p. 81.
[516] とらばーゆ
[517] James Stanlaw, *Japanese English: Language and Culture Contact* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press: 2004)
[518] While as mentioned *katakana* has been widely claimed to denote foreign loanwords, Stanlaw (2004, p. 182) posits that it has now moved on to become one of many writing styles used in Japanese – in particular becoming a way to represent colloquial speech in text, marking something as playful or not as seriously Japanese rather than just foreign. *Hiragana* on the other hand marks a more personal and natural style as a softer approach (Stanlaw, 2004, p. 183).

are preserved), English-inspired vocabulary (partial keeping of meaning or form), or 'made-in-Japan' / 'home-grown' words (creative use of English to denote Japanese-specific concepts). While the rest of this advertisement does not use any other loanwords, Stanlaw posits that the use of loanwords holds particular appeal to young women in Japan. In modern pop songs and poetry, women appear to use English words as a way of circumventing constraints imposed on them by Japanese language. Freed from the overburdened cultural connotations of Japanese words, as well as the restrictions of politeness demanded by female Japanese speakers, the creative use of English in Japanese enables women to more freely express themselves as liberated cultural speakers. In this case, the playful use of a French-originating word in *hiragana* shows not just the successful assimilation of the loanword into the softer Japanese lexicon, 'nativising' it, but the less commonly used French[519] conveys an additional degree of sophistication and 'high culture'[520] to the already modern and cosmopolitan nature of loanwords.

Thus, although internationalism can be seen to reinforce inherent nationalism, in the form of loanwords it could also provide a way to circumvent the difficulties women faced situated in a nationalist patriarchal discourse. Furthermore, travelling overseas and engaging in international leisure at home could be used as a way of offsetting their marginality, and accompanying the *kokusaika* movement was much discussion about women's place in the new international community[521]. Based on a belief that women's exclusion from the rigidities of Japanese social discipline gave them the flexibility to operate in the new global environment, the idea of the international community held for women a utopic promise of freedom and self-fulfilment in a "natural" aligning of Japanese women's interests with the foreign and against the insular, feudalistic and male. Suggested within this search for emancipation and transformation is a positing against the masculine, and Kelsky[522] notes how in women's depictions of internationalisation, men are noticeably absent, replaced by the fetishized international (Western) male as marker of modernity and limitless space of the West[523]. Posited against the constraints of Japanese society, the

[519] French loanwords make up only 0.18% of Japanese vocabulary (Stanlaw, 2004, p. 13).
[520] Stanlaw, 2004, p. 12.
[521] Kelsky, in Blake Willis & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008, pp. 88-90.
[522] In Blake Willis & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008, p. 90.
[523] In this, Kelsky notes how for some women, education and foreign marriage abroad provide opportunities for both emancipation and escape, in which 'women in dead-end, clerical "office lady" ("OL") positions are uniquely enabled to turn their marginalization from the centers of corporate power into opportunities to gain professional training and experience abroad.' (ibid). Furthermore, for some, describing themselves as 'refugees' (*nanmin*) or 'exiles' (*bōmeisha*) (Kelsky in Blake Willis & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008, pp. 91-92), careers abroad and overseas marriages provide other opportunities to leave Japan. In both these cases, women were more free than Japanese men, tied as the men were to their work and responsibilities in Japan. According to Kelsky, (citing ICS 1996, ibid), by the mid-1990s, approximately 130,000 women were travelling abroad to study. However, this did not mean that men were not interacting in the international, as in 1989, 1,112195 people were travelling abroad on short business trips, and 97752 were posted to overseas company branches, most presumably men, while 113234 were studying abroad, and 58164 were residing permanently.

international allows women to reconstruct their environment in which roles are reversed, and becomes the site of emancipatory redemption and belonging through a universalist alliance.[524]

Thus, during the Bubble we can see two types of modernity being articulated and competing against one another. The first was a Japanese-specific modernity built on the incorporation of technology and globalised business while in opposition to the foreign as other. Predicated on masculinist modernisation and rigid gendered labour division, it was central to the narrative of post-war growth. The second meanwhile was an internationalist modernity, and based on the individualistic principles of Enlightenment humanism, technology and cultural importation, it represented a threat to Japanese autonomy as intrusion from the outside[525]. However, while men were placed firmly within the former women were caught between the two, having to negotiate the realities of their working lives with their desires for self-fulfilment, and choosing between adhering to their identity as Japanese women, or embracing the promise of emancipation and universalist belonging of internationalism.

As Kelsky notes, as internationalisation was linked to a utopic vision of 'universalist alliance'[526] with the ideals of an emancipated modernity, a physical exodus to the West was not necessary but instead could be achieved through incorporation of the West into Japan. In the materialism of the Bubble, this took the form mainly of consumption that in addition to travel also included shopping and food. This period was famed for the importance of luxury brands, famously listed in great detail in Tanaka Yasuo's '*Somehow Crystal*' in which brands and trends take centre stage, as they do in *Hanako* magazine where luxury foreign brands feature in travel abroad and mix with internationally-styled Tokyo shops. While this consumption of foreign goods can be linked to official

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(*2-38: Japanese who Legally Departed from Japan by Purpose of Voyage (1971--2004)*, (Statistics and Information Department, Judicial System and Research Department, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Justice) <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/02.htm> (accessed 04/02/2017)

[524] An example of women using the international to affect their environment outside of consumption and leisure, can be seen in their presence in the new professions that benefitted from the booming economy. Known as the *katakana* professions for their non-Japanese origin as described in the *katakana* script, they were seen as modern, fashionable, and desirable (Tanaka in Ben-Ari, Moeran & Valentine, 1990, pp. 89-90), and included jobs in design, high technology, headhunting and counselling (Iwao, 1993, p. 171). Smaller and less established, these companies were more receptive to women joining them, and the 1980s saw more professional women working in these sectors as globalised flows of technology and business benefited the Japanese economy. This is something that is reflected in the data of the time, showing how women's participation in the creative industries increased over this period, with women designers as a particularly large cohort (68,916 as compared to men's 87,939.) *26-19: Persons Engaged in Culture-Related Occupations (1920 – 2000)*, Statistical Survey Department, Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/chouki/26.htm> [accessed 23/01/2017])
Moreover, as Kelsky (in Blake Wills & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008, p. 86) observes, the internationalist zeitgeist of the 1980s also had a direct impact on Japanese women's writing, introducing internationalising narratives which proposed rejections and reforms of the Japanese system through comparison with the West in a declared allegiance to the universalist democracies of global humanism.

[525] Kelsky in (Blake Wills & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008, p. 87

[526] Ibid

policies of mollifying trade tensions and utilising women's capital in the reduction of the trade surplus, these goods also have their own cultural capital for women, not only in being international but also in their material value. Largely excluded from structures of real material benefit such as mortgages, investments and careers, luxury goods were one of the few areas in which women could differentiate themselves in terms of status. Moreover, there are indications that young women were often given these items as gifts by men, something mentioned in interview with Matsuo, who elaborated on at length on the luxury gifts she often received during the period by admirers[527]. In this regard luxury goods also become a mediator of value – not of themselves, but of the men giving the gift and women receiving it within the valuing constructs of dating in a marriage market.

Food as a marker of international culture was also prominent in *Hanako* magazine. Featuring heavily in all the special feature travel articles through numerous restaurants, bars, cafes, delicatessens and even markets, food often rivals shopping in the experience of the international. Regular articles too show the incorporation of non-Japanese cuisine into the lexicon of everyday consumption, exemplified by the article, 'Bread Club' in which each new issue examines a different foreign bread by country[528]. Furthermore, the importance of food as part of international culture during this time seems not only portrayed through *Hanako* magazine, but also in other sources, such as Murakami's bubble-era set novel, *Dance Dance Dance*[529], in which the main character is a freelance writer whose assignments appear to be mostly about restaurant guides, as well as Yoshimoto's work, *Kitchen*[530], in which food is central to the experiences of the main characters. Importantly both of these works, written around the same time, contain in this experience of food the added dimension of travel. Murakami's character has to travel to Hokkaido and around Japan to research and write restaurant reviews, and through the rushed and professional nature of the assignments gives us an insight into the fast-paced and insatiable nature of writing guides for

[527] See Appendix I, Matsuo Interview, p.14

[528] It must be remembered that not only do women and food have a specific history, as linked to their traditional role as nurturers and homemakers, but the 1980s also saw anxieties and changes to attitudes towards appearance and food. Miller (2006, pp. 159-160) suggests that with the rise in diversity and availability of food, women were seeking to control it through their bodies in the form of diet and exercise, and this decade was when thinness rather than plumpness escalated as a female beauty. With anxiety over food surfacing in contemporary literature and popular culture, Miller (2006, p. 174) sees food and dieting as both a battleground for authenticity and liberation, in which struggles against late-consumer capitalism and anxieties over lost cultural authenticity are combined with a rejection of traditional roles of nurturer and preparer of food. However, with the close portrayal of women's enjoyment and food in popular culture, especially when contrasted against men's self-denial and status as producer to women's consumer, one could say that the link between women and food was in fact fetishized as part of their role in irrational consumption. However, it must be noted that the descriptions of young women and food in magazines such as *Hanako*, as well as in popular culture, mostly revolve around restaurants and instant or convenient foods, thus supporting Miller's observation that women's engagement with food was not about being a homemaker, but rather a consumer in the public domain.

[529] Murakami, Haruki, *Dance Dance Dance*, trans. by Alfred Birnbaum (London: Vintage, 2003).

[530] Yoshimoto, Banana, *Kitchen*, trans. by Megan Backus (London: Faber and Faber, 2001).

magazines in the Bubble. Yoshimoto's main characters, although they for the most part encounter food in the more domestic environment of the home, also through the prolific use and familiarity with non-Japanese dishes, kitchen implements and terminology, display their international credentials and ability to assimilate and take ownership of international travel and culture into their own experience. In both of these novels, written for the young *shinjinrui / shōjo* of the Bubble, we see food of different types and cultures being assimilated into Japanese experience, through travel as well as infiltrating the home. Thus food, like loanwords, although distinctly foreign also take on a domesticated character that through creative practice becomes part of the Japanese food vocabulary. This accessibility in turn enables it to take on a transformative quality, through which practitioners (makers, eaters, critics) can take on an internationalist guise without compromising their integral Japaneseness[531].

However, as Kelsky[532] observes, there is a fundamental discord in women taking up the internationalising discourse of Western modernity. For although seeking to challenge nationalist agendas of patriarchy, by adhering to the largely Western standards of internationalisation women were also upholding the hegemony of the West. Moreover, I would argue that by performing their internationalist credentials through the material consumption of foreign goods, services and leisure, women were not only reaffirming Western hegemony, but also the universalist claims of Western capitalism with all its associated structures and divisive labour assumptions. Ironically, these also infer a patriarchal system based on binaries of producer/consumer, worker/nurturer. Nevertheless, this also shows that while Japanese women thought they may have been accessing a uniquely Western idea of democratic living, this in fact was their own utopic vision, itself becoming a domesticated import that would allow them to maintain possession of their Japanese identity.

Fundamental to the problematic and emancipatory nature of internationalisation was this potential for renegotiation of existing norms, and like the modern working environment for women, so *kokusaika* was a chance for them to find a middle ground between complicity and opposition, especially within the working context. In interview, former OL, Matsuo, discussed the importance of placing the best OLs in the international-dealing departments of Panasonic, their appearance, education (especially in languages), and etiquette skills all necessary for their front-facing role during these boom years of international investment and development[533]. In addition to year-long in-house etiquette courses, Panasonic female employees were also given the opportunity to attend

[531] Stanlaw (2004, pp. 189-209) makes an interesting observation that although modern food in Japan appears to display a remarkable amount of apparent Western influence, like loanwords used in the description of colours, foreign loanwords and food types have become domesticated to suit specific Japanese contexts. In this process they lose their connection to any original meaning and instead describe modern Japanese food for Japanese consumers.
[532] Kelsky in Blake Wills & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008, pp. 87-88
[533] See Appendix I, Matsuo Interview, pp.2-10

English-language classes and practice English conversation at parties with invited foreigners, showing how the personal development of OLs was incorporated into the international business practices of Japanese industry. *Hanako* magazine too shows an awareness of incorporating the international in a more meaningful way, with regular articles such as *'Fax from Overseas'* discussing the view from living abroad as opposed to tourism. In this there is a link between the new Japanese femininity and work, as embodied by the OL, with the new internationalisation that was shaping the landscape of Japanese business. Both Tanaka[534] and McVeigh[535] identify internationalisation with ladylike qualities and a cosmopolitanism that indicate intelligence and sophistication without excluding or threatening conventional underpinnings of femininity. Furthermore, while allowing for compromise, with its promise of emancipation, internationalisation could also be linked to the new active and liberated female body, allowing women to explore Other versions of femininity that sit outside the nationalist discourse, thus not compromising their Japanese identity.

Thus while interacting with international culture was problematic for men, bound as they were by the strict confines of the working structure and their position in hegemonic masculinity, young women's marginality made them appear to be the ideal citizens of the *kokusaika* movement, both receptive to the messages of individuality and emancipation within it, and having the skills of flexibility and adaptability born from their peripheral status in Japanese society.[536] However it must be remembered that although by engaging with the international women were (whether consciously or unconsciously) articulating a desire for greater liberation from the confines of Japanese femininity, their engagement was predicated by the limitations of their situation. The other areas of internationalism during the Japanese Bubble of overseas investments and international business were effectively denied them, meaning consumer culture, leisure and peripheral roles in business were the only areas they could contribute to the *kokusaika* project. Tanaka[537] for example, notes how the appearance of cosmopolitanism and individuality in women's magazines, displayed predominantly through fashion, was more important than being culturally cosmopolitan, and was used to gain access to, rather than internationalism, to the notion of an international elite.[538] Further to this, Kelsky[539] observes how the internationalist project was also privileged rhetoric, inaccessible to many Japanese women and its individualistic message conflicting with the communalist values of both Japanese identity and feminist activism. Instead, as it becomes subsumed into the aims of capitalist consumerism, the emancipatory promise of *kokusaika* becomes nothing more than another placatory device, masking women's real inequalities at home

[534] In Ben-Ari, Moeran & Valentine, 1990, p. 88.
[535] McVeigh, 1997, p. 70.
[536] Kelsky in Blake Wills & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008, pp. 89-94.
[537] In Ben-Ari, Moeran & Valentine, 1990, p. 88.
[538] Ibid, p. 91.
[539] In Blake Willis & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008, pp. 96-97.

while they pretend to be liberated through the purchasing and displaying of signs of international community. Instead despite pursuing internationalist aims, women were still subject to a rigid patriarchal system in which their skills and attitudes had no place, even potentially detrimental to their chances of success to life in Japan.

However, it must be remembered that although *kokusaika* for women was in many respects a superficial practice, it occupied a relevant and useful space within the wider aims of the Japanese economy. In addition to their consumer role in reducing the trade surplus, against a background of increased Japanese investment, trade and political engagement overseas, women were the presentable front-facing labour that smoothened the process of international business for their less flexible male counterparts. Translating, organising affairs, and generally facilitating the internationalisation of Japanese industry, their marginal status in the workplace and inessentiality to the home, made young unmarried women ideal for the corporatist and economic aims of *kokusiaka*, supporting Japanese industry's internationalist credentials whilst providing no real threat to the cultural fabric of Japanese society. In this way women's labour and marginal human and financial capital were once again being co-opted into use for informal economic and political aims at little cost to the fundamentals of Japanese society, becoming through consumption the highly visible face of Japanese *kokusaika*. Travelling abroad as tourists, in the non-Japanese restaurants and bars, clutching/wearing foreign branded goods, buying foreign kitchen gadgets to make foreign foods at home, and learning foreign languages to use in their work life – young single women were the perfect vehicles to showcase not just the international life, but a new kind of life in which Japanese citizens were also international citizens. In this *kokusaika* could be seen as an empowering force, with women placed at the forefront of a national project of Japanese destiny and self-determination adding to the power metanarrative of Japanese ascendancy. However while seemingly emancipatory and empowering, other more meaningful ways of enacting *kokusaika* through work, finance and cultural production were still elusive, meaning women's overall impact and influence on projects of national development and international influence were ultimately limited in scope.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have explored how women could be viewed as essential beneficiaries of the Bubble. The period of the Bubble Economy coincided with developments in government policies in equality that were seen to benefit women in their accessibility to the workplace, leading to it also being termed the 'women's era'.

Women were also central to the new strategy of developing a consumer tertiary economy based on consumer services, leisure and consumption, and in this, magazines were central to the construction of new lifestyles seen as part of Japan's new liberalised consumer society. *Hanako* was thus part of this new trend for a different type of woman's magazine focusing more on lifestyle rather than either just fashion or domesticity, and instead echoed economic policy developments in its focus on leisure activities.

Within this context, the young working OL was thus an ideal candidate for boosting the consumer economy, with her disposable income, lack of responsibilities and abundance of free time. Furthermore, in being free of the hegemonic dominant forms, OLs were also seen as free to indulge and explore the ideology of individualism through consumption that globalisation was bringing to the Japanese system, but which was ultimately at odds with it.

However, on further interrogation, women's participation in the consumer and leisure boom of the 1980s was in fact predicated on their complex and precarious relationship with the structures at work, in which access to fringe benefits was seen as both a placating tactic and a right to be taken, but acceptance of which also cemented their position in the patriarchal framework. Moreover, their participation in the leisure economy could also be viewed as society co-opting their disposable income as useful to developing the domestic consumer economy, whilst also recognising young women's inessential value to the wider Bubble economy, limited as their buying/investment power was to only inessential and ephemeral types of consumption.

Nevertheless, even while women were on the face of it accepting the status quo of lower-waged relatively short-term work in exchange for the fringe benefits of having disposable income and positions of low responsibilities, in occupying the new consumer spaces of the public realm and entering the workplace, they were also creating a different type of role that moved away from the dominant hegemonic forms of salaryman/housewife, instead becoming that of the consumer-citizen tied to the corporation rather than the home, whose domain were the urban leisure spaces of the public consumer realm. In this way, the OL was instrumental in the transition from Japanese groupism to capitalist Western individualism through consumer culture, and as such pioneered a new way in which Japan could embrace the concepts of individualism without compromising its distinct identity.

This struggle between the two ideologies of international individualism and Japanese groupism can be seen particularly in the appearance and body of the OL; where the formal but modern deportment of the OL in her manner, etiquette training and dress may be interpreted as a carefully negotiated performance of the two approaches. In this way, she was at the forefront of refashioning Japanese femininity for a modern context that allowed greater participation in corporate and

international life, but that was still acceptable for a Japanese context. Nevertheless, establishing a negotiated corporate Japanese femininity did not mean a foreclosure of any other negotiations, and both the appearance and participation of the OL during leisure was an area of potential dynamism and change, seen in the hypersexualised dress of 1980s body-conscious fashion among Japanese women, as well as their inclusion in the depiction of sport, especially modern sports of fitness and individual play.

However, it is in the field of the international that OLs were really using as a site of potential change and the expression of their desires. Representing humanist universal values of modernity, emancipation, and the limitless space of the international, travel had become a locus for the act of self-discovery and self-actualisation, and featured heavily as the central theme to *Hanako* magazine. Yet, in focusing on international travel, a hierarchy was being formed in which the international was divided up into locations in the West or Asia, with the former becoming associated with the abundance of capitalist enjoyment and consumption, while the latter as the locus of the exotic and peripheral production. Furthermore, young women, with their peripheral position in both the wider economy, could be seen as useful in offsetting the trade surplus of Japan with the international community. As in the wider leisure economy, so the OL's instrumentality in the workplace becomes replicated in the use of her leisure, time, and disposable income, whilst also contributing to Japanese investments in the leisure industries abroad.

An exception to the imagining of the non-West as peripheral, is Japan, and specifically Tokyo, which is presented as on par with American cities. In doing so, Japan, and notably urban Japan, itself becomes exoticised as not just a way to rival the cities of the West, but also as an alternative to the authenticity of rural Japan. In this way, it also becomes a refuge against the brutalising pace of modern life, and in bringing the otherness of the international home, as another place for self-actualisation and as a way of resolving young women's own marginal otherness.

Drawing on the fundamental desire for emancipatory change, the culture of the international was not only brought home to redefine the exoticism of urban Tokyo, but also was reflected in the trend for international lifestyles among the OLs, through their fashion, goods, food and urban leisure practices, and of course in magazines such as *Hanako*. On the one hand this could be seen as a domestication of the foreign through the adopting cultural practices seen in the use of loanwords and food, and in doing so encouraging women to partake in a nationalising discourse in which they reconfigured the international to become Japanese, or to reconfirm their own essential Japaneseness through contact with the foreign. On the other hand, accompanying the discourse around the international was also the possibility for women to reconfigure their own place in the fluid spaces of the global community, suggesting a natural alignment of women's interests with the

foreign against the rigid constraints of Japanese patriarchy in a universalist alliance of otherness and liberation.

However, by identifying the international as the locus for potential emancipation and self-realisation, young women were also inadvertently adhering to a Western hegemony, and specifically one of Western capitalist patriarchy that showed their conception of the international was a uniquely utopic vision and another domesticated import. Furthermore, young women's interest in the international can be seen as another strategy by which the wider aims of the economy were met, not only in developing the consumer leisure economy and easing the trade surplus through the consumption of goods and foreign travel, but also through the use of their skills within international corporate business. Just as with the development of the OL's appearance as a new type of negotiated Japanese modern femininity, so the personal development of the OL into a new type of international, well-travelled, well-presented, multilingual woman was co-opted into the demands of business without necessarily compromising the hegemony of the Japanese corporate male nor indeed the national and cultural identity of Japanese femininity.

In this project of internationalist assimilation and business, the OL, as the flexible and adaptable counterpart to the inflexible, corporatist salaryman, was perfect to help facilitate Japanese business ambitions aboard. Moreover, even though much of the internationalist promise for women resulted in mostly superficial gains and concessions, by being the highly visible face of Japan in its international dealings at home and in its leisure abroad, young working Japanese women were at the forefront of a national project of internationalisation that meant that they were the ones renegotiating not only a new type of Japanese femininity, but also that of the new internationalist Japanese citizen.

However, even as they were forging new ground in the arenas of business and leisure, OLs were still deeply entrenched in a formalised patriarchal system, of which the discourse of the international was only another placatory cover for their marginal role in an unequal hierarchy. Thus, although seemingly empowered and highly visible beneficiaries of the new spaces that internationalist privilege were opening, the restrictions of young Japanese women to the marginal areas of international business and consumer economy meant that their overall influence on more meaningful areas of cultural and economic production were ultimately limited.

In conclusion, rather than being the simple consumer-participants of the pleasures of the Bubble, young women's place in it was much more complex than at first appears. Young women were a highly visible component of the Bubble Economy, on which government hopes of economic change from export to consumer were hinged, and policy changes in work were devised to further cement women's role in economic production and consumption. However, based on their position in a rigid

system of male privilege, far from being liberated consumers, women's experiences were much more nuanced in a constant back and forth of benefits and disadvantages. Furthermore, not only were women's labour and capital co-opted for wider economic aims, but their bodies too were a site of struggle for control and autonomy. Travel and the international did offer women the promise of an alternative, however their overall engagement as consumer-participants in the various trends of the Bubble was mitigated by their wider exclusion from more meaningful social action.

Chapter 4: Men, Culture, *Kokusaika*

Identified as the dominant, hegemonic form of masculinity in Japan, the salaryman model has been accompanied by a cultural practice that encompasses performance, dress, and material culture. From academic literature to novels, manga, and magazines[540], the salaryman ideal has been culturally perpetuated and reproduced[541]. It is in this context that *Brutus* magazine, aimed at working middle-class urban men, is situated as a form of hegemonic masculine expression. As Benwell notes, 'Men's magazines may be conceived of as both 'cultural text' and 'cultural phenomenon' […] in other words, magazines produce representations of masculinity but are also a site within and around which meanings of masculinity circulate and are negotiated or contested.'[542] Through a combination of magazine analysis and lived experience taken from interviews, we can better understand how working Japanese men were interacting with cultural elements of the Bubble as presented to them through the lens of consumed media.

The *Brutus* Consumer

First launched by Magazine House in 1980[543], *Brutus* is a men's general lifestyle magazine, regarded as the 'first' lifestyle magazine for men[544] (Figure 28). The 1980s were a period in which men's magazines were identified as a growth area in Japan[545], and publishing under its tagline 'The lifestyle magazine for men who live in the new era', with a focus on 'happy consumption' for 'men who work in the cities', *Brutus* from the start identified itself as a magazine for working men's lifestyles framed by urban living and consumption in 1980s prosperous Japan.[546] As part of the wider publishing

[540] For example, the novel by Hajime Maeda (1928) *Sarariiman monogatari* (Story of the Salaryman); the manga by Rakuten Kitazawa, 1973, 'Salaryman's Heaven' (*Sarariiman no tengoku*) and 'Salaryman's Hell' (*Sarariiman no jigoku*); and the monthly magazine, *Sarariiman* (Dasgupta in Louie and Law, 2003, p. 122).
[541] Ibid
[542] Bethan Benwell, *Masculinity and Men's Lifestyle Magazines* (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2003) p. 8.
[543] And predating *Hanako* magazine by about 8 years
[544] Tanaka in Benwell, 2003, p. 226
[545] As it was in Britain, indicating a wider global trend in magazines. Although as Tanaka notes, magazines for men were nothing new, just that their allocation as specifically gendered was subsumed into an assumed dominant (masculine) narrative, categorised under specific male interests (sports, cars, electronics) rather than general male culture (Tanaka in Benwell, 2003, p. 222). In fact, what often identifies the dominance of patriarchal hegemony in culture is its very absence, taken as the unclassified, unarticulated norm against which non-hegemonic forms position themselves. For example, although the economic, corporate, design and consumer cultures explored in Chapter 2 in *Mono* and *AXIS* were presented in general terms, implicit within the magazines is an assumption of a male readership, situated as it was in a society where the standards are automatically measured up to those of men's. This is something Tanaka also identifies with *Brutus*, placed, as with many other men's magazines, in the 'general reading' / literature category in the Japanese Publishing Yearbook (Tanaka in Benwell, 2003, p. 223).
[546] Tanaka, in Benwell, 2003, p. 226.

trend for greater specialisation and segmentation of the Japanese magazine market[547], in its focus on a 'happy' consumption, *Brutus* was also part of the consumer boom that was shaping the Bubble Economy. With a circulation of about 130,000[548], although about one third that of *Hanako*'s readership numbers, it is still a popular magazine that still remains in circulation today[549]

Intended for men aged 25-30, the magazine can be seen as part of the performative discourse on hegemonic masculinity aimed at training young salarymen into conforming to accepted practice. In line with the didactic style of Japanese magazines in general, men's literature that includes self-improvement manuals as well as magazines function as prescriptive guides to 'correct' performances of salaryman masculinity. These establish patterns of behaviour, appearance, and attitude in all aspects of a salaryman's working and personal life that can include dress, grooming, speech, deportment, responses to different work scenarios, and even advice on marriage and potential spouses.[550] In this, *Brutus* is no different, and aimed at salarymen who have graduated from the younger cohort of *Popeye* readers, it acts as a conduit for 'correct' consumer behaviour for young salarymen whose interests are no longer those of the pre-*shakaijin*, but who have achieved legitimate adulthood through full-time employment, and are seen as starting on the next stage of social acceptance through advancement at work and matrimony.[551] Moreover, with its almost

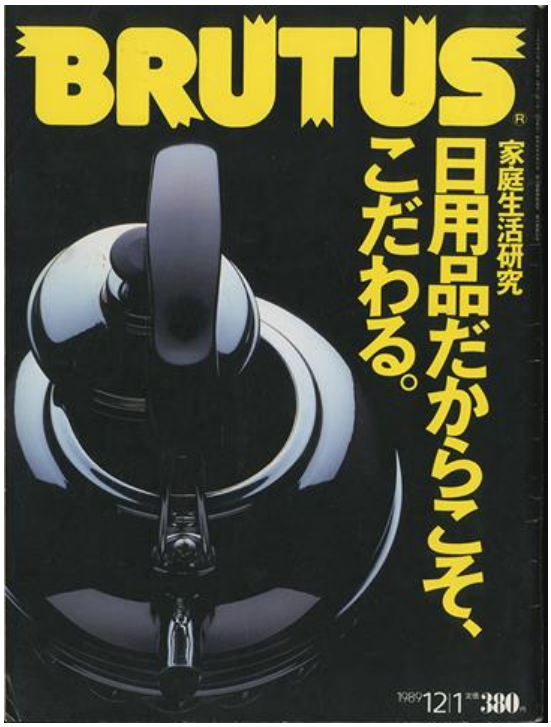

Figure 28: Brutus, 1989, Front Cover
Brutus Issue 216: 01/12/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989); Front Cover

[547] The *Brutus* reader, typically aged 25-30, was meant to have graduated from the younger *Popeye* magazine, before going on to read *Gulliver* in his 30s.
[548] Tanaka in Benwell, 2003, p. 227 – As Tanaka (ibid) notes, compared to the more established *Non-No*'s 860,000 it is also relatively small for the magazine market
[549] In the 1991 Murakami novel, 'South of the Border, West of the Sun', a *Brutus* article is used as a plot device to carry a chain of events forward and for characters to meet, indicating, not only the familiarity assumed by the author of the knowledge of *Brutus* by his readership, but also of its validity of being a widely read enough magazine for characters in Tokyo to become aware of one another through it.
An offshoot magazine focused solely on design called *Casa Brutus* was established in 2000 having started as a special edition of *Brutus* in 1998. Anita Hackethal, *Casa Brutus Magazine Questionnaire: Editor-in-chief Ko Matsubara* (01st January 2013) <http://www.designboom.com/design/designboom-visited-casa-brutus-in-tokyo/> [Accessed 08th August 2015]
[550] Dasgupta in Louie, Kam and Morris Low (eds.), *Asian Masculinities: The meaning and practice of manhood in China and Japan* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003) pp.122-125
[551] Hidaka, Tomoko, *Salaryman Masculinity: Continuity and Change in Hegemonic Masculinity in Japan* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010); Dasgupta, Romit, *Re-reading the Salaryman in Japan: Crafting Masculinities* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

hyper-masculine name, it announces its credentials as a strongly heterosexual masculine magazine, almost overstating its claim to enable young men to make the transition from green salarymen recruits to more established members of the corporate and social establishment.

In Chapter 3, we saw that young Japanese women were the highly visible consumers of the Bubble, not only represented in the magazine, but also in the public spaces of travel, shopping and urban entertainment. While their office counterpart, the salaryman, was also as highly visible in the imagining of the Bubble Economy, this is for the most part confined to aspects of his work, rather than leisure. Thus, in the lifestyle magazine of *Brutus*, from data collected from issues dating 1986-1991[552], we can see that out of all the images of men in the magazine Japanese men have an average visibility rating of 39.5%. However, when applied against the magazine as a whole this drops to around 13% of all images, (with the visibility of all men being around 34% of all magazine images). While the visibility of Japanese men appears to be rather low in this magazine, set against its sister publication, *Hanako*, this is a similarly comparable number, with Japanese women appearing 23.5 times per issue (about 13.5%), which appears to say that while the visibility of Japanese men as represented to themselves are low, this is no different to frequency of Japanese women appearing in *Hanako* magazine[553].

However, on closer inspection of the two magazines there appears to be a crucial difference between the two: namely where the images of men and women appear. In *Hanako* magazine the appearances of Japanese women occur mainly in advertisements, with 62% of the total number of images (15 images per issue), while articles hold about 38%. Conversely, when applied to *Brutus* magazine this is reversed, with Japanese men appearing mainly in articles (at 68%, or 17 images per issue), and much less so in advertisements (32%, or 8 images per issue)[554]. Compared to the overall number of images that feature in either magazine, these numbers are low, but significant in that they indicate how gender is perceived and marketed to during this time. In *Hanako*, Japanese women are shown to themselves in mainly consumer advertisements, while in *Brutus*, Japanese men are focused in cultural and professional articles featured as the main stories in the magazine.

While this has precedents in the application of the male gaze, the use of women's bodies in the selling of goods, and women's role as consumers in Japan's new economic policy of shifting from secondary to tertiary industries, it also says much about the Japanese system of gendered division of labour and the primary place men have in it. For although the salaryman's hegemonic status was the dominant form in Japanese society, it has been called a dependant hegemony, predicated on sexual inequality and gendered labour division. With the onset of capitalism, rapid industrialisation

[552] See Appendix II, Brutus Magazine Data, pp.289-290
[553] See Appendix II, Magazine Comparison, pp.301-302
[554] Ibid

and urbanism, the division between the public and private spheres and the role of producer and homemaker became more pronounced. As such labour division became gendered, with masculinity becoming inextricably intertwined with that of work, production and provision, while femininity was linked to that of home, nurturer and facilitator. Thus, the very definition of this type of masculinity is exclusively bound up with work and production, meaning not only the necessary exclusion of women from work, but also their requirement to fulfil the role of consumer from which men were equally restricted as producers. This may also explain why women encountered so much resistance from men in their attempts to enter the workforce – feeling as they did the need to protect their masculinity and position in the dominant order.

Thus, when we compare the images of Japanese men and women in *Brutus* and *Hanako*, we see that the depiction of them in leisure activities is also gendered. Apart from the images of Japanese men and women depicted as normal everyday subjects which are roughly similar in quantity, images of the men differ from the women in every other category. Surprisingly for the men's magazine, at 1.64 images per issue (6.56% of all images of Japanese men), Japanese men are not depicted doing much sport or outdoor activities at all, with *Hanako* readers surpassing them at 4.33 images per issue (or 18.42% of all images of Japanese women) – a lead of about 3 times. Likewise, in images of leisure-related activities Japanese men feature 3.72 per issue (14.88%) whilst Japanese women in *Hanako* magazine feature 6.19 per issue (26.34%), again, an increase of almost double. What these magazines appear to suggest is that Japanese women were being depicted to themselves as active participants in consumer leisure while men had a significantly reduced physical presence as leisure activity participants. Indeed, articles on specific leisure activities (such as sports, travel and going out to bars and restaurants) are small in number, amounting to around 3 pages per issue, or about 1.82% of the whole magazine, the majority of which came from specific one-off articles on leisure, and compared to the 45.8 pages per issue on leisure in *Hanako* magazine (26.47%), indicates how little leisure is considered in *Brutus* magazine.

Whilst this data originates from *Brutus* magazine, in the popular salaryman manga of the period, *Kosaku Shima; Section Manager*[555], we can also see the peripheral nature that leisure has to play in working men's lives in the Bubble. Apart from a few scenes of domestic life, there are few instances that do not involve work. All the common leisure activities, such as eating out and bar drinking, are in fact extensions of the work environment, partaken with work colleagues outside of work hours. Although sports such as golf also feature, these too are just used as another form of work activity,

[555] 島耕作; 課長 *Kosaku Shima ; Kachō* (Hirokane, Kenshi, *Kachō Kōsaku Shima* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1983-1992) Although a manga, the author (Hirokane Kenshi), a former Panasonic employee, was known to conduct extensive research on which to base the famous manga series. Gaining popularity for its positive and dynamic message and heroic depiction of its main character, it appeal was also based on its reflective and accurate portrayal of middleclass, urban Japanese working life.

and in opposition to all the hype about golf in the Bubble, feature rarely throughout the series at this time, something that is echoed in the rarity of sport being featured in *Brutus* magazine. Dalliances and love affairs are central to the story in the series, and do take place in numerous bars, restaurants, and love hotels, however considering the women are by and large work colleagues or women encountered through work, it could be argued that these activities count towards the extension of the general corporate culture as put forward in the manga, rather than any non-work related form of leisure.

While the linking of masculine identity with work and production may explain the sexual inequality that defined Japanese work, it was also the reason why men worked so hard during the Bubble Economy, even if at great personal cost to them and their families. For although defined through its opposition to the feminine and private sphere, the hegemony of salaryman masculinity is also reliant on the protection of the corporate system, maintaining the gendered labour division which offsets their privileged status (higher wages, extended training period, seniority system, lifetime employment, generous pension options). However, in return for this patriarchal dividend, absolute loyalty and dedication is demanded by the company structure, often demonstrated through excessive working hours, obeying without question, travelling on business trips or relocating for work transfers (*tanshinfunin*), incorporating within it a sense of self-sacrifice that has its roots in the nationalistic demands of the state from the soldier. Moreover, in addition to upholding the gender labour division, corporate compliance, and more prosaically as the requirement for career advancement, hard work was also a symbol of masculinity as producer in a capitalist system, and a way of upholding and justifying a company-sanctioned position of privilege.[556]

Thus, men were not only restricted from accessing the leisure boom of the Bubble Economy because of their excessive workload, but it was a marker of their company loyalty, value as an employee, and requirement of their masculine identity to deliberately refuse enjoyment of leisure. In Hidaka's[557] study of salarymen, more than merely a way of sustaining one's existence, work is described as the meaning to a man's existence, defining one's social position and identity as *ikigai*. Despite family being included within this equation, a salaryman's *ikigai* as husband and father was often defined within his economic and producer capacity as main breadwinner rather than nurturer of children, once again reflecting the gender labour divisions. A study commissioned by the Tokyo Metropolitan Women's Foundation in 1998 found that despite trying to keep a balanced work and family life, practically speaking many men were forced to conduct their lives centred on work.[558] Any time off would be considered disloyal to both company and fellow colleagues, and even asking

[556] Hidaka, 2010
[557] Ibid
[558] Cited in Hidaka, 2010, p. 226.

for family leave could incur disciplinary action. Moreover, due to their allocation of the work space as public realm, men were often not entirely welcome in the private space of the home, estranged from their families and unable or unwilling to help with house tasks as a practice problematic to their construction of masculine identity[559]. Thus, outside the sphere of work there were few places for men to go, summed up by the phrase, 'It is good that husbands are healthy and away from home' that appeared in a 1987 television commercial.[560]

However, this does not mean that there were no outlets for working men's leisure, and suitably masculine pursuits were allowed or even encouraged as a way of enhancing the masculine narrative and gender divide. These included sport (especially golf, which fulfilled requirements for both cultural and corporate-sanctioned masculinity, but also includes other manly sports such as baseball, and spectator sports), company-endorsed activities (company retreats and after-work meals, drinks and entertainment such as karaoke and visiting hostess bars), and in addition to company drinking with colleagues, personal drinking for relaxation.[561] For example, in interview with Dentsu employees, Komatsu, Tamura, and Sakaitani, they spoke at length how they felt almost obligated to spend money and have fun in the context of and as part of their work, with a culture of bar-hopping, hearing stories about their colleagues playing around in Shinjuku through the night, and accompanying bosses and clients to Hokkaido by private jet, just on a whim to eat crab.[562]

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[559] This inspires the '*kitaku kyohi* (fear of going home, due to lack of communication between the salaryman and his family)' among salarymen (Dasgupta in Germer, Mackie and Wöhr, 2014, pp. 259-260).

[560] (Hidaka, 2010, p. 148) This commercial was mentioned during interview by Sakaitani of Dentsu. (See Appendix I, Sakaitani Interview, pp.79-80) In the advert, titled: *Tansuni Gong*, during a housewives' meeting, men are compared to flies, which should be kept out of the house. While comic, this nationally-aired ad campaign shows the level of disdain for salarymen in the Bubble, even while they were at the helm of the economy. See YouTube, *Tansuni Gong Advert* (2008) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Sk88hpvGGw> [accessed 02 September 2015].

At this point it is also worth noting that although research points to rather grim telling of salarymen's lives, my interview subjects were all much more upbeat about their work, and especially working in the Bubble period. While the Dentsu advertising men said that for them, work was play (it was their pleasure to work), others, especially the designers, cited that it was an exciting time full of opportunity, to collaborate on projects or start their own business. There were also some who felt that the young newcomers were rather spoilt for choice and thus the quality of new recruits was rather poor, who were only interested in having fun. Nevertheless, these were generally more upbeat experiences than secondary literature suggests, although it must be remembered, that these interviewees had generally survived the corporate restructuring of the Lost Decades, and were in good positions in their careers. Furthermore, it has been said anecdotally that those Bubble generation men tend to be more cheerful, upbeat and carefree than those that came after, potentially benefitting from Japan's period of wealth in the 1980s.

[561] In 1987, men spent an average of 19 hours a month in work activities outside the workplace, compared to women's seven. (Ministry of Labour statistics, 1987 cited by Brinton, 1993, p. 232)

[562] See Appendix I, Komatsu, Tamura, Sakaitani Interview, pp.50-51

'Very typical, now I came up with typical example. That was my boss. He was creative director but doing nothing. All day and you know, he used to listen to the radio on stock market, and make draft. And if the stock he had the price increased, "Oh I earned three hundred dollars today. I earned two thousand dollars today." And every night he played around Shinjuku area and I clearly in memory, very big picture, was on the wall behind him and he remarked, "Oh last night, I went here, here, here, here."' (Appendix I, Komatsu, Tamura, Sakaitani Interview, p.51)

Moreover, Christensen[563] explores how drinking alcohol in Japan has become culturally imbedded as a specifically masculine practice; from its spiritual roots as a divine drink that enabled communion with the gods, to a cultural facilitator of communication between men. Linked in the post-war years of nation-rebuilding to men's hard labour and their reward at the end of the day, alcohol became a symbol of physical respite, masculine revitalisation and camaraderie over shared drinks that helped to cope with the hardships of loss, defeat, and adversity. As incomes increased through the 1960s and 1970s, alcohol became more available through vending machines, and by the 1980s, drinking culture became established among women and young people as well as men. For companies drinking together after work helped create and strengthen social bonds among men (and in a space and activity where women are culturally prohibited), facilitating greater group cohesion in the workforce.[564] For men it allowed for transgressions and the frank open discussions necessary in the forging of intimate bonds of friendships, whilst also providing a respite from the disempowering experiences of the working day. In the course of my research there were a few occasions where I went drinking with my interview subjects. One interview I conducted at a sake tasting in an old traditional sake house (meeting up with her later to go to a German beer festival in Kobe), while another I met several times to go drinking in retro-1970s bars in Osaka. While most of the interviews were conducted in the work spaces of my subjects, I realised the importance of drinking environments to my bubble-era salarymen and OL subjects, forging social bonds through spending time together in a way that inspired confessional intimacies.

Many of my interviewees also appeared to visibly relax when asked about their involvement and enjoyment of company leisure activities. While doubtless relieved that the interview was not straying into territory that may have been difficult to recount (the embarrassment of over-expenditure, potential criticism about their work environment, their position on gender relations), their recollection of enjoying after-work functions was marked by an almost unadulterated delight and enjoyment in the retelling. That is, until they remembered to hastily reposition themselves with hindsight back into the present and condemn the period as excessive and a collectively foolish overspend of an overconfident Japan. Nonetheless in their enthusiasm I caught glimpses of the fun

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'He goes, "Let's go to Hokkaido!"… To eat crab. And we went by private jet.' (Appendix I, Komatsu, Tamura, Sakaitani Interview, p.51)

[563] Paul A. Christensen, *Japan, Alcoholism, and Masculinity: Suffering Sobriety in Tokyo*, (Lanham, Boulder, New York, and London: Lexington Books, 2015) p. 29.

[564] The organising of time and space is a way of structuring hierarchy as well as a sense of community and shared experience. (Tomoko Kurihara, *Japanese Corporate Transition in Time and Space* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) pp. 145-156) Likewise the giving of gifts, favours, and free meals and drinks is a way of fostering bonds between individuals and reemphasising the shared nature of community (Kurihara, 2009, pp. 156-160) – this all contributes to the continuation of the harmony of the workplace, as workers in a hierarchy create bonds of reciprocal obligation and reconfirm/reiterate recognition of status and thus reproduce the structure of hierarchy.

'bubbly' feeling that marked their time in the Bubble, as a youthful wonder at all the normalised excess and possibility for fun. As one of my Dentsu interviewees amusingly put it, 'What was the bubble lifestyle? More work, more spending, more gorgeousness [luxury], no thinking.'[565]

For while salarymen were denied some of the more visible leisure that women enjoyed, they still enjoyed themselves, facilitated in no small part by the company expense account.[566] Just as women got their men to pay for their leisure, gifts and treats, so I discovered in my interviews that those salarymen lucky enough to work for a large company could count on company expenses to pay for their own excesses. Former OL Matsuo described how when caught out without the right cash at a restaurant while travelling abroad with friends, a nearby table of unrelated Japanese businessmen paid for their entire meal[567]. Meanwhile Uematsu from Panasonic recounted a famed *fugu*[568] dinner amounting to a lavish ¥100,000 per person. Generous department budgets allowed for extensive research trips abroad for design teams, for example to the European destinations of Spain and Italy, while advertising budgets paid for famous actors and filming in glamourous overseas locations.[569] Dentsu once paid ¥2 million to a sports player to have dinner with executive, and while executives took taxis all the way from Osaka to Toyko, even normal employees could travel first class on the train[570]. On the subject of travel, Matsuo recounted how Panasonic headquarters paid for every OL to take a taxi home from the Christmas party, costing around $400 American dollars per ride, while Dentsu employees could use taxis for free. Indeed, one interview subject at advertising giant, Dentsu, said he knew the Bubble was over when he could not claim travel expenses for taxis to and from work anymore. The end of the Bubble meant he had to arrange and pay for his own transportation to work, and the end to the Dentsu expense budget of ¥300,000 per person per month[571].

From the interviews, it appeared that with all the money sloshing around in the Bubble, no one with access to corporate connections actually paid for anything, relying on the next person up in

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[565] Appendix I, Komatsu, Tamura and Sakaitani Interview, p.51

[566] Although difficult to estimate whereabouts expense accounts would be calculated on a company balance sheet, in 1989, for all industries except finance and insurance, average company personnel costs minus wages and welfare expenses was about ¥2.17 trillion, averaging at around ¥90,670.54 per employee. However, in terms of sales data for that year, average non-operating expenses were around ¥1.59 trillion, while selling and general administration expenses was about ¥38.17 trillion, making a total of ¥39.76 trillion. *'Personnel Expenses'*; *'Income Statement'*, Financial Statements Statistics of Corporations by Industry, Quarterly, Policy Research Institute (PRI), Ministry of Finance, Japan.
<http://www.mof.go.jp/english/pri/reference/ssc/historical.htm> [date accessed: 16/03/2017].
See also Appendix IV, Corporate Expenses – Historical Data, p.322

[567] Matsuo anecdote, unrecorded.

[568] Appendix I, Uematsu Interview, p.37; *Fugu* is the famed Japanese blowfish. Valued as a delicacy, its high price is partly accounted to its poisonous nature, requiring careful preparation by highly skilled chefs.

[569] More on this in the following chapter.

[570] Appendix I, Komatsu, Tamura and Sakaitani Interview, pp.44-45

[571] See Appendix I, Komatsu, Tamura and Sakaitani Interview, p.44; p.55

the chain, until finally the company footed the bill. While consumer debt appeared to balloon[572] banks weren't allowed into the credit card market until 1992 and most of their loans were for the small business and mortgage markets. As Ohtsu and Imanari note, '"Bubble" … was a skilful metaphor. Retailing as a whole grew at an average annual rate of only 5.5 percent. In other words, the general public did not loosen their purse strings; only a minority of consumers was being extravagant.'[573] Instead, with access to the liberalised sources of money in the international markets, companies, no longer bound to the domestic banks, were allowed to source their funding further afield. With the higher yen, low interest rates and the availability of cheap money, the rocketing land prices buoyed by speculative investments enabled companies to borrow more at cheaper prices guaranteed by the land they were sitting on. While used to fund their expansion abroad, undoubtedly some went into their expense accounts while they concentrated on courting clients, developing products, and fuelling a consumer boom at home.[574]

However it must be remembered that this enjoyment was predicated on the condition of corporate access, and interviews with those running their own small businesses such as the architect Sakakiyama, enjoyed none of these benefits.[575] Moreover, as has been criticised about some current global high-technology companies such as Google, these company perks only encouraged employees to spend longer hours at work, blurring the line between personal time and work, and some participants spoke of not being able to go home till past midnight, due to work-socialising commitments. It must also be remembered that regardless of the lateness of the hour, salarymen were expected nonetheless to turn up to work the next day on time. However, despite some frustrations at the length of hours spent working, this excessive style of working, coupled with the booms in investment projects, consumer and leisure culture, would have contributed to the heightened sense of excitement of economic and social frenzy that characterised the Bubble.

Thus, we can see how in Japan's 1980s, not only is labour a gendered issue, but so is consumption, leisure and time. While women were largely excluded from the working structures due to their essential femininity[576], equally it could be argued, so were the men, the demands of upholding their

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[572] Up sevenfold from ¥9 trillion to ¥67 trillion between 1989 and 1991 (Wood, 1992, p. 37)

[573] Ohtsu and Imanari 2002, p. 245 – Indeed NHK director, Inoue, said that because people were spending on the assumption of loans and estimated asset increases, what they were doing was imagining – and in this way spending imaginary money.

[574] Indeed, in interview it was suggested that it was common practice for money to be left over from projects, which in the sloppy practices of the Bubble, got subsumed into the expenses of the departments rather than being accounted for. (See Appendix I, Komatsu, Tamura and Sakaitani Interview, pp.40-59)

[575] Although they did benefit from the additional work as larger companies struggled to fulfil all their orders. According to Sakakiyama, the 1980s were a good time to start up an independent architectural studio, with plenty of building projects to go around. (Appendix I, Sakakiyama Interview, pp.60-76)

[576] Indeed, in Hidaka's (2010) study, she notes that when women enter the professional track, their femininity is often used against them, as a criticism of their neglect of their feminine duties at home or a singling out at their ability to do things their male colleagues can't do – or they are made masculine, compared according to the standard of men rather than women, and thus 'de-feminised'.

masculinity and privileged position foreclosing the possibility of any unsanctioned enjoyment of the leisure benefits of the Bubble. This did not mean that men were denied any enjoyment, however the condition of their hegemonic status meant that this had to be mediated through the practices of the company. Although there were perks, in some ways this became a double-bind, extending the working day and therefore the role of the salaryman further into his personal life. Finally, despite gendered access to the benefits of working life, one thing that appeared everyone had access to was money – or at least the ability to find someone else to pay for one's enjoyment. Even if this excluded the smaller independent businesses, they in turn benefitted from the extra work coming their way from larger companies. However, while it appeared that everyone was able to enjoy themselves at someone else's expense, by offsetting the costs onto the company overheads, they were in fact storing up debt in the international money markets for future payback. The ballooning of property values could thus be seen as a metaphorical store of Japan's collective enjoyment, displaced into excessive mortgages that would have to be paid over the next two decades.

Men and Culture in *Brutus*

With the emphasis on women as being the face of the 1980s leisure and consumption boom, men's exclusion from opportunities for leisure outside of work would suggest that they were less visible in Bubble culture, instead hidden away at work or in bars. However rather than being advertised to, images of men in *Brutus* magazine are predominantly shown to appear in articles, placing them at a different centre of the Bubble: that of the production of culture and industry rather than consumption of services and leisure. As mentioned, whilst the total number of images of Japanese men and women per issue are approximately the same (at around 23.5 and 25 images per issue), their allocations are almost exactly opposite, with 62% of the images of Japanese women appearing in advertisements as opposed to 32% of the images of Japanese men, and 38% of the images of women featuring in articles as opposed to 68% of Japanese men[577]. This does not necessarily mean that men did not appear to themselves as idealised images. In addition to Miller's[578] observation that in line with the consumer trends of the 1980s, male beauty was on the rise, Tanaka[579] notes that younger male magazines such as *Popeye*, *Men's Club*, and *Men's Non-No* promoted a softer, more fashionable version of masculinity. However, targeted at younger men in their late-teens to early-twenties, these magazines cater to a demographic still considered not full adults, and thus not yet expected to inhabit the hegemonic masculine role of full-time white-collar wage earner,

[577] Appendix II, Magazine Comparison, p.301
[578] Miller, 2006
[579] In Benwell, 2003.

husband and father. *Brutus* by comparison caters to readers who are starting to enter this role, and thus need guidance on how to complete the transition from pre-*shakaijin* to *shakaijin*, establishing themselves more legitimately as hegemonic masculine subjects.

However, it is not just the fact that women were being targeted mainly by advertising and the men through articles that indicates the gendered arrangement of enjoyment and participation, but also the types of articles that feature in the magazines. As explored in Chapter 3, the articles in *Hanako* are primarily concerned with travel, going-out, fashion, entertainment, and food, pointing to primarily leisure activities as the main source of interest for their readership. Meanwhile articles on interior design, architecture, arts and culture, and technology, number the fewest, with products and politics and current events numbering a medium amount, and regular articles feature subjects that focus on topical issues, entertainment, and consumption suggestions and advice. By comparison in *Brutus* the focus is on products and interiors, while the minority of subjects include food, leisure, politics and current events, relationship advice, technology, art, and entertainment, and features on fashion and cultural and historical articles amount to around halfway between the two. Surprisingly for a time in which land prices and cost of home ownership was on a rapid increase, architecture features very little in both magazines, but in the case of *Brutus*, is made up for by the prominence of interior design. Finally, the regular articles, which make up about 23.63% of the articles, consist mostly of current events and cultural trends[580].

What this indicates is that for the Japanese male *Brutus* readers, culture, cultural trends, and product and interior design occupy a central role, while leisure activities and entertainment hold less of an interest – directly in opposition to the way *Hanako* magazine is structured for women. Thus, just as women were able to access leisure options and articles through magazines such as *Hanako*, so men appear to be able to access other aspects of the Bubble through *Brutus*, namely through culture and design. The portrayal of entertainment and media in both magazines is a good example of this difference; in *Hanako* entertainment is depicted through listings of ephemeral entertainment such as cinemas, films, and bars, which are all laid-out to help the reader make an informed consumerist choice among different activity options. In *Brutus* however, entertainment is not usually in a list format, but instead is featured through information and discussion about specific films, historic or retro and contemporary, indicating a type of consumption based around cultural information rather than participating in consumption activities. As with the format in *Mono*, we see how article structure can indicate to the reader its place in the system of capitalist mass-production, with relative cultural value in direct proportion to its ephemerality which, in the case of *Hanako* and *Brutus*, is also gendered. According to Benwell,[581] the structuring of gender is a form

[580] Appendix II, Magazine Comparison, p.302
[581] Citing Giddens (1991), Beck (1992) and Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (1995) (Benwell, 2003, p. 11)

of cultural capital, in which the masculine occupation of the hegemonic discourse leads to a gendered division of culture. In this way, the relative ephemerality of women's interests in *Hanako* and the monopoly of interests of higher cultural value by *Brutus*, mirrors and replicates gendered discourse around culture and capital.

However, gendering the system of cultural production and value is not the only a way of dominating the cultural discourse, but is also a way of dominating over other men. Even though the likelihood of working salarymen at the start of their careers having time to enjoy the entertainment and cultural pursuits of the Bubble would have been slim, their consumption of information about it through the magazine shows a different kind of consumption was being practiced. At its most prosaic level, it could be seen as information gathering, vital in the training and development of the salaryman, not only in the formation of his identity to fit the masculine ideal, but also as part of the process of distinguishing himself from his colleagues and improving his chances of promotion[582]. In this we see Bourdieu's exchange of educational and cultural capital in play, where through the investment of time and effort, these can be later exchanged for social capital and further down the line economic and financial capital as the individual makes his way through the different networks of social and occupational fields.[583]

In a wider sense, through being portrayed through articles on culture, men were also being placed at the centre of cultural production that reflected their permanent status as editors, photographers, writers, artists and designers. Women's marginal status at work thus had implications for their participation in the national production of culture, and although they still were able to occupy positions as direct producers of art (through literature, art production, and performance of heritage), their ability to contribute to the wider popular discourse of culture (through journalism, design and producing mass-entertainment) was restricted by the gendered nature of their work, and thus limited largely to performance through consumption. Men on the other hand, by occupying the centre-ground, were able to largely dictate cultural discourse and thus reproduce gender norms, even though they could not be seen as actively consuming their own output.[584] With the EEOL starting to improve women's access to work, coupled with their rising importance as consumers, this was beginning to change, and women's input would become increasingly valuable

[582] For the salaryman, continuous training and education was part of an overall work philosophy that characterised the Japanese work environment, seen in the endless company courses and after-work groups ('Quality Circles') that aimed at improving the company, its systems, services and products (Dore and Sako, 198, p. 108; Thomas, 1993), as well as prove a dedication to the company.
[583] This may explain why this approach appears exclusive to the male readers of *Brutus*, but not necessarily the female readers of *Hanako* (who were not expected to be as highly qualified, educated, nor career-dedicated as their male counterparts).
[584] See Footnote 349 (p.108) of this thesis for statistics on gender participation in professions.

in the production of a consumer economy. However, at this point in the late 1980s, men still dominated the discourse, using it to shape and replicate structures to their advantage.[585]

One of the ways in which cultural production is co-opted can be seen in the dissemination of cultural information in *Brutus*. Issue 166, 'The Style-Wise Man; A Guide to Life's Finest; for the 1990's *Brutus* readers',[586] opens with an extensive look at upcoming international trends for the next decade. Exploring 1990s trend predictions, it showcases international cultural icons such as the Pompidou Centre in Paris, products, design, architecture and urban design, computers, technology, art and media – laying claim to these areas of special interest for male *Brutus* readers, in which information rather than products are the consumed item. This exploration of cultural knowledge as opposed to consumerist participation, is extended further by a following article, '4 Doors for the Individualist', a retrospective of significant historical figures from 20th century culture, from Benjamin Franklin and Walt Disney to LA Lakers/NBA player, Abdul Jabbar. While of no apparent consumer benefit, this article appears to have the express purpose of widening the reader's knowledge of international cultural history and general knowledge, not only providing a different perspective, but also obliquely aligning the significance of the international and historical with a Japanese knowledge of culture.

Issue 205, 'Brutus Intelligence Report'[587] also features an extensive examination of cultural trends, although in this case the focus appears to be on various aspects of international culture, from German postmodern design to international art exhibitions and operas, presented with big bold blocks of colour in the background that ground it to dynamic and up-to-date postmodern trends. However, as the issue goes on, it appears to feature more Japanese examples of cultural trends than in previous issues about culture, showing a greater inclusion of Japanese engagement with contemporary international culture, art and design, rather than as a separate exoticised sphere. In

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[585] At this point I would also like to note how all my male participants were involved in the production side of culture in some way or another, whether in advertising at Dentsu, in design at Panasonic and Toshiba, for television at NHK, freelance, in graphic design, product design, architecture, or indeed as somewhere in between, as my interviewee, Sakai, who worked on a freelance basis for Nissan. As such they all had very interesting viewpoints on culture, not from a consumer point of view, but from a production side, where ways of working, budget constraints and working with colleagues all framed their memories of the Bubble, rather than how things tasted, felt, cost, and so on. While I would have like to have interviewed more women who were OLs in the period, contrasting these experiences with my OL contact, Matsuo, there was a huge difference between how she and the men described their time in Japan's Bubble. The closest perhaps would have been the Dentsu executives in their recalling of going out and having fun, however Matsuo's memories of how things tasted (for example, creamy and rich French food), felt, and how much she enjoyed things, were much more sensitive and material in quality, reflecting perhaps a more consumer-oriented outlook.

[586] 'The Style-Wise Man; A Guide to Life's Finest; 90 年代のブルータスたちへ (*kyūzero nendai no burūtasu tachi e*); *Brutus* Issue 166: 01/10/1987 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1987)

[587] , 'Brutus Intelligence Report, 「NY、パリ、ロンドン、バルセロナ、東京、最新コラム集情報に溺れる！」' *pari, rondon, baruserona, tōkyō, saishin koramu-shū jōhō ni oboreru!* (NY, Paris, London, Barcelona, Tokyo, latest column collection – drown in information!) *Brutus* Issue 205: 15/06/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989)

this sense, this issue on cultural trends appears to be promoting an overall engagement with the world, rather than a retreat or fantasy-led escape. By placing contemporary modern Japan intertwined and amongst other international trends, featuring knowledge-based and culturally educational articles on real leading people and objects in the arts/culture industries, we can see how the cultural situating of Japan with the international thus adds to its overall prestige and by extension the reader's own cultural capital.

Men and Things

However, the emphasis on cultural information does not mean that men were also not consumers of things, and true to the consumer boom of the Bubble Economy, products do feature quite prominently in *Brutus*. While it was said that young women were the new lucrative consumer market, the products featured in *Brutus* show that men too were being targeted at. These broadly fall into the two categories of: luxury goods and imported items, and domestic and homeware goods.

Issue 205, *'To find individualistic goods, research imported goods thoroughly'*[588], is devoted to foreign goods as a consumer guide. Starting with a double-page spread comparing the styles and products of the 1970s and 1980s[589], through consumer goods it highlights the differences between the decades (Figures 29, 30). Contrasting the polaroid cameras, McDonalds, gold Adidas trainers, topside deck shoes and panama hats of the 1970s to the coffee machines, 'mineral water boom', Macintosh computers, gold-buckled Gucci loafers/moccasins, Filofaxes, luxury watches and serious briefcases of the 1980s – this contrasting display aims to show not only the technology advances, but also the lifestyle changes between the two. The brighter colours, carefree expression and relaxed attitude of the former makes way for the profusion of matt black surfaces, luxury designer brands, and weightier seriousness of the latter. In this way, we can see how the agenda of *Brutus* as a guide to adulthood manifests itself through this comparison. Through the guise of nostalgic retrospective, by contrasting their readers' late-teens and early-twenties of the 1970s, with their 1980s present-day selves, the article shows up a model of adulthood as sophisticated, technologically advanced, professional, and much wealthier than his cheaper happy-go-lucky past. As such, it is a self-congratulatory guide to successfully transitioning to hegemonic masculine adulthood, a metaphor that furthermore may be extended to include Japan's transition from 1970s growth to 1980s-economic and international powerhouse.

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[588] '個性派グッズを求めて、輸入品を徹底研究' *koseiha guzzu o motomete, yunyūhin o tettei kenkyū* *Brutus* Issue 183: 01/07/1988 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1988)
[589] *Brutus* Issue 183: 01/07/1988 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1988) pp.16-19

Top:
Figure 29: 1970s goods comparative page spread
Brutus Issue 183: 01/07/1988 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1988) pp.16-17

Left:
Figure 30: 1980s goods comparative page spread
Brutus Issue 183: 01/07/1988 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1988) pp.18-19

For implicit in the title of the entire issue are two main points. The first is a focus on 'individualistic goods' and the second is the searching for it in 'imported goods'. In the 1980s, government policy focused on improving Japanese lifestyles through a search for meaning and authenticity in individuality, whilst also addressing the problem of Japan's trade surplus with other nations through the lowering of trade tariffs and opening up the domestic consumer market. It is against this background that we can view this article on imported goods, and the wide variety of goods depicted, ranging from cars, motorbikes, electric toothbrushes, skis, and other high tech consumer goods, to teapots, hats, exotic fruits, and luxury jewellery and watches. Notably, whole sections on luxury imported foods appear to circumvent the conventional gender division regarding food (as domestic and therefore women's interest), however in this case the mantle of luxury and the foreign overrides gendered categories.[590] While this focus on the foreign may also be attributed to the glamour of the international, with the unstructured, relaxed composition and wide unspecified

[590] More will be discussed about men and food further into this chapter.

range of the objects we can see this article more as encouraging the importation of foreign goods, rather than of looking to foreign goods for its meaning. In this way, just like the incorporation of loanwords into the Japanese lexis, using them for Japanese-specific purposes and contexts[591], so these foreign objects too can be seen as cultural imports, of miscellaneous foreign origin and irreverently jumbled up for Japanese consumption.

Tellingly, in the same month there is another issue on products, 'The Style-Wise Man: A Guide to Life's Finest; In the thrilling column, kick/beat the heat![592] With a focus on quality rather than the novelty of the foreign, it features all types of unusual and disparate items that range from cars, pianos, sunglasses on one page, to designer avant-garde furniture, handmade boats, interiors, architecture, taps, and crystal decanters (and even guns!). What links these disparate areas of technology, designer products, furniture, luxury foreign goods (crystal decanters, vintage cars), postmodernist architecture and interior design, and art, is the vague intent of denoting quality, social status and cultural value. Thus, in prescribing a guide to being a 'style-wise man', the article looks to these goods for their transformative quality, chiming with both standard consumerist practice of accessing sign-values, and the *mono igai no mono* (things that are not things)[593] trend that characterised the 1980s quest for individual meaning.

Another example of *mono igai no mono*, can be seen in the 1989 issue, *'I obsess over these daily necessities.'*[594] More than the cultural significance of the goods, it is their material quality that takes centre-stage. Even though these are not extraordinary special purpose goods but rather domestic goods for everyday use, the presence of modernist styling in the products and stark glossy presentation coupled with the large sensual close-ups of products, elevates and even fetishizes the everyday (Figure 31). Rather than foreign branding or imports, here we see the combination of international styling, cultural capital and material quality used to indicate a subtler communication of quality and value. It also indicates the increased presence of not only luxury high-end products in Japanese consumer culture, but the aesthetic language used in international values of quality and presentation infiltrating the sphere of the everyday.

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[591] Stanlaw, 2004.
[592] The Style-Wise Man: A Guide to Life's Finest; 痛快コラムで、暑さを蹴とばせ！' (*tsūkai koramu de atsusa o ketobase!) Brutus* Issue 184: 15/07/1988 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1988)
[593] Tobin, 1992, p. 15.
[594] 日用品だからこそ、こだわる (*nichiyōhin da kara koso, kodawaru*) *Brutus* Issue 216: 01/12/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989)

Figure 31: Sleekly modernist designs of the everyday in Brutus.
Brutus Issue 216: 01/12/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989); pp.32-33

During interviews, many of my subjects talked about the style of the Bubble[595]. From 'light' and 'delightful' it was also described as a time of 'gorgeousness', 'luxury' and 'beauty'. While the designers talked about ornamentation, postmodern styling, and a 'beautiful lifestyle', former OL, Matsuo and the Dentsu employees mentioned luxury brands, cars, houses and even yachts. Of note was how important appearance was for the Dentsu employees – one of whom was once sent out by his boss for looking 'shabby', and having to buy a completely new suit on his lunchbreak. From these accounts, the glamour and excess of the Bubble appeared to have struck both genders. Where Matsuo enthusiastically recounted LV, Hermès, Tiffany, so the men reeled off Versace, Brooks Brothers, Rolex. With expressions of mild disapproval from the older participants of the shenanigans of the younger generation and horror at the expense of sushi in the Bubble (¥40,000), the differences perhaps were found more in generational and occupational attitudes rather than gender. Notably, other than in designing and selling products, none of the participants mentioned everyday items, even when asked about their everyday life. Perhaps this was to do with their age at the time and their gender, but certainly luxury items and beautiful styling were the themes of the Bubble.

Nevertheless, the infiltration of the everyday by the language of luxury works both ways, and in the 1991 issue, 'Consumer Reports 1991; what you can buy now'[596], we see the co-opting of international styling and presentation to curate and present sets of high-quality, styled, beautiful objects that are nevertheless practical and eminently consumerable. Featuring once again a range of goods, from rice cookers, drinking glasses, and laundry baskets to cameras, music systems,

[595] See Appendix I, Various Interviews, pp.1-155
[596] 'Consumer Reports 1991 いま、なにを買うべきか。' (*Ima, nani o kaubeki ka?*) *Brutus* Issue 241: 01/01/1991 and 15/01/1991 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1991)

guitars and mineral water, the large-image with accompanying text format is both sophisticated and accessible. Moreover, an included timeline of the historical development of products from 1960-1989 provides the cultural background that enrichens the piece and adds depth to the readers' knowledge, proclaiming this is not only a guide to material consumption, but also to knowledge and cultural consumption. In this piece, we thus see several separate practices of cultural capital coming together, from the provision of objects and information with cultural and consumer value and the invoking of international culture through styling and presentation, to the satisfaction of consumer desires for individuality and the creation of the self through things.

However, in a period in which the dominant form of masculinity was based primarily on a relation to work, production and thus the equal denial of leisure and consumption, these articles on material consumption appear problematic to this formation. Moreover, with the large proportion of domestic household items showcased, men consuming images and information of household goods appears contradictory to their performance as men in the public realm. What we thus see here are several contradictions that is one of the many that appear to characterise the Bubble period when it comes to the application of wider policy to local systems. In some ways, the articles occupy a place of no conflict, explained by the demands of industry on men as producers to be informed of current products and designs. Moreover, the use of the international as an aesthetic to promote Japanese products and industry can work in favour of Japanese nationalism, overriding the gendered divisions – as does the need of the economy in encouraging a consumer market[597]. In his study of Japanese consumption in the late 1980s, Tobin[598] observes how, despite the failings of postmodern consumption in the West to successfully eradicate feelings of meaninglessness, repetition and boredom, Japan consumes as 'adolescent exuberance rather than middle-aged despair… Though they might well be trapped in the same cycle of consumption as Americans, middle-class Japanese somehow manage to save more regularly and yet to spend with less guilt, less regret, and less ambivalence than their counterparts in the West.'[599] Yet rather than the guiltless and childlike enjoyment that Tobin appears to suggest, I would posit that, although the consumption in 1980s Japan was fun, exuberant and not tinged with 'despair', the situation as more like carnival. In the grip of a mania, the frenzied conditions of the Bubble Economy combined with the self-confidence of a latent *nihonjinron* movement to create a state of hyper-consumption that overrode any normality and convention of gender or social position.

Moreover, the experience was not necessarily guilt-free as there were other Japan-specific tensions under the surface that made consumption one of the few avenues for release, and it is in this that

[597] Tanaka in Benwell, 2003.
[598] Tobin, 1992, p. 20.
[599] Tobin, 1992, pp. 20-21.

we see a final implication of the consumption of goods for men. For while the needs of the consumer economy and the overriding of gender norms in regards to consumption, meant that men were being included in the conversation of material consumption – in many ways it was also a kind of deviant behaviour in which men were allowed to indulge in the consumer culture of the Bubble without openly diverging from their performance of masculinity. This is something we can see in the following section.

Consuming Interiors

Surprisingly for a men's magazine, interiors feature quite prominently in *Brutus*. Of the thirteen issues examined in the years 1986-1991, three issues focused on interior design as their special feature[600], and two of which were the largest of all the special features.[601] As mentioned, Japanese performance of hegemonic masculinity is predicated on the gendered division of work and home, the public and the private, and by definition interiors fall within the feminine remit of the private domestic space. However, with the demand of a consumer market for all to become consumers, it appears that men were being encouraged to encroach into this traditional female space. As Tanaka[602] has shown, other blurring of previously gendered areas had already been affected by the needs of the consumer economy, for example in the rise of men's fashion magazines also in the 1980s, depicting not only men's fashion, but also images of men as objects for the consumptive gaze[603]. With fashion already catered for by 'city boy' magazines aimed at younger men,[604] *Brutus*' move into the interiors market chimed with the 25-30 age of their soon-to-be settling down demographic, as well as the interest in a land price bubble whose masculine link with investment and economy negated the link with the feminine and interior. In this, *Brutus* can thus be viewed as once again facilitating the performance of the salaryman masculinity, encouraging at this stage in their readers' lives to participate in the discourse around setting up home and thus heterosexual matrimony.

Interiors also have a longer history of interest in Japan, seen in the home decoration magazines that were part of the *mai homu* (my home) boom accompanying the rising incomes and aspirations of the 1950/1960s miracle economy. By the 1980s, 'life-style' and 'catalog' (home redecorating) magazines were observed to have multiplied rapidly, promising to create an "independent lifestyle"

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[600] These were, *Architectural Stylebook* (*Brutus* Issue 126: 01/01/1986 and 15/01/1986 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1986), *Casa e Moda* (*Brutus* Issue 154: 01/04/1987 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1987), and *Brutus Interior* (*Brutus* Issue 252: 01/07/1991 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1991).
[601] *Architectural Stylebook* at 72 pages and *Brutus Interior* at 73 pages.
[602] In Benwell, 2003.
[603] Edwards, 1997, and Chapman, 1997, cited by Tanaka, in Benwell 2003, pp. 231-232.
[604] *Popeye, Men's An-an, Hot-Dog Press* (Tanaka, in Benwell 2003, pp. 224-225)

to readers through a variety of western-style items[605]. In this we not only see the effect of promoting individualised consumption, but also the market for companies such as INAX (bathroom fixtures and tiles) as featured in *AXIS* magazine in Chapter 2, who were rebranding their corporate identity in order to expand their domestic market. Nevertheless, the promotion of interiors as a masculine subject marked *Brutus* as one of the new men's magazines that, in its focus on only cultural aspects and little to no discussion of the conventional 'male' topics of sex, politics and economy of traditional men's magazines,[606] displayed its credentials as a more inclusive guide for a new type of urban man. As a sign of the changing status of interiors in men's magazines, in 1998 *Brutus* created a regular special edition focusing solely on interiors and design called *Casa Brutus*, its popularity gaining it separate magazine status in 2000[607].

As such, this shift in the gendering of interiors from women to men's magazines also required a different approach in emphasis as to its meaning for male identity, adapting it to better fit within the existing expectations of hegemonic masculinity. At a time of economic muscularity and international prowess, the rising values of Japanese land was totemic of national fortune, as was the higher yen value. Thus industry, work and land become part of public space as economy, alongside the culture of property around land investment. These include interiors which provide a convenient space to display one's participation in the new economy of the Japanese 1980s Bubble, and thus become suitable as a display of hegemonic masculinity.

Accordingly, rather than only small-scale displays and tips on domestic home-improvements[608], the special features on interiors in *Brutus* are much grander and wide-ranging in scope and ambition, placing interiors as professional design within a larger cultural practice. In the issue, '*Casa e Moda*'[609], the first 16 pages of the interiors and architecture feature, entitled, 'Modernism Renaissance', are presented through an educational lens, providing cultural capital through the examining of Modernist examples past and present and focusing on specific designers such as Corbusier and Man Ray. From international design history, it then proceeds to explore specific properties in Tokyo[610] designed in trendy 1980s postmodern style. Densely packed with small images and blocks of text outlining details on location, price, size, and floor plan, this appears to be more advertising than design feature (and knowing the close relationship between Japanese advertisers and magazine publishers, this may be the case). Nevertheless, placed just after the

[605] Rosenberger, 1992, p. 106.
[606] Inoue, 2001, p. 134 cited by Tanaka, in Benwell, 2003, p. 230.
[607] Anita Hackethal, *Casa Brutus Magazine Questionnaire: Editor-in-Chief Ko Matsubara* (01st January 2013) <http://www.designboom.com/design/designboom-visited-casa-brutus-in-tokyo/> [accessed 08 August 2015]
[608] Rosenberger, in Tobin, 1992, pp. 106-125.
[609] *Brutus* Issue 154: 01/04/1987
[610] *Brutus* Issue 154: 01/04/1987, pp. 73-81.

historical design piece on International Modernism, the article is doing more than furnishing its readers with educational and cultural capital; it is inviting direct links between hallowed figures in Modernism with Tokyo designers, its buildings direct descendants of those of Corbusier. In this way, it is not only showing its internationalist credentials, but reversing the process, bringing the international within the sphere of Japanese practice and domesticating it to become part of the Japanese urban landscape. This is perhaps the significance behind the use of the postmodern style in the everyday cityscapes of 1980s Japan; aside from the detritus from the property bubble, as evidence left behind of the risky behaviour of foolhardy investors, it was also Japan's way of taking in with its buildings what it had done culturally in food, words and dress – take in the international, adopt it and turn it back out as part of its own recreated image.

Interviewing designers, postmodernism was an inevitable part of the conversations. However, despite the prevalence of the style in 1980s Japan – and indeed it may have contributed to the 'bubbly' and frothy style that used decadence and surface ornament to characterise the Bubble in some of my participants' minds – it was revealing to hear that many of the designers had backgrounds in European modernism, and thus were at odds with postmodernism. This was certainly true for the product designers, who had to acquiesce to the requirements of the sales and marketing departments in providing products styled in the latest postmodern colours and shapes[611]. The architect, Sakakiyama, also notably disliked the postmodern style, calling it boring and using cheap materials[612]. Nevertheless, he also had to design to his clients' requirements, and perhaps in this is the true nature of the postmodern in the Bubble – that rather than being designer-led for the most part, it was instead sales and marketing who coerced reluctant modernist-leaning designers into making cheaper versions for the market. That though postmodernism was an international style, bringing it home it became adapted to the whims of a moneyed but undiscerning audience.

As a strategy of laying claim to international discourse, '*Brutus Interior*'[613] contains a 16-page article entitled: 'Latest Industry Information from 32 Interior Authorities [specialists]'. As the title suggests, this article features 32 professionals involved in the interiors industry discussing design. On each page, large bold blocks of primary colour frame a photograph of the interior design specialist, a large colour photograph of the design object, and corresponding text. On the one hand it is assumed that this article is to educate and inform the reader as to the wisdom and taste of trusted professionals in the field, something identified as common in guidance function of Japanese lifestyle

[611] See Appendix I, Uematsu Interview, pp.23-39
[612] See Appendix I, Sakakiyama Interview, p.69
[613] *Brutus* Issue 252: 01/07/1991

magazines.[614] However with the dominance of Japanese specialists (31 out of 32) mixed in with the featuring of glossy seductive images of avant-garde designer objects, not only is this article more spectacle than tips for the aspiring housewife, but it presents Japanese design as contemporary, professional and authoritative. Featuring a variety of people involved in the design field, from designers, architects and stylists to gallery and shop managers and journalists, this article shows Japanese design to be a complete cultural practice and industry. Professionalising it in this way links it back to the economy and thus widens its scope beyond the domestic and private out into the public sphere of professional and international culture. However, while interior design was being masculinised to be acceptable for male participation, in another sense this can be seen as a front for a more deviant interaction with culture away from the dominant masculine paradigm, and which can be seen in the consumer products that comprise part of the domestic interior. For while interior design is presented as historic, cultural, international and professional, the products that accompany it are more nuanced, and full of domestic and consumer overtones that stray into the realm of the private and feminine. '*Brutus Interior*'[615] for example has an article entitled 'Take a peek inside this shop, and get accustomed to the interior authority' (by which it is assumed to mean 'interior design knowledge'). Made up of 11 greyscale pages on an eclectic variety of objects and their respective stores or galleries, this is more accessible as visual and practical consumption for home decoration. Likewise, '*Casa e Moda*' [616], features various materials and interior/home accessories/products ranging from home office solutions/furniture to antique clocks and furniture, Persian-style rugs, and Japanese calligraphy and postmodern furniture and lighting options, complete with information on stockists and prices that are reminiscent of *Hanako* magazines shopping lists for travel and entertainment. If Persian rugs, furniture and lighting weren't feminine enough, '*Brutus Interior*', has a whole section on chinaware[617], in which established Euro-American brands such as Wedgewood, Minton, Royal Crown Derby, and Royal Copenhagen are presented alongside prices and Japanese stockists. Meanwhile in a move reminiscent of Rosenberger's[618] home decorations for housewives, '*Architectural Stylebook'*[619] contains an article on DIY interior design techniques, and specifically, examples of avant-garde postmodern design. Using a range of styles and materials, it includes false-marble effect wall-paint, textured paint on wallpaper, innovative use of objects as room accessories, and mosaics (Figure 32). The article covers many

[614] 'The didactic tone is also present in the Japanese men's 'lifestyle' magazines for a slightly older generation. When I conducted the interview with the editor-in-chief of *Brutus* (Saito 1998). He explained that his audience… would like to read up on the subject and 'study' before going to a restaurant and ordering wine. Asked if he thought that his readers generally liked 'studying', he said, 'Oh, yes. Japanese people love studying!'' (Tanaka, in Benwell, 2003, p. 238)
[615] *Brutus* Issue 252: 01/07/1991
[616] *Brutus* Issue 154: 01/04/1987, pp. 62-73
[617] *Brutus* Issue 252: 01/07/1991, pp. 61-76.
[618] In Tobin, 1992, pp. 106-125.
[619] *Brutus* Issue 126: 01&15/01/1986

aspects of what appears to be fashionable postmodern design on a doable room-by-room, step-by-step scale, enabling the *Brutus* reader to engage with and implement cutting-edge style and design into their everyday domestic environment. While Rosenberger notes that 'the husband's participation in decorating is strongly encouraged. At the very least, he is pictured sitting alongside his wife in a redecorated apartment, a romantic mate in a leisured life.'[620], it must be remembered that helping out in home affairs was a relatively new practice. Unsanctioned by a work environment that required absolute devotion, this could be seen as deviating from the model of masculine salaryman identity.

Figure 32: DIY for men in Brutus
Brutus Issue 126: 01/01/1986 and 15/01/1986
(Tokyo: Magazine House, 1986); p.100

Thus, in the postmodern reappropriation and emulation of international styles, designs and products, especially in the consumer sections of home goods and DIY, we see a playfulness and exuberance that suggests an active engagement with postmodern concerns about breaking away from traditional preconceptions. Through playing with design style, postmodern concepts around intertextual engagement are incorporated into the *Brutus* vernacular, giving readers not only the things by which they can project their individuality and distinguish themselves in a consumer society, but also a freedom to transgress conventional norms. As such, in the furtive consumption of these domestic products, hidden amongst articles about professional interior design and behind the butchness of the *Brutus* name, it seems men were practicing a different kind of masculinity, and one which strayed into the more traditionally feminine sphere.

[620] Rosenberger in Tobin, 1992, p. 114.

This is something we see elsewhere in other aspects of men's subculture, not only in the new men's fashion magazines, but also in the development of a softer, more delicate and feminine male fashion and beauty[621]. A men's discourse around cooking too would become popularised in the late-1970s and 1980s.[622] Although the total domination of salaryman masculine hegemony in the 1980s prevented many of these forms from fully revealing themselves until the end of the Bubble, these deviant male practices of accessing traditionally female interests can be seen in these rather furtive arrangements. In this we see how the excuse of consumerism and contact with the international were allowing not only women, but also men to break out from their rigidly defined gender roles, of which more will be discussed in the next section.

Travels in the International

In the narrative of internationalism, Kelsky describes Japanese men as the 'phantasmic Other', who are seen by Japanese women as backward (*okureteru*) and a symbol of the static system in which they are marginalised. Men's privileged position in the patriarchal structure makes them both 'intransigent defenders of "feudal" Japanese tradition' and actively hostile to the 'possibilities of internationalist transformation and universalist alliances' that internationalisation brings.[623] Noting the aggressive responses in young men's magazines such as *SPA!* and *Popeye* to the infiltration of Western festivals such as Christmas into the Japanese calendar,[624] Kelsky references *Asahi Shimbun* journalist, Mitsuko Shimomura, in his description of Japanese men as having created 'a "rotten, pus-oozing" system, literally putrefying from the inside out from its pathological insularity, and paralysed in the face of globalising forces.'[625] However, although Mitsuko's quote is dated back to 1990 (and can be seen as part of the general unease about hegemonic masculinity in the Bubble – more on this later), the hostility from *SPA!* is dated to 1993 as the Bubble was ending and Japanese hegemonic masculinity was becoming aware of its precariousness. Moreover, if we examine the

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[621] Masafumi Monden, *Japanese Fashion Cultures: Dress and gender in contemporary Japan*, (London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2015);
Laura Miller, *Beauty Up: Exploring Contemporary Japanese Body Aesthetics* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press), 2006

[622] Aoyama in Louie & Low, 2003, pp. 155-173 – Rather than men becoming less masculine through accessing aspects of female beauty such as depilation, Aoyama explores through popular literature, manga and cookery books, how cooking becomes a masculinised practice through the emphasis on culinary knowledge, skill and technique, exploration, and robustness in ingredients such as offal.

[623] Kelsky in Blake Wills and Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008, p. 94.

[624] "Aren't you people Buddhist? You're not even Christian! What is this "*Meri kurisumasu*"?? Get serious! If you want a holiday, have one on April eighth – the "Flower Festival", when Buddhists the world over celebrate the birth of the Buddha in a Himalayan flower garden." (*SPA!* 1993, p. 58)' (Kelsky in Blake Wills & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008, p. 94)

[625] (quote in UPDATE 1990:90) (Kelsky in Blake Wills & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008, p. 94)

Brutus issues, there is an engagement with international culture that appears neither defensive nor hostile, but rather outward looking and interested.

According to Ivy[626] the formation of Japanese identity is symbiotic with the West, framed through a simultaneous positioning as Other and against the Otherness of the foreign. While at its simplest it manifests itself as *nihonjinron* nationalist discourse, this framing and re-framing has been identified in the self-exoticising and auto-orientalising of Tobin's Japanese-French restaurant in Hawaii[627] and Ivy's JNR Discover Japan campaign[628] – in which Japanese cuisine, culture, and landscape is 're-discovered' as Other by native Japanese adopting the orientalising eyes of the West. At the same time, through the extensive incorporation of foreign loanwords in Japanese language[629] and the mixing of cultural and visual references in JNR's 1980's Exotic Japan campaign,[630] the practice of ready adoption, incorporation and playful re-appropriation of disparate elements has been described as the specific marker that defines the composition of Japanese cultural identity.

However, a third reading of Japanese identity formation can be seen in the practice of reversing the exoticising process back on to the Other, in which one's own primacy is further legitimised by emphasising the exoticness and difference of the Other. This has been explored in the phenomenon of Tokyo Disneyland[631], where the insistence on recreating a 'faithful' replica of Disneyland as a fantasised marker of the typical American Other, speaks to more about Japanese desires to place itself as central to a global narrative in which Otherness is made to be performed by the foreign for the enhanced enjoyment and entertainment of its own local populace.[632] This can be seen in some of the *Brutus* articles presenting the foreign, most notably in the article, 'Young Fogey's London'[633]. In this a hyper-exaggerated imagining of English culture is presented; accessorised with classic cars, bespoke tailors, picnics and country houses, offered in a muted colour palette and set against the backdrop of an English countryside, complete with the impeccably tailored English gentleman (Figure 33). Combining to create a romantic fantasy of England that is more *Brideshead Revisited* than Sex Pistols[634], these free-floating signifiers of exotic Englishness are eminently adaptable for

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[626] Ivy, 1995. See also Tobin et al. (1992); Stanlaw (2004)
[627] Tobin, 1992, pp. 159-175.
[628] Ivy, 1995.
[629] Stanlaw, 2004.
[630] Ivy, 1995.
[631] Brannen in Tobin, 1992, pp. 216-234; Raz, Aviad E., *Riding the Black Ship: Japan and Tokyo Disneyland* (Cambridge (Mass.) and London: Harvard University Press, 1999).
[632] Tokyo Disneyland will be explored in more detail in Chapter 5.
[633] 'The Style-Wise Man; A Guide to Life's Finest; 90 年代のブルータスたちへ [For the 1990's Brutus readers] *Brutus*, Issue 166: 01/10/1987
[634] *Brideshead Revisited* (1945) is a classic English novel written by Evelyn Waugh (1903-1966) set in the interwar period in Britain in the 1920s to the 1940s. It is famed for its nostalgic rendering of a romanticised and glamorised English past of titled families, grand country seats, indolent and old moneyed lifestyles that were fast disappearing with the onset of the Second World War. By comparison the Sex Pistols were a late-

commercial use, as indicated by the aesthetics of the accompanying advertisements in *Brutus* for classic English brands. However, rather than providing a fantasy alternative for Japanese women looking for an escape from their marginalisation, in the men's magazine the article takes on a more nationalist tone, its titillating and backward-looking English Otherness framing the comfort of Japanese global primacy and triumph over Western modernity. Thus, rather than reserved for a feminine discourse of transformation and emancipation, engagement with the international can also be used to shape nationalist discourse, and by extension a reaffirming of the Japanese hegemonic masculine position.

Figure 33: Englishness imagined in Brutus' 'Young Fogey's London' Brutus Issue 166: 01/10/1987 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1987); pp.116-117

An example of this strange combination of the allowed transgression of the masculine into the feminine came up in my interview with the Dentsu employees. In 1990 Dentsu was heavily involved with the Osaka Expo '90, *Kokusai Hana to Midori no Hakurankai (Hana-Haku)*, 'The International Garden and Greenery Exposition'. Part of the International Expositions Convention, Komatsu explained that while Osaka originally wanted a rural exposition, the government insisted on it being international, and as a result they got gardens and plants. While notably not a very masculine topic, under the umbrella of work, Komatsu designed a pavilion, and his colleagues all went to the exposition several times to enjoy the exhibitions of flowers, plants and seeds. In this we see not only work neutralising a traditionally feminine area to allow temporary trespass, but in co-opting it

1970s punk band who, fronted by their leader, Sid Vicious, shook the British establishment with their extreme and antagonistic irreverence and courting of controversy. Though short-lived (1975-1978) the band's confrontational energy and anti-establishment sentiment reflected many of the tensions in society that characterised much of the British 1970s and 1980s.

for the purposes of nation-work, it masculinises it and reclaims it for the public and masculine realm.[635]

In this way, the landscape of the international and language of *kokusaika* can also be seen as men's natural territory, as public space and the stage for nationalist ambitions, international industry and the performance of Japanese work. However, this also has problems for the men operating within these parameters, as their engagement with the international was defined by their pact with corporate-sponsored masculinity. Thus, unless legitimised through the company or government, men were by necessity essentially prohibited from finding enjoyment in the international as leisure or consumption, due to their masculine identity as worker and producer.

Nevertheless, it appears in *Brutus* that men were still engaging with the internationalism discourse through the articles, although this had to be consumed clandestinely in order to preserve their hegemonic masculine status. For alongside engagement with the international through culture and consumption of things, *Brutus* appears to be particularly keen to explore it through interiors. In '*Architectural Stylebook'*[636], at 72 pages this special feature is the largest of all the issues, featuring interior styles and designs from all around the world. Containing examples from New York (31 pages), Sydney (12 pages), and India (9 pages), rather than showcasing exemplary models for home redecoration purposes, it is an exploratory and voyeuristic peek into the homes of American, Australian and Indian foreigners. Furthermore, more than a simple tour around other people's homes, it explores their cultures and lifestyles, from specific areas in New York (the African American culture in Brooklyn for example) and Sydney (a 'boating lifestyle'), to exemplary interiors and homes in India. In this way, the *Brutus* reader gets not just interior design ideas and tips, but also a visit to that country, and an idea of how people there live in much the same spirit as the travel articles in *Hanako*. At times this does have the feel of the *nihonjinron* as explored in the '*Young Fogeys London'* article, and if we go forward to '*Brutus Interior'*[637], an extensive 32-page feature on home interiors in the US is divided up into specific sections of West Coast, South West, and East Coast, with large glossy images of home interiors and their occupants of 'typical' American families (Figure 34). However, unlike previous special features on international design, little detail is mentioned on the specific domestic things featured, with images dominating over text, framed by the bright postmodern colours of pastel greens and burnt orange. With so little specific detail provided on the occupants or their things, these act as visual showpieces of American domestic interiors that go beyond the culturally anthropological or consumer-oriented, but stray into that of the Japanese gaze on the Western-exotic and indeed, Western-eroticised. For although the images

[635] See Appendix I, Komatsu, Tamura, and Sakaitani Interview, pp.40-41
[636] *Brutus*, Issue 126: 01&15/01/1986
[637] *Brutus*, Issue 252: 01/07/1991

speak of the Other to the reader, they also reference a fantasy and a longing for an interior of the Americas, in whose large open-plan rooms and family-friendly living hold the promise of exchanging the 'limited mental and physical space of Japan' for the 'limitless space of the foreign'[638] that Kelsky's female subjects also saw in the international.

Figure 34: Ideal US interiors in Brutus Brutus Issue 252: 01/07/1991 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1991); pp.36-37

However, it is not just the foreign that is imbued with promise, but at times also provides a convenient background to a fetishisation of the domestic as well. In '*Casa e Moda'*, the last 14 pages of the feature focus on a range of paraphernalia, that include avant-garde furniture and domestic decorative objects, to more traditional Japanese settings and materials for a domestic environment[639]. Although providing cultural information about design pieces as per the requirements for masculine consumption, by the end of the article it becomes clearer that the aim of the piece is not to provide style tips or information about upcoming trends and styles, but instead to display unusual objects in fantastic and exotic settings. Initially large blocks of text accompany the images, however, as the images get larger and more outlandish, the blocks of text get progressively smaller, until the piece is consumed by images of objects as pure visual consumption.

[638] Kelsky in Blake Wills & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008, p. 89.
[639] *Brutus* Issue 154: 01/04/1987, pp. 82-95.

By the 1991 issue on LDKs[640], the interiors are almost a parody of domesticity (Figure 35), littered with kitchen utensils, furniture, and living accruements that display their inhabitants' characters and tastes, and allow the reader to voyeuristically imagine life within those interiors. Likewise the featured rooms are often inhabited by their occupant-creators, giving a scale and context of real domestic and authentic life not always present in features on design.[641] Apart from the voyeurism of travel into the international, through the intimate portraits of inhabitants and their domestic set-up, the reader is able to fantastically displace himself into their environment, seeing what they wear, use, sit on, their home colour palettes, objects they surround themselves with, and even scale of rooms and furniture. In this way, we see not only a desire for the colour of international travel as a leisured cultural experience, but also a longing to participate in the conversation about home and the domestic interior.

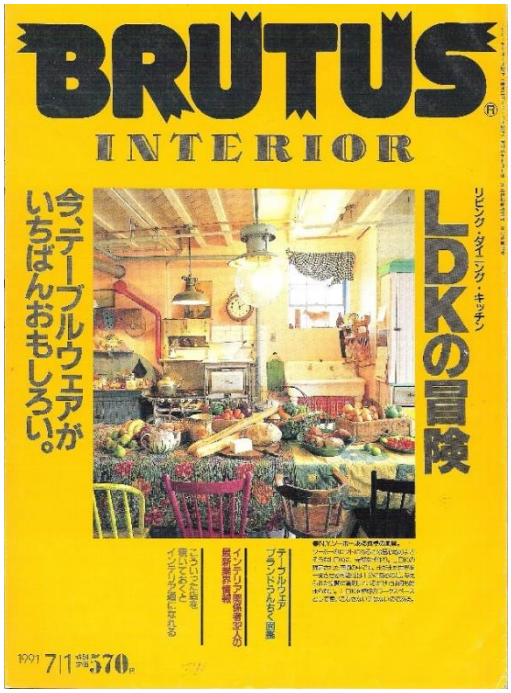

Figure 35: Brutus LDK Issue, Front Cover
Brutus Issue 252: 01/07/1991 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1991); Front Cover

Thus, we see a double transgression happening, for through *Brutus*, not only are men accessing an international that in its consumer-orientation and leisure unsanctioned by any relation to work, but it does it through the lens of interiors. Partially disguised by informative pieces on culture and design knowledge, it allows men to indulge in the conventionally feminine areas of travel and the domestic interior. In this way, it appears men could enjoy participating in this aspect of *kokusaika* culture outside of work and their own hegemonic status.

[640] Acronym for 'Living (room), Dining (room), Kitchen', LDKs refer to Japanese apartments built in the post-war building boom, and describe a more modern, open-plan and Western-style way of living.

[641] Of course, although in some ways these articles do provide a glimpse into other overseas lives and experiences of lifestyle, by the very fact that they are selected and edited means that they are also part of a construction about foreign interiors, adhering to an ideology of 'good', 'exemplary' or 'typical' design that the magazine editors want to promote. However, this also lends it to being more easily curated into an easily packaged fantasy for visual consumption.

However, as part of the dominant paradigm of social and structural power, men choosing to subvert their own status appears both contradictory and unnecessary. Yet in the 1980s we see men starting to explore other avenues of expression that go against the prescription of hegemonic masculine performance, from the aforementioned cooking to changing models of male beauty. Part of this was to do with a dawning awareness of the relative drawbacks to salaryman life, notably in the amount of self-sacrifice given over to the company. Through the miracle economy this was more easily subsumed into the wider narrative of nation-building, yet in the lauded and internationally-recognised prosperity of the 1980s, the trade-off of national project no longer appeared plausible. Indeed Hidaka[642] observes decreasing levels of certainty in the link between *ikigai* and work among her salarymen interview subjects as their ages diminish. Dasgupta[643] also notes that not only did salaryman manga[644] around this time increasingly portray the salarymen as pitiful and often ridiculous beings, but the English-language guide of '*Illustrated "Salaryman" in Japan*' produced by the Japan Travel Bureau (JTB) was also an officially sanctioned publication that depicted the poor salaryman as harried, pitiful and comic. While the JTB guide as referenced by Dasgupta was the seventh edition produced in 1996, well after the Bubble had burst, an examination of a first edition published in 1986[645] (Figure 36) shows similar presentations of the salaryman, even before the Economic Bubble had gotten underway. In reference to the practice of *tanshin funin*, the salaryman's experience is described as follows (with accompanying illustrations):

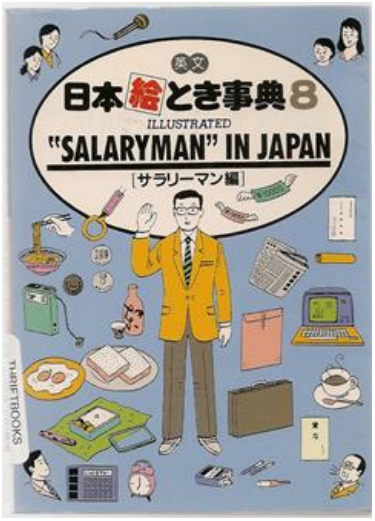

Figure 36: JTB's 'Illustrated Salaryman in Japan'
Japan Travel Bureau Inc., Illustrated 'Salaryman' in Japan, (Japan: Japan Travel Bureau, Inc.) 1986; Front Cover

> 'Businessmen who refuse to go on solo assignment are literally discarding their hopes of career advance. The husband must do his own cooking and laundry, often a lonely and aggravating experience. Only on payday does the wife remember that, yes, she is still married. A considerate husband tries to come home on weekends, with most of his own pocket money used to pay the transportation costs. Less considerate husbands just send home the money, creating an atmosphere which increasingly resemble divorce.'[646]

While undoubtedly tongue-in-cheek, the pocket-sized publication was nevertheless intended as a cultural export that showed typical traits of the working salaryman. Though most of the illustrated

[642] Hidaka, 2010
[643] Dasgupta in Louie & Low, 2003, p.128
[644] '*Salaryman Heaven* and *Salaryman Hell'* (ibid)
[645] Japan Travel Bureau Inc., *Illustrated 'Salaryman' in Japan*, (Japan: Japan Travel Bureau, Inc.) 1986
[646] Japan Travel Bureau, 1986, p.49

points are harmless, describing practical daily life, some, such as the *'Salaryman Blues'*, *'Reasons Salaryman Want to Quit'* and *'The Salaryman's Health'*[647] are almost brutally honest in describing the downsides to a salaryman's life. These include nervous children refusing to go to school, the danger of his or his wife's unfaithfulness, a 30 to 40-year home loan (described as a ball-and-chain in daily life), not enough pay, no freedom and long working hours. In describing the salaryman's health, the guide can be particularly brutal:

> 'In their 20s and 30s salarymen work to the limits of their physical stamina, often relieving the stress with alcohol. When they suddenly begin to run out of steam in their 40s, they at last become concerned with their health. The most common salaryman ailment is the nervous stomach ulcer. Because of the frequency of such ulcers, most companies view them on the same level as the common cold. Salarymen suffer from lack of sleep and hangovers, rarely exercise, eat irregularly, have a poor nutritional balance, and are usually chain smokers. In short, it is a miracle they are alive at all.' [648]

Further to this, while Japanese men were beginning to appreciate how difficult their lives were in relation to the relative rewards, other changes in the 1980s meant that there were more direct challenges to the structures of corporate masculine hegemony. With more focus on gender inequality and the passing of the EEOL, women encroaching on men's work were a direct challenge to men's status and masculine identity. Furthermore, the discourse of individualism and freedom in the 1980s broke the link between corporate unity and self-sacrifice. Barred from the benefits of stable work, women and the *shinjinrui* enjoying themselves in the leisure boom were examples of new lifestyle possibilities that broke away from the post-war industrialised gender norms. Excluded from formal responsibilities, young women were largely exempt from disapproval, however Hidaka[649] shows that working salarymen displayed great reservations and even contempt for young men not fitting into the norm of working life. This she interprets as a new type of liberated man representing a threat to conventional corporate-dependant masculinity as well as an envy regarding their autonomy over their own time. Although Hidaka's research was conducted in the decades after the Bubble ended, nevertheless in the salarymen's disapproval of the following generation, we can see the anxiety about social roles and order the *shinjinrui* incited in commentators at the time.[650]

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[647] Japan Travel Bureau, 1986, pp.132-137
[648] Japan Travel Bureau, 1986, p. 136
[649] Hidaka, 2010, p. 114
[650] More of which will be explored in Chapter 5.

While the destabilising effects wouldn't be felt until the recessions of the Lost Decade after the Bubble[651], we can see the seeds of it being sown in the social and policy changes of the 1980s. Where before men's *ikigai* (purpose for being) was located firmly in work and family as fully-employed worker and main breadwinner, the discourse of personal self-fulfilment coupled with a greater awareness of the sacrifices of men's work created doubts about *ikigai*'s locus in the corporate workplace. Moreover, with 1980s feminist discourse and policy changes in sexual discrimination, women too were beginning to more directly challenge the *daikokubashira* system, not only at work, but also in the home. Following the birth rate shock of 1989 [652], reassessing their attitude towards gendered work, the government encouraged women to combine both marriage and maternity through more women and family-friendly policies. Meanwhile men were now encouraged to spend more time with the family, helping out with chores and childrearing[653]. However, as their role as financial provider and occasional disciplinarian was no longer enough, and their loyalties began to be more divided between family and company, their *ikigai* as work inevitably came into question.

At this point in the late 1980s and early 1990s we see the start of men's interest groups forming such as the 'Study Group for Men's Liberation'[654] in 1991, as well as the publication of academic books and founding of men's studies[655] inspired by the findings of feminist research into Japanese women's and men's lives.[656] Taking a more critical look at the structures and tenets of Japanese masculinity, in addition to all the other male interests in fashion, cooking, interiors and family, this can be seen as a wider concern about men's working practices that, inspired by the rising profile women and their changing status in society, started to demand more for men in the affluence of the Bubble.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen how men's lifestyle magazines were a new growth area in Japan and globally, coinciding with the Bubble Economy and its focus on consumption and new lifestyles. More than just lifestyle and consumer literature, magazines can also be seen as locations for performative discourse on hegemonic masculinity, in much the same way as self-improvement manuals, helping young men to conform and establish correct patterns of salaryman consumer

[651] Usually credited as the catalyst for the 1990s questioning of men's identity as their authority and status eroded with the subsequent corporate losses and restructuring.
[652] in which the birth rate declined to 1.57, the lowest since the mid-1960s (Hidaka, 2010, p. 155)
[653] Although with limited success over time.
[654] *Menzuribu Kenkyūkai*
[655] *dansei gaku*
[656] Taga in Martinez, 2014, p. 220.

behaviour. Moreover, the importance of establishing gendered positions is important for salarymen, as their hegemonic status has historically been reliant on sexual inequality, with a gendered labour division helping to maintain their privileged position in the workplace and in society. However, this also means that men in this polarised arrangement are by definition restricted to the role of workers and producers, making open consumption problematic as an illegitimate masculine action.

This lack of access to consumption is reflected in the lack of leisure featured in *Brutus* magazine, especially when compared to *Hanako* magazine. Instead, for leisure to be enjoyed for men, it needed to be partaken under the umbrella of work, legitimised as an extension of corporate culture. Furthermore, working hard at the office and denial of open enjoyment of leisure and domesticity was not just a symbol of their own masculinity, but was also part of a contract of privilege as sanctioned by the corporate system, in which absolutely loyalty and devotion to the company upheld and justified the benefits of masculine privilege.

However, this did not mean that salarymen in the Bubble did not enjoy themselves, and company-sanctioned activities, such as drinking and golf, were leisure activities that not only helped bond colleagues and facilitate business, but also enhanced the narrative of masculinity, facilitated by the company expense account. In this way, the excesses of the Bubble, often borne by the men for the women, were themselves offset by the budgets of the corporation. These in turn were facilitated by the access to globalised finance and booming property values of the Bubble, making in its own way a mockery of the new consumer economy. Thus, while work, leisure, consumption and even time appear to be gendered concerns in Japan during the period of the Bubble Economy, bound together by the overarching influence of the corporate system, it appeared that access to finance, or having someone else to finance one's enjoyment was readily available to all, leading to the ballooning of corporate debt as the store of the collective enjoyment.

However, as indicated by the various interests within the magazines of *Hanako* and *Brutus*, while women were the visible face of consumer enjoyment during the Bubble, men appear to be the ones behind the production and discourse around culture and leisure, and specifically areas normally deemed to be of higher cultural value. In doing so, men could not only dominate cultural discourse, but also add cultural capital to their professional lives, acting as important leverage in the cultural and knowledge economy. Thus, while apparently prevented from openly accessing the leisure and consumer benefits of the Bubble Economy, men were still heavily invested and involved in the cultural forms of the Bubble.

Part of keeping abreast of cultural events included being aware of latest trends in consumer objects, and Brutus shows how their male audience was kept aware of not only the types of goods were out there and their cultural value, but also the seeping of the international and the luxurious into the

normal in the quest for self-determination and an 'individualistic lifestyle'. In this way, the demands of industry and nationalistic ambition may have created conditions in which men could and indeed were required to consume information on mass amounts of goods, contributing to the feeling of frenzy and carnival-like mania that overrode gender norms and characterised consumer culture in the Bubble.

Nevertheless, there were some fundamental contradictions that so much rampant material consumption had with the essential formation of masculinity, indicating a gender deviancy among *Brutus* readers that transgressed normal masculine interests and behaviours. This can be seen in the promotion and focus on interiors and domestic goods, which are given masculine legitimacy through the cover of workplace and industry information-gathering, cultural cache, design trends, and Bubble Economy property investments. Furthermore, the arena of the domestic interior, when placed in the context of masculine interests, becomes another battleground for nationalist comparison of Japan within the international community and internationalist discourse. Nevertheless, this focus on the domestic was a new step for masculine heterosexual culture in Japan, and was echoed in the developing discourse around cooking and male beauty also popularised around this time, indicating a change in the positioning in Japanese masculine identity.

Another area in which masculinity could be negotiated was in the international. While for women it was a site for potential emancipation and change, for men it represented a potential threat to the stability of their hegemonic privileged status. However, in the adoption and juxtaposition of the international, it could also help signify extreme otherness, and by comparison reaffirm the nationalist discourse of Japanese (masculine) hegemony.

Thus, the articles in *Brutus* go further than merely for the purposes of information-gathering for professional capital, but indicate a wider trend for transgression into the traditionally feminine under the guise of work/industry and nationalism. This comes together in the 1990 World Expo, *Hana-Haku* 'The International Garden and Greenery Exposition', in which the theme of plants and flowers is co-opted for national prestige and commercial opportunities in the international sphere, and in the process, allow men the ability to enjoy a normally prohibited feminine activity.

This transgression is also showcased in the extensive articles on the spaces of the international domestic interior. Partly anthropological and partly voyeuristic, these cultural articles of interior spaces act as stages for the Japanese gaze to eroticise the West as exotic and limitless spaces of possibility. This exoticising of the international interior then becomes turned back in on itself as the idealised fantasy domestic interior, the international enabling the Brutus reader to articulate a longing for involvement in the domestic discourse, as respite and a refuge from the brutality of his own workplace and hegemonic status within it.

In this way, alongside the developments in cooking, male beauty, this new interest in domestic interiors and international cultures indicate a growing awareness of the downsides to salaryman life that were beginning to make themselves felt, juxtaposed as it was against the significant leisure and consumer gains of the Bubble. Furthermore, with changes in the workplace with the greater introduction of women, and expectations that men would have to contribute more to their domestic and family arrangements, the end of the Bubble brought with it more uncertainty and conflict that would have consequences for men's understanding of their role as *daikokubashira* and main breadwinners. As such the affluence of the Bubble seemed to indicate not that Japanese men had 'arrived', but conversely made them feel more impoverished in terms of time and enjoyment than the young people and women around them.

In summary, men, while prominent captains of industry and the hegemonic ideal during the Bubble Economy, were thus also ultimately restricted by their dependence on the company for their totemic status. Bound by work and excluded from unsanctioned leisure, academic research in this field has typically portrayed the salaryman as a pitiable construct. However, personal accounts from interview subjects show that not all experiences reflect this, and in the Bubble many men did enjoy themselves through the context of work. It moreover enabled them to experience other areas of gendered leisure and culture which they would normally have been excluded. However, study of *Brutus* shows that these gendered separations were changing, with men reflecting a yearning for both the international and domestic interior normally prohibited under the terms of their corporate-hegemonic contract. In this way, we see how men's experiences and attitudes from this time are much more complex and subtle, requiring further study.

Chapter 5: Imperfections, Disaffections: Flaws in the Bubble

Through the research so far, what has stood out is a heady optimism and national confidence that made itself felt in spending, consumption, work, leisure, and enthusiasm for international engagement. However, despite the perceived successes and enjoyment of the Bubble, there were indications of more ambivalent attitudes that digressed from the main narrative of national celebration. Although not as prolific, these can be seen in some of the articles and images in the magazines that demonstrate questions and reservations about whether Japan's Bubble Economy was delivering on its implied promise of real national and international prosperity through the wealth it generated. Through examples from the afore mentioned magazines this chapter will explore some stranger, more ambiguous aspects to the Bubble, and how they demonstrated the various strains felt by its audience.

Spend! Spend! Spend! Consumption and Transformation in the Bubble

In the frenzy of opportunity in the Bubble, a buoyant labour market, expansion of certain tertiary and high-tech industries, investment opportunities and new openings for leisure and enjoyment all seemed to combine into one big swirling bubble of excess. With so many demands on one's working and leisure time, speed appeared to be a defining characteristic in which everyone was busy working and enjoying themselves. One of the ways in which new liberalised attitudes towards consumption, capital and commerce coincided was in the consumer card industry. While the lead article on cards in *Mono* magazine, *'Important Card Strategy; I will teach you how to use smart cards from play to work!'*[657] (Figure 37), features some credit cards, through store cards and other membership cards it explores the card as a culture in which the consumption of different aspects of leisure and lifestyle are articulated through membership and spending.

Figure 37: Mono 'Cards' Issue
Mono Issue 125: 02/12/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988); Front Cover

[657] *Kādo dai sakusen; asobi kara shigoto made kashikoi kādo no tsukai masanori emasu!*
カード大作戦 ; 遊びから仕事まで賢いカードの 使い方教えます！ *Mono* Issue 125: 02/12/1988 (Tokyo: World Photo Press, 1988)

While seemingly logical that at a time of financial deregulation there would have been an explosion in the market for general purpose credit, sources indicate that in fact historically credit cards have had a slow uptake in Japan. Even as the American credit card market expanded in the 1970s and 1980s, though the credit card was introduced to Japan in 1960, the Japanese market for general purpose credit was stagnant until the early 1990s. This may in large part be the result of historic tight restrictions on the credit market, to which Japanese banks were precluded access to opening direct lines of credit to their customers. The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI)[658], was in charge of consumer finance, and it was not until 1992 that Japanese banks were allowed to lend to consumers on revolving credit.[659] Instead bank credit often worked more like a debit system in which borrowing consumers had to repay their outstanding balance each month, and only independent non-banking companies, such as the smaller *shimpan kaisha* modelled on the early American charge-card models of Diners Club and American Express, were allowed to lend to consumers on revolving credit.

This may explain why the article in *Mono* magazine is dominated by department store and restaurant dining cards rather than credit cards, with only a few bank-affiliated cards featuring on a single final page about international cards, foreign banks and credit card companies. Additionally, it has been noted that the cultural practice of using credit cards in Japan is different from that of America, with a strong cash culture, high savings rate, and those with credit cards using them more like debit cards with an agreed one-off payment of the entire sum (*ikkai barai*) rather than monthly payments. Overall this makes the practice less lucrative for companies, and the need for credit cards for general purchases less prevalent in Japan then, for example, store cards[660].

However, despite the lack of regulatory and cultural enthusiasm for credit cards in Japan in the Bubble, the presence of this special feature in *Mono* on cards attests to a change in the attitude towards spending, or more accurately the practice of spending. Moreover, although there were restrictions on consumers being able to access revolving credit through their banks, there are indications that consumer spending via credit increased during the boom of the 1980s. At the end of September 1991, the personal sector's gross financial assets (excluding shares) totalled ¥777 trillion, or ¥19 million per household[661], and linked to the rising value of personal financial assets

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[658] Rather than the Bank of Japan or indeed Ministry of Finance – suggesting a link between industry and consumption rather than finance and consumption.

[659] Wood, Christopher, *The Bubble Economy: The Japanese Economic Collapse* (London: Sidwick & Jackson, 1992) p. 37. This in turn may have been due to a combination of global pressure from the Plaza Accord to liberalise the Japanese financial system, a desire to encourage Japan's domestic consumer economy due to the increased value of the yen and the resulting drop in exports, and finally the bursting of the Bubble in 1991.

[660] Ronald J., Mann, *Credit Cards and Debit Cards in the United States and Japan*. Vanderbit Law Review, Vol. 55, p. 1055, 2002. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=263009 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.263009 [Accessed 19th June 2015]

[661] Wood, 1992, p. 37.

and the international value of the yen, Japanese consumers took advantage of indirect lines of credit through easy housing finance (for example from housing loan companies and market-shielded employer-subsidised mortgages[662]) and low interest rates to fund their spending spree.[663] Suffering from depressed exports, Japanese manufacturing firms also created easier conditions in consumer credit in order to boost their domestic market[664], and the boom in consumer spending has been attributed to these lines of non-banking credit. There are of course detractors to this, for example although department stores enjoyed a high growth rate, the retail sector as a whole only grew at an average annual rate of 5.5%, further to which the introduction of a consumption tax in 1989 worked as a dampener to the consumption boom of the Bubble Economy.[665] Nevertheless, from 1983 to 1990, credit cards increased threefold to 166 million cards, and while gross consumer debt (excluding mortgages) was in the range of ¥9 trillion in 1989, by the end of March 1991 it totalled ¥67 trillion, an increase of more than seven times in under three years.[666]

However, while these figures show that there was a definite market for consumer credit and spending, even if not necessarily facilitated by direct bank-credit, the *Mono* article shows that there was also a culture to be seen in the 'consumer-credit' card. As the title shows[667], this article was about educating and informing the reader on the types of cards and their benefits and uses, and with an emphasis on 'from play to work', sets the ground for its scope to encompass all areas of life as a 'lifestyle', rather than just for work (or indeed just for play).

By the virtue of its presence in *Mono* magazine, it being an introductory guide, and its inclusive language and content, the article demonstrates that 'card culture' is not just for the wealthy or elite, but is available to all, and indeed necessary to access the promise of Japanese 21st century living. In this are also implications of Japan's destiny, and the responsibility of the Japanese citizen to not just be a good worker and producer, but also, as consumption was becoming more and more a vital part of its economy, a good consumer. As ever the spectre of *kokusaika* was also never far away, and with the greater integration of Japan with the world in trade, industry and tourism, the promotion of card use can be seen as part of this wider narrative of belonging and liberation.

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[662] Ibid, p.37.
[663] Itoh, Makoto, *The Japanese Economy Reconsidered* (New York: Palgrave, 2000) p. 81.
[664] Itoh, 2000, p. 15; pp. 80-81.
[665] Ohtsu, Makoto and Tomio Imanari, *Inside Japanese Business: A Narrative History, 1960-2000* (New York and London: M.E. Sharpe, 2002) p. 245.
[666] Figures quoted from Japan's Economic Planning Agency in Wood, 1992, p.37. Of course, it must be remembered that these do not necessarily take into account the differences either in gendered spending, nor that covered by corporate spending vs. private consumer spending. Nonetheless, it can be said that spending rose as a whole during this period.
[667] '*Important strategy for cards; I will teach you how to use smart cards from play to work!*'

The national responsibility to consume and form an identity with being a consumer is something that Baudrillard touches upon in his essay on credit in 'System of Objects'[668]. In this essay Baudrillard, on building upon his reasoning in which consumption is established as a choice (albeit a false choice on which the real lack of agency of the consumer is masked by the apparent choice available to him within a limited range of virtually identical models in a series) – this presentation of 'choice' in consumption is extended towards the offering and use of credit as a 'free gift', or a bonus within the world of production. While of course not literally free, by deferring payment into the future, credit allows the consumer to instantly obtain and use the desired object without having to pay for it first, or indeed labour for it in advance, and in this way, takes on the appearance of being 'free'. In being the product of an entire system of production and consumption, credit is seen as an extension of the entire system and therefore the State, and can thus be assumed not only as an economic right of the citizen existing and contributing to the production system, but as an extension of the choice and freedom of choice implied in the consumption economy. Credit thus becomes mingled with perceptions of the rights of freedom of the citizen and any attempts at curtailing consumption, even that which is not yet paid for, comes to be seen as a curtailing of the freedoms and rights enjoyed by the citizen. In this way the State becomes even more intermingled with the system of production and consumption, and the citizen with consumer.

It is with this in mind that the paragraph that opens the article can be examined:

> 'The world is in the general card era. You can telephone with a card, and also ride on the train. Shopping and meals are also OK. Also don't be afraid of a vacation abroad. But there is an excess of these cards and now it is commonplace to have the card, which card you choose is really a cause of annoyance. Practical ways to use credit cards, from the future of prepaid cards, trends in membership cards, to the new products of card goods, there is a large feature that boldly attacks the problem of 'What is happening in cards now'. Now [this will] certainly finish the 'important card strategy' battle for modern people who can't exist without cards.'[669]

In the above extract, we see how pervasive cards were either becoming or predicted by *Mono* to set to become, especially in the new consumer environment of leisure and international travel. Although credit cards were not widely used nor widely available as bank-affiliated general purpose credit cards (at least until 1992), the article appears to show an increasing uptake of other types of cards, from cards for telephone calls, shopping and eating out, to membership cards, vacations and prepaid cards. What this shows is not only Japan's move towards a more technological (and by

[668] Baudrillard, Jean, *The System of Objects*, trans. by James Benedict (London and New York: Verso, 2005)
[669] *Mono*, Issue 125: 02/12/1988

implication cashless) society, but also how Japanese citizens of this new modern world were expected to come on board and embrace a 'card lifestyle'.

Going on to lay out a brief survey of the areas Marunouchi, Ginza, Harajuku and Shinjuku, the article attempts to show the reader the 'real' situation of card ownership among people canvassed on the street, and in doing so how ordinary and normal it is (as well as fashionable) to have cards on one's person. From the results, it appears that men outnumber women as card owners, although the proportion of this depends on the area[670]. Although the data may be flawed[671], it provides a small snapshot of averages when it comes to card ownership, such as the average number of cards on a person (between 7-10 cards) and the top 5 most popular types of cards. Of these all included some form of telephone card, cash card, department store card, and video rental card, but only the two most expensive areas and with the highest average age surveyed (30-35) had credit cards as one of the top 5[672]. The youngest demographic meanwhile appeared to value cards for physical services such as the beauty salon and sports clubs in its top 5 cards.

While Japan has been credited with a slow and limited credit card market and a preference for a direct cash economy, this data shows that cards themselves were not subject to the same attitudes, but instead were used to access a whole range of services and consumption strategies. Crucially the card culture as described by *Mono* magazine does not adhere to Baudrillard's narrow view of credit, but includes other types, from membership affiliation and rental (video), to telephone cards and prepay cards in which credit is first deposited on the card in advance of its later spending – something replicated in other sections of the articles where cards of all types and brands appear, but that all fall within the categories of membership, services and prepay cards. This we may view in light of the tendency in Japan to use credit cards more as debit cards, or to pay off the entire balance in an agreed one-off payment rather than by periodic and regular instalments as in the American model. Moreover, where banks were restricted in coming on to the credit card market, this left the market open to other interpretations of consumer cards, not only through the credit-card companies, but also department stores, cashing in on the consumer boom and their own plans for expansion. In the *Mono* article, department store cards are among the top most common cards carried, and Creighton[673] notes how in 1985 the Isetan Department Store even marketed a

[670] Marunouchi showed the biggest difference, at 82.4%:17.6%, men to women. Other than that the ratio was roughly nearly evenly split, although Ginza had marginally more women than men as owning cards. (*Mono*, Issue 125: 02/12/1988)

[671] Subject to numerous variables such as the quality and quantity of surveyed participants and the small age range of 21-35 on average, and the limitations of surveying such small catchment areas.

[672] And entirely unsurprising considering limitations on banks' access to the credit card market until 1992. It also highlights the importance of owning property and being an invested member of society in order to access the consumer-credit benefits (as well as investment benefits) of a capitalist society.

[673] In Tobin, Joseph J., *Re-Made in Japan; Everyday Life and Consumer Taste in a Changing Society* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992) pp. 48-49.

'Cinderella Card' to young girls in an attempt to increase its share of the youth market and maintain customer loyalty – although the manager at the time was at pains to clarify that these weren't credit cards, but membership/discount cards to the specific section in store.

However, the most significant is perhaps in the implications for Baudrillard's understanding of time and the extension of credit. For according to Baudrillard, in deferring payment, credit allows the user to obtain and consume the product immediately and ahead of time. In this way, the system of production is turned on its head where the object is consumed even before production and labour has been done by the user, and more importantly the object is enjoyed before the user even owns it. By the time the full payment for the object has been extracted from the user the danger is that the object is used up and worn out, necessitating a replacement on fruition of ownership, or even worse, before complete payment has been fulfilled. However, with the Japanese card market seemingly based on services (beauty parlours, membership, cash cards), temporary rentals (video rental), or for short-term credit leading to one-off repayments (department store cards), this logic of credit does not really bear out. Similarly, for prepaid cards such as telephone cards where the cash is deposited onto the card in lieu of future use, the original system bears out where labour is turned into capital, ready to be spent rather than the other way around.

In a sense this use of cards, as a way of storing up a guarantee of consumption through labour deposited as capital against future purchases, can be viewed as a turned around metaphor for the role of the Japanese consumer in the Bubble Economy. By consumers operating under the illusion that the State was extending them credit and through the upside down temporal nature of capital production in credit, Baudrillard saw this more as the promise of future labour to the State, and thus the opposite – namely that consumers (and citizens) were in fact extending the credit of labour to the State rather than the other way around. However, with Japanese users of prepaid cards, they were not extending credit to the State, but in fact depositing already earned labour and capital as additional investments into the production system. Instead of promising future labour in lieu, Japanese card users were promising consumption in lieu, and depositing capital, much in the same spirit that other investments were being conducted in the asset-inflated Bubble in which capital was being spent before the participants could enjoy them fully.

Yet it is this temporal nature of cards that is key to understanding their impact on attitudes to consumption in the Bubble. By separating out the process of ownership and enjoyment from labour and payment, the buyer becomes alienated from the payer. While this may be the same person, by using a card for the transaction, time is used to distance, separate and obfuscate the production/consumption process, and bring temporality (rather than capital) as a primary factor. In this way, the goods/services obtained by cards are always in the future, either (as in Baudrillard's

logic) never to be fully owned until the product is nearly at its end, or in the case of prepaid cards, to delay enjoyment and usage of the goods/services until some undetermined future.

As such what is purchased on a card becomes elusive, and the temporality alienates the consumer not only from their own labour (which they give up to the State), but also from the object (or service) itself, mediated as it is by the card. Ungrounded from the system, instead magical thinking is applied, alleviating the pain of immediately giving up capital for consumption through the deferment of either payment through credit or expenditure through transmutation of unspent capital onto the card.

It is this sense of temporal instability and capital/object transmutation that creates a feeling of constant flux and intangibility, and to which (according to Baudrillard) the consumer is constantly striving to fulfil. By existing in a system of deferred payment/enjoyment, and in which series of models and new services and goods are being constantly updated, the user consumes and discards rather than owns or accumulates, in a cyclical system of production/consumption that through the separation out of payment and enjoyment, can spin faster and faster without the need for matching levels of production to ownership and usage.

Thus, through Japanese card culture of the Bubble Economy, we can see how the card, acting as a medium between the consumer and the object within the system of production and consumption, becomes associated with the State, confusing the rights of the citizen with that of the consumer. At the same time, it further alienates and separates out the process of production and consumption and through this, fragments the buyer/user from the payer/owner through the stretching out of time. In this way, previously associated relationships between labour, capital and production become unlinked, enabling a magical process of storing up of labour as capital or consumption as deferred credit, and ensuring that consumption and production can happen much faster, shed of its accountability to each other. Moreover, contrary to the notion of credit cards in the West, Japanese card culture was about depositing unused consumption as credit in the cards, to be spent at a later date, echoing the investments and deferred enjoyment of assets in the Bubble Economy.

The Retro-Boom: Moving Forward, Looking Back

As time machines for capital, cards weren't the only mediums, but rather than transferring one forward into deferred enjoyment, the retro-styling and kitsch of the 1980s '*nostarujii būmu* (nostalgia boom)'[674] took one backwards instead. In 1986, *Brutus* magazine published a special

[674] Tobin, 1992, p. 14.

feature on retro[675]. Spanning 38 pages, the articles examine aspects of popular culture from the past, notably from the early-to-mid-20th century. In doing so it attempts to outline the trend for 1950s retro culture that had a notable boom in 1980s Japan.

The first part of the article is an extensive piece on 'retro culture'. Initially identifying as 'Music, fashion, art, culture, equipment, movies, food and shops and, ah… anything goes'[676], it is seen as both hobby and 'amusement', and in Part 1 the article features popular culture through categories of: pop music, magazines, published materials (magazines, books, manga), fashion, and movie stars. While some examples feature real Japanese people as collectors or connoisseurs, many of the sources appear to be heavily influenced by American pop culture of the 50s and 60s, especially in music, fashion and film. Furthermore, the opening words to this first article, 'Now is the peak of the retro hobby' acknowledge the popular trend for retro, as well as the difference in its interpretation, particular to Japan in the Bubble.

Opening the piece, retro is linked to nostalgia as desire for former days and for the 'interestingness' of the past.[677] In the listing of everything, from music, fashion, to equipment and shops, the postmodern attitude of 'ah, anything goes' is present, taking in pop cultural and cross-disciplinary references that show no adherence to canons or hierarchies of culture. Linked to hobby and amusement/enjoyment, (primary motivating words commonly used in the consumption culture of the Bubble), through these two ways the article sets out retro as a contemporary interpretation of the past, mixing and matching different aspects of popular culture with reverence for the past (as indicated by collecting and connoisseurship), while at the same time framing it within enjoyment and by extension superficial entertainment.

In this way retro becomes more than just a looking back to the past, but transforms itself into contemporary practice; a mix of superficial consumer enjoyment in a variety of styles and genres and a longing and desire for the past articulated as nostalgia. In this we can see Ivy's[678] identification of the use of montage in the depicting of 'Exotic Japan' in the 1980s, in which dynamic style and the creation of aesthetic is presented as much part of Japanese identity as the cultural remnants of its past. Thus, this article is another example of Tobin's[679] 'domestication' of foreign things – except

[675] *Brutus Issue 134: 15/05/1986* (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1986)
[676] Ibid.
[677] 'The thing about nostalgic retro/ retro nostalgia, is mostly/somehow the retro nowadays, there is a feeling that the mood is different, that the older guys miss the former days, they desire they desire the former feeling of enjoying oneself. In short it is called the hobby of loving antiquities. Music, fashion, art, culture, equipment, movies, food and shops and, ah, anything goes, nevertheless we desire the former enjoyment. In this way now this is how there is enjoyment.' (Brutus, Issue 134: 15/05/1986: Contents page)
[678] Ivy, 1995, pp. 48-53.
[679] Tobin et al. 1992

this time rather than being Western the foreign is the past, and what it makes/describes Japanese is not the thing but the process of adoption itself.

However, nostalgia in itself is a loaded term, and as the following introduction to the article shows, this was something the magazine (and therefore by extension its readers) was aware of.

> 'Retro hobby? What is it? And what is this retro? And there is to consider the question of numerous types/categories. Retro is nostalgia in French [language]. It is also the same in American [English]. But in England it is called YF (Young Fogey). However now retro is rather different. Nostalgia and revival are unconnected, it's not the old guys, it's the gap/space between youngsters and young salarymen, isn't it the interestingness of the olden days, it is about the trend of the rise in the hobby of love of old things. In other words, there is a new culture of people who love the olden times.'[680]

In this extract the article makes clear that though retro and nostalgia are connected, this may have different meanings in different cultures. The meaning of nostalgia (and therefore retro) and the motivations behind it are geographically and culturally dependant and distinct, whether from France, America, England, or Japan[681]. Identifying this nostalgic desire for the past as 'the gap between youngsters and salarymen' not for the revival and reliving of past experiences, but as part of a new generation adopting the past as 'hobby', the article reaffirms the generational gap between the old and new generation as *shinjinrui*, as well as the Japan and the Japanese Bubble as a special time and place in which new cultures are being formed.

Although it may appear that this refashioning of the past as retro nostalgia was a new thing [682], nostalgia for a past un-experienced is something that has become common to postmodern late-capitalist societies. If we go back to Baudrillard, he identifies in retro and revival a more basic desire for the past and consumption that has its root in the industrialised system of production itself[683]. In the process of mass-manufacture and its essential impoverishing of objects, sign-values are not only privileged over use-function, but Man becomes alienated from his environment. It is this alienation from and constant desire to reconnect with objects that Baudrillard sees as the reason behind the reified value of antiques, and by extension objects from the past. For if objects become no more than containers for signs with which man attempts to satisfy internal needs and drives, then what antiques contain is time itself. Connected as it were to the past, what the antiquated object signifies is its own relationship to time, and through its very uniqueness as a relic of the past and not of the

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[680] *Brutus*, Issue 134: 15/05/1986, p.6
[681] And once again the comparison to leading industrialised countries places Japan in relation to the first world.
[682] Ivy (1995, p. 54) for example, identifies this as a 1980s Japanese practice of montage and 'neo-Japanesque'
[683] Baudrillard, Jean, *The System of Objects*, trans. by James Benedict (London and New York: Verso, 2005)

mass-produced present, an authenticity of being, lost, as covered in Chapter 2, by the process of mass-manufacture.

It is authenticity that is therefore at the root of man's quest for the unique object, an authenticity perceived to be lost or reduced by man's own alienation from the common world of objects. A theme common to the postmodern experience of late-capitalist production, it also reflects the *mono igai no mono*, or 'things other than things' trend that characterised the 1980s. [684] Thus in the *Brutus* special feature, authenticity appears as an adjoining issue; in the section titled, 'Human Watching', the two-page article focuses on the behaviour and relationship of generational difference to retro and attitudes towards the past and authenticity. Opening with the introduction, 'Occasionally things are also 0. Affectation is not supremacy. To check honesty/integrity abide by honest/frank/unaffected judgement.'[685] The piece goes on to analyse groups of people categorised according to age with the following subheadings:

17 *Ika, kakko tsukeru usotsuki* [Under 17, to wear the appearance of a liar / wearing a false appearance][686]

18-29 *Hakkiri shinaiga suijun* [18-19, there is no clear standard] [687]

30-40 *Kanashī made no retoro* [as far as 30-40, is a sorrowful/sad retro][688]

42 *Ijō, kishō, hotondo kako no hito* [rare over 42, people are nearly past][689]

Brutus, Issue 134: 15/05/1986, p.19

What this shows is that authenticity appears to be a factor to consider in the attitudes to the past, differentiated along generational lines. Challenging affectation the piece calls out for honesty, something seen as lacking in the under 17 year olds who appear false in their appearance (another charge levelled at the superficiality of the *shinjinrui*), while as the generations get older the past appears more burdened and less carefree. It is interesting to note that as an article on generational differentiation, this not only continues a categorisation that has been applied to each decade's generation (the 1960s *dankai* youth, and the *shirake sedai* of the 1970s[690]), but marks an increasing segmentation of youth culture by type and interests that echoes that of the segmentation trends in the magazine market. In this it precedes the strong identification of sub-cultures in the 1990s in

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[684] (Creighton in Tobin, 1992, p. 53) Creighton (ibid) also notes that at this time department stores were heavily involved in the selling of nostalgia and self-exoticism, staging as part of a *matsuri būmu* (festival boom), regional festivals symbolising pre-westernised Japan in their urban metropolitan stores, marketed as 'authentic regional traditional events'.
[685] *Brutus*, Issue 134: 15/05/1986, p.19
[686] 17, 以下、カッコつけるウソツキ
[687] 18-29, ハッキリしないが水準
[688] 30-40, 悲しいまでのレトロ
[689] 42 以上、　稀少、ほとんど過去の人
[690] See Chapter 1

which young men and women could be labelled according to titles such as 'herbivores' and 'carnivores', 'otaku', and 'Lolita', indicating a move away from overarching terms such as 'salaryman' and 'OL'.

However, despite the perceived dishonesty and superficiality of the younger generation in how they affect the past, the next section of the magazine deliberately blurs the lines between authenticity and a 1980s interpretation. In a 7-page article titled, '*Beginner's absolute retro film'*, the piece features a British film called '*Absolute Beginners*', directed by Julien Temple. Released in 1986, the magazine article could arguably be seen as promotion for the film, but that which dovetails nicely into the retro theme. Based on the novel by Colin MacInnes about late-1950s London, it is described by the article as a 'mirror image of '85 now'[691], in which teenagers share a similar culture of financial autonomy, freedom and consumer power. This blurring of contemporary culture with a historical past through the medium of entertainment is something that is continued through the remainder of the article, placing screen shots of the film with historical photos, and finally photos of the actors, arriving at debuting film events.

It is in this muddling of time (contemporary and historical), fact with fiction, photographs with screen shots, that we approach another of Baudrillard's concepts, that of hyperreality; this describes the creation of empty signs which have no original referent, and which signify that which is actually fictional. Furthermore, in the creation of empty signs the hyperreal causes confusion between the real and the fictional, exacerbated by modern replicating technologies, and unanchored from context and history to produce pure sign.[692]

Therefore although an article about London in the 1950s, or more accurately a 1986 film interpretation of a novel about 1950s London, may seem incongruous to 1980s Bubble Economy Japan, seen in the light of Baudrillard's theories on production and consumption, the impoverishment and emptying of the sign, man's alienation and the desire to reconnect to an

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[691] *Brutus*, Issue 134: 15/05/1986, p. 63.

[692] Deriving from his work on sign and its replacement of real signification through the late capitalist system of mass production and consumption, Baudrillard was the first to coin the term 'hyperreality'. Referring to the creation of signs with no actual referent, hyperreality does more than just blend the real with the sign, but instead the sign becomes a referent for something that does not actually exist. In this way, it creates a copy world in which signs come to take the place of reality, and to which desires are directed and fulfilled. Within this process Baudrillard uses the terms 'simulation' (in which reality becomes blended with signs through a process of imitation, to the point where the signs lose their original referent) and 'simulacra' (the signs and copies of signs that have no real original referent/reality to begin with), and argues that with the development of the systems of mass-production, capitalism, consumption, and mass media technologies, man becomes increasingly alienated from reality, during which process the sign begins to take over reality, first imitating it, superseding it, and finally replacing it altogether. By the end of the process consumers' experiences have become so artificial that no pretence to the real is even needed, and signs merely have to refer to other signs in a system of total equivalency that signal the hyperreal system.

original state of complete being, as well as the blurring of the real and the unreal through hyperreality and the co-opting of pure sign – it becomes irrelevant whether the past is depicted through produced film or documented photos, based in London or Japan, or whether this is hidden or openly shown to be a contemporary reimagining. For through man's search for an imagined state of authentic being, his desire becomes channelled into a consumption of a past emptied of its original context into an empty sign, in order to be packaged up for easy consumption, and losing in this process any personal or localised connections. Thus, London as fictional film is as good as any place or means in which to enact the past, igniting readers' desires for authenticity, and we are back to Ivy's montage of 'Exotic Japan'[693], except in this case it is 1950s London (and 1950s Americana) as 'Exotic Japan'.

Nevertheless, although in a late-capitalist system authenticity and a connection to completeness of being may become more desirable, this still does not entirely explain why the past, and specifically a mid-twentieth century past, was so desirable in 1980s Bubble Economy Japan, when Japan was full of confidence in its economic and industrial power, its national destiny manifest as a global leader. However, it may be in this very economic bubble that is at the root of a trend for the past and not, for example, a shining future of Japan's continued ascendancy, for as Baudrillard writes:

> 'The ascendency of the urban and industrial milieu is producing new examples of shortage: shortages of space and time, fresh air, greenery, water, silence. Certain goods, which were once free and abundantly available, are becoming luxuries accessible only to the privileged, while manufactured goods or services are offered on a mass scale.'[694]

Thus, we understand that economic capitalist progress is not free, but comes at a price; formerly free unquantifiable intangibles such as time, silence and unpolluted environment become reserved for the privileged few as mass-produced goods become cheaper and more abundant[695]. In this sense the conditions of the Bubble itself predicate the lessening of these things as a resource; with property treated as over-priced assets increasingly out of reach for ordinary people, subject to an overinflated bubble, and the excesses of money and opportunities encouraging employees to work

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[693] Ivy, 1995

[694] Baudrillard, 1998, p. 57

[695] This is something also touched upon by Leheny in his analysis of why leisure and lifestyle were pursued as an official policy since the 1970s 'This issue has become one of how a country with obvious material wealth could so conspicuously fail to be a garden of Eden for the pleasure of its citizens. Between long commuting times, long working hours, and crowded living conditions, many Japanese authors have argued that the country, even today, fails to approach the quality of life evident in the other advanced industrial countries. Perhaps the most famous of these authors (her book ran through more than thirty-five printings), Teruoka Itsuko, suggested in 1989 that Japan's rapid expansion of material wealth had not been accompanied by genuine feeling of wealth, because the mere accumulation of trinkets and baubles could not compensate for the lack of free time and space, protection of welfare, and a preserved natural environment that is fundamentally central to a decent human lifestyle.' (Leheny, 2003, pp. 106-107)

harder and faster for longer hours, time and space become much desired luxuries. While, as covered in the previous two chapters, leisure pursuits such as luxury sports, shopping, going out, and holidaying abroad are offered up as compensation for the limitations imposed upon people in the Bubble, it is particularly the qualities of time, space and restful environment that make the past such a desirable prospect, for it is only within a historical past that these resources were not commodities, but freely abundant and available to all.

Furthermore, identified by Guffey[696] in the nostalgia of America's 1960s and early-1970s is a dissatisfaction with the present, and accessing the past may also be seen, not just as an articulated desire for time and space, but in its very escapism as a rebellion and refusal of the capitalist system itself. As Debord explains:

> 'With the development of capitalism, irreversible time is unified on a world scale. Universal history becomes a reality because the entire world is gathered under the development of this time. But this history, which is everywhere simultaneously the same, is still only the refusal within history of history itself. What appears the world over as the same day is the time of economic production cut up into equal fragments. Universal irreversible time is the time of the world market and, as a corollary, of the world spectacle.' [697]

Thus, as the industrialised world organises time itself into a linear irreversible resource, colonised and fragmented by global production, so the past becomes both a spatial and temporal location that fulfils requirements of desire for space in contrast to the increasingly industrialised and urbanised landscape, as well as the desire for non-universal, reversible time.

However, this dissatisfaction with the present was not only restricted to the playing with retro in this magazine, and as Cassegård[698] notes, even as Japan's dominance appeared total, artists and writers were expressing a feeling of deadlock and closure at the height of the Bubble. The critic and philosopher, Kōjin Karatani, for example, describes a feeling of suffocation in the 1980s, at the apparent triumphalism of Japanese capitalism and the lack of 'exists' or 'exteriority' in the complacency of Japanese discursive space. Meanwhile Murakami's novels, written in the Bubble but set in the radicalisation of the 1960s, are infused with a critique of conformity and the hidden power of the State that laments the loss of alternatives even as it searches for one.[699]

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[696] Elizabeth E. Guffey, *Retro: The Culture of Revival* (London: Reacktion Books, 2006) pp.18-19
[697] Debord, 1977, p. 145
[698] Carl, Cassegård, *Youth Movements, Trauma and Alternative Space in Contemporary Japan* (Leiden, Boston, Massachusetts: Brill, 2013) pp.31-33
[699] 'Murakami's fiction helps bring into view a more nuanced picture of the triumphalist 1980s as a traumatised state, brought about through a paralysis of protest. In this world externally applied criticism has

Nevertheless, despite the intention of accessing the past as a location for authenticity (as complete being with access to the pre-industrialised resources of space and time), it is important that the past is not within the realms of the experienced nor remembered, as personal memory and context disallows the emptying of it into pure and easily consumed sign[700]. Instead, as unexperienced and unremembered, capitalism enables aspects of the past to be transported and modified according to the consumer's desire, without the unnecessary and distracting additions of context and historical fact. This is why retro as described by the *Brutus* article is highly selective, containing only the popular aspects of cultural history and omitting any of the more problematic aspects of the 1950 and 1960s[701]. Seen as the province of the young, and not of the generation before it, with nostalgia and revival being two separate things; the retro trend is dependent on a nostalgia for a vague unconnected past, while revival suggests a bringing back of a past that has already been experienced and through its familiarity, inflexible to the shapings of modern trends and desires.

The capitalist project may also partly explain why it is the mid-twentieth century that is part of the retro-boom, and not, for example, an older, more distant past. While Ivy[702] identified that a Japanese rural, pre-modern past spoke to the longings for authenticity and desire to resolve the ruptures of modern urban change in the 1970s, the generation of the 1980s, fully cognisant and at home with the urban technological landscape, saw the modern Japanese past itself as an exotic entity, mined for 'the thrill of the unfamiliar in lost aspects of Japanese life'[703] Furthermore, other aspects of the pre-1950s past make it more problematic in being superficially co-opted. A pre-twentieth century Japanese past for example, although in itself far enough away to be exotic and therefore commodifiable, also comes loaded with the rhetoric of historical and cultural identity that interferes with the process of hollowing out for easily consumerable sign in everyday life[704].

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become powerless, since the protagonists are enmeshed in and part of the decay and fallenness of the world.' (Cassegård, 2013, p. 33)

[700] This could prove problematic for the repurposing of the past in Murakami's novels, as they are within his living memory – however it must be remembered that for the majority of his younger readers in the 1980s, his depiction of Japan's 1960s would for them have been in a more collective rather than personal memory, serving as backdrop to the characters' interior journeys of self-discovery and realisation.

[701] Such as the frictions caused by the American Occupation, student protests, and labour union strikes.

[702] Ivy, 1995

[703] Ivy, 1995, p. 54.

[704] Although this is not to say people haven't tried, with the creation of rural-themed parks and modern re-creations of the distant past, as postmodern transformations and reinterpretations of historical and cultural identity (see Guichard-Anguis and Moon et al, 2009). However, it must be said that although these types of historically themed parks enjoyed their own boom in the investment and leisure frenzy of the Bubble, they were created as part of an educational conversation of national and cultural identity with leisure rather than for commercial mass-production, and as such their appeal was of the niche rather than real integration into popular culture. In essence their simultaneous insistence on authentic form and lack of authentic feeling, jars with the imagined sanctity of a collective and reified historicity and modern identity, making them more unsettling than enjoyable.

Likewise, the political and cultural problems of the early-twentieth century mean that elements of this past are too sensitive to be easily decontextualized.

By contrast the 1950/1960s coincide with the end of the post-war era and the two decades that mark the period of Japan's rise in the miracle economy. The overwork in this period was used, as suggested by Ivy[705] to negate the trauma of the Second World War which, through its obliteration, also made it impossible to imagine Japan before it. In this way, the Economic Miracle marks the limit to nostalgia for succeeding generations, which in addition to the comfort of its single-minded purpose (itself a foil against the anxiety-inducing multiplicities of postmodern life), also heralds the beginnings of recognisable mass-consumer culture[706].

Thus, the desire for the exotic but familiar, the postmodern Japanese practice of montage[707], and the inability of youth to imagine a pre-Economic Miracle Japan, collide to result in the revival of the Japanese 1950/60s that incorporates a re-appropriation of American pop culture 'nostalgia products', and by extension all Western 1950/1960s culture. For implicit in this retro trend is also the origin of Japanese post-war internationalisation, in which American products are as much part of Japanese urban cultural identity as tradition is to its rural.[708] This imagining of Japan through the incorporation of and contrast with the Other, itself a constant theme in Japanese modern culture, is thus part of the larger picture of *nihonjinron* and *kokusaika*, so prevalent in the politics of 1980s cultural identity.

This searching for urban cultural origins (of internationalisation, urbanisation, technology, cultural and economic growth) is something we can see in *Brutus'* description of the film: '[…] while on the stage in '58, it honestly records and emphasises a mirror-image of '85 now. Thus the, '50s were the beginning of the era of teenagers who could get the advantages of money for themselves. Certainly, for much of the 50's boom, it investigates the origin of the sensation.'[709] We can see how links were being made between the late-1950s and 1980s Japan, and in doing so co-opting the near past and

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[705] Ivy, 1995, p. 15.

[706] And this is something also echoed in Lee's (in Timothy J. Craig (ed.), *Japan Pop! Inside the World of Japanese Popular Culture*, (London and New York: M.E. Sharpe / Routledge) 2000, pp. 186-203) account of 1980s and 1990s popularity of Japanese anime, *Sazae-san* (based on the manga of the same name that ran from 1946-1974). Against a background of rising single households, these miracle economy family anime depicted a comforting image of 'a large and extended family nostalgically situated in idealised postwar past of old-fashioned values, behaviour and dress.' (Lee in Craig, 2000, p. 192)

[707] Ivy, 1995.

[708] Marilyn Ivy (1995, p. 24) would argue that just as Japan as a nation is inseparable from its formation as a nation state and the colonizing project – that both are implicit within each other – so too this is applied to the realm of culture. That colonisation and domestication are both implicit within the formation of a Japanese national culture, and this goes also for the intrusion and acceptance of the West into Japanese cultural life. The West both colonises and is domesticated by Japan, and as Ivy seems to suggest, is inseparable from the construction of Japanese cultural identity, formed in relation to its Other, and itself as Other.

[709] *Brutus*, Issue 134: 15/05/1986, p. 63.

its achievements to reflect back on the economic and cultural strength of the 1980s. Thus, the retro-trend for the miracle economy years of the '50s and '60s, the beginnings of global teen/young adult consumer and popular culture, as well as its own special place in the narrative of the ascendancy of modern Japan, becomes blurred and represented as a mirror to the economic, consumer and popular culture of the Japanese 1980s Bubble.

It is this rather cynical playing with the past as retro-trend, emptied of context to be moulded to the desires and ambitions of the 1980s to be a new 'Golden Age' that informs the rest of the *Brutus* article on retro. Although there are references to a more localised retro, namely in the form of Japanese locations, services, literature[710], as well as a more cultural and historical approach to a Japanese past[711], these are essentially small sections that provide a cultural slant on the retro theme. Likewise although there is a two-page spread on a more nuanced and self-aware view to retro, through writers and theorists such as Evelyn Waugh (on the 'Young Fogey' theme) and Marshall McLuhan on technology, as well as observations about the use of retro in TV commercials and retro nostalgia in Japanese and foreign advertisements and films[712], once again these are only small sections in comparison to the extensive pages on shops, 8mm camera equipment, leisure activities (ballroom dancing) and sports (boxing and snooker/pool).

In particular, the section on retro goods[713], at six pages, is three times the length of other comparable sections in the article. Displaying a variety of objects in large and glossy images, from Silvercross prams and shoe shine kits, to Hitachi electric kettles and pencil sharpeners in the shape of books, these objects interpret the past for a retro-trending modern audience. Here the true spirit of 1980s Japan comes into play, showing the reader how, once unanchored from history and emptied of context, the past as pure sign can through nostalgia and a retro retelling be co-opted into easy and lucrative consumption. As such it also helps to anchor the reader in providing a tangible way in to accessing retro culture otherwise locked in the past. This is the real purpose of the retro-trend; not to glorify, inform or relive the past, but ultimately to sell goods.

The goods feature across a range of categories, from type and function to style and aesthetic, and although varied, they are given a cohesiveness through the common theme of the past, used in the styling as a kind of shorthand for collective memory and nostalgia, although not necessarily specific or personal. In this way, the goods distinguish themselves from antiques or heirlooms through how they evoke the past itself – namely as stylised kitsch items that recreate the past through stylisation and imitation rather than authentic cultural or historical accuracy.

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[710] *Brutus*, Issue 134: 15/05/1986, pp. 71-73
[711] *Brutus*, Issue 134: 15/05/1986, pp.101-111
[712] *Brutus*, Issue 134: 15/05/1986, pp.74-75
[713] *Brutus*, Issue 134: 15/05/1986, pp.82-87

The Retro-boom 2: Retro as Kitsch

In her study of Japanese nostalgia in the 1980s JNR campaign, Ivy refutes the idea of *nosutarujii* products as being kitsch, but instead sees in them a campness that she labels 'neo-kitsch'.[714] However, although Japanese kitsch may not necessarily contain the self-mocking irony of Western kitsch, in her invoking of Jameson's 'pastiche'[715] to describe Japanese vintage nostalgia products, she invokes many of kitsch's defining commercial and stylistic properties.

As a style that lacks authentic value, kitsch is a rather problematic quality that divides as much as it appeals. Seen as a consequence of industrialised production, Baudrillard[716] defines kitsch in relation to trash, in which the object is a result of the overabundance of production. As a copy or imitation, the kitsch object is often reduced down to a stereotype, and becomes what Baudrillard calls a 'pseudo object' in which its lack of real signification is equalled by an abundance of superficial signs. Mirroring this abundance whilst also compensating for their essential emptiness and disconnectedness, kitsch objects often become accumulated together as collections, the disparateness given cohesion through the very emptying out of difference. Becoming mere shells into which meaning can be imposed, kitsch objects thus are reduced down to the level of cliché, empty of real meaning whilst still encompassing a whole variety of things.

Emptied as it is of real signification, the kitsch object is thus defined by Baudrillard as a perfect vehicle for consumer desire; its potential to multiply and be configured together endlessly making it ideal for reproducing the past for consumption in a system of industrialised production. It is this aspect of kitsch that we see produced in the magazine, a variety of objects offered up for readers' personal consumption with no obvious connection except for the way in which they offer up nostalgia as an instrument for consumer desire, and linked in its own way to the excesses of production and consumption opportunities available in a Bubble Economy.

However, this ability of kitsch to be endlessly reproduced also causes Baudrillard to denounce kitsch as 'vulgar', encapsulating within it not only the processes of industrialised production, but also the accompanying disorder and excesses of consumer society. In this the 'vulgarity' does not only relate to the essential poverty of the kitsch object, but also the way in which it operates and shapes the system around it. For while impoverished and without real meaning, kitsch also has a necessary function in determining the parameters of taste and quality; that in being vulgar and abundant,

[714] Ivy, 1995, p. 56.
[715] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,* pp. 65-66 in (Ivy, 1995, pp. 56-57)
[716] Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths & Structures* (London: Sage Publications, 1998)

through opposition it reaffirms that which is deemed authentic, rare and precious, defining in the process the boundaries by which value is assessed.

It is this relation with value that is precisely so disconcerting about kitsch; for its very impoverishment of real signification means that depending on the viewer, a kitsch object may hold either value or little to no value as a cultural item. Both Baudrillard and Bourdieu see kitsch as inherently related to class and social aspirations. Indeed, as objects whose value is based on cultural repetition, cultural capital is an inherent part of its makeup. In Baudrillard's case, kitsch is simply that where its vulgarity opposes pure authentic aesthetics (anti-aesthetic quality) through careless reproduction, and furthermore in its mimicry functions as a vehicle for the excesses of the classes desiring social mobility, aspiring to those of the classes above through affiliation and imitation of culture.[717]

Although Bourdieu does not necessarily invoke kitsch by name, he does discuss cheap imitative goods which, like Baudrillard, he broadly sees as part of the environment of class relations. In this case the goods in question are cheap imitations of the luxuries of the upper classes, and distinguish the province of the working classes in which cheap substitutes indicate working class lifestyle as much as the lack of authentic luxury goods and pursuits.[718]

Like Baudrillard, Bourdieu sees in this imitation an implied tacit acknowledgement of the superiority of the upper classes and their cultural pursuits. However, he takes this further by seeing the imitation not only as a form of aspiration, but also of dispossession, in which the acceptance of inferior copies is really a concession in which the working class recognise their own alienation from cultural life as in their labour. The lack of real agency in any production of cultural goods and

[717] 'To the aesthetics of beauty and originality, kitsch opposes its aesthetics of simulation: it everywhere reproduces objects smaller or larger than life; it imitates materials (in plaster, plastic, etc.); it apes forms or combines them discordantly; it repeats fashion without having been part of the experience of fashion. In all this, it is all of a piece with the 'gimmicky' gadget in the technical world. That gadget is, similarly, a technological parody, an excrescence of useless functions, a continual simulation of function without any real, practical referent. This aesthetics of simulation is profoundly linked to kitsch's socially assigned function of translating social class aspirations and anticipations, of expressing the magical affiliation with a culture, with the forms, manners and markers of the upper class – an aesthetics of acculturation resulting in a subculture of objects.' (Baudrillard, 1998, p. 111)

[718] 'As much as by the absence of luxury goods, whisky or paintings, champagne or concerts, cruises or art exhibitions, caviar or antiques, the working-class lifestyle is characterised by the presence of numerous cheap substitutes for these rare goods, 'sparkling white wine' for champagne, imitation leather for real leather, reproductions for paintings, indices of a disposition at the second power, which accepts the definition of the goods worthy of being possessed. With 'mass market' cultural products – music whose simple, repetitive structures invite a passive, absent participation, prefabricated entertainments which the new engineers of cultural mass production design for television viewers, especially sporting events which establish a recognised division between the spectators and the professionals, virtuosos of an esoteric technique or 'supermen' of exceptional ability – dispossession of the very intention of determining one's own ends is combined with a more insidious form of recognition of dispossession.' (Bourdieu, 2010, p. 387)

entertainment marks the lack of agency in working life. In both cases the working classes accept that which is devised, organised, and given to them by others, their participation limited to passive and alienated acceptance.[719]

It is against this theoretical background to kitsch that we may see the practice of retro, not only shown in this special issue of *Brutus*, but also in other retro practices in Japan in the 1980s. Coinciding with the *kokusaika* and leisure (*reja*) booms, was the 'theme park/resort' boom that conveniently combined the fads for internationalisation, leisure, travel, and investment all into one. Popularly attributed to opening up the field for the resort boom, Tokyo Disneyland (TDL) opened in 1983, and was the most successful of all Japan's theme parks in both visitor numbers[720] and yearly revenues, exceeding even those of its American precursors in its success[721]. Baudrillard notably saw in the American Disneyland the ultimate archetype of the hyperreal in which the spectacle of the imaginary was used to placate the populace of their own decreasing reality, descending into the simulated simulacra – although in this he has been critiqued for not crediting the audience with enough autonomy, acting on the assumption of passive acceptance that in itself betrays a certain cultural imperialism.[722] Tokyo Disneyland too has been subject to accusations of American cultural imperialism, although researchers have pointed out that in the Japanese ownership by the Oriental Land Company (OLC) and the specific tailoring of the attractions and organisation of the park, it is profoundly Japanese – not in its localising of the original formula, but its insistence on creating a version of America that satisfies its Japanese audience.[723]

Thus, it is not TDL's hyperreal quality that Baudrillard saw in its American precursor, but its insistence on parodying America in a pastiche that makes it kitsch. For rather than providing an illusionary fantasy that distracts from the disturbing falseness of the postmodern everyday, the setup of TDL both empties it out of its original 'Disney' meaning, and imbues it with a Japanese meaning – of American signifiers – that do not necessarily provide an escape from the everyday,

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[719] 'It is not only in music or sport that ordinary people are reduced to the role of the 'fan', the militant 'supporter' locked in a passionate, even chauvinistic, but passive and spurious participation which is merely an illusionary compensation for dispossession by experts. What the relation to 'mass' (and, a fortiori, 'elite') cultural products reproduces, reactivates and reinforces is not the monotony of the production line or office but the social relation which underlies working-class experience of the world, whereby his labour and the product of his labour, opus proprium, present themselves to the worker as opus alienum, 'alienated' labour.'' (Bourdieu, 2010, p. 387)

[720] 'In 1988 attendance reached 13,382,000, making Tokyo Disneyland one of the most popular diversionary outings in Japan.' (Brannen, in Tobin, 1992, p. 216)

[721] Raz, Aviad E., *Riding the Black Ship: Japan and Tokyo Disneyland* (Cambridge (Mass.) and London: Harvard University Press, 1999) pp. 3-4.

[722] Raz, 1999, pp. 10-11; Joy Hendry, *Fantasy Travel in Time and Space: A New Japanese Phenomenon?* In Guichard-Anguis, Sylvie and Okpyo Moon, (eds.) *Japanese Tourism and Travel Culture*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2009) p.139

[723] Raz, 1999; Brannen in Tobin, 1992.

but an opportunity to reaffirm one's own normalcy. Here once again the spectre of *kokusaika* and *nihonjinron* reappear, rubbing up against one another to reaffirm Japanese identity, and perhaps this is the real reason behind the resort boom and the retro boom. For following the phenomenal success of TDL, theme parks and resorts sprang up all over Japan, taking advantage of the Resort Law and the leisure boom to provide cultural, educational and economic stimulation to a region[724]. Departing from the outmoded amusement park model, they followed TDL's lead in creating themes, and in the case of resorts, included activities, facilities and overnight stays. Many of these mined the historical, geographical, cultural, and even fantastical and literary resources of far-flung Western countries, from the famous 'Holland Village' (*hollanda-mura*), Huis ten Bosch, to 'Canadian World' centred on the fictitious character of Anne of Green Gables[725]. Notably in interview, the architect Sakakaiyama, mentioned that for him, the spirit of the Bubble Economy was epitomised in his commission for the design of a small pavilion in the resort park, Parque España, themed on the culture and architecture of Spain, and the literary figure of Don Quixote.[726]

In all of these pastiche is key, the guarantee of authenticity through exact replicas the prime attraction rather than the uncertainty of an entirely new and unexpected experience, and the same may be said for the practice of retro as an aesthetic in the goods and products of *Brutus*. In his study of TDL, Raz[727] discusses the extreme measures of control used in both the American and Tokyo Disneylands, seeing in it the inverting of the traditional concept of festival (*matsuri*) and its inherent function and threat of social disturbance and disruption. Furthermore, he also notes the control turns the notion of play (*asobi*) into leisure (*reja*), turning the agency of the participant into the passivity of the audience. In this, and in other themed parks and wholesale presentation of retro, we can thus see Bourdieu's dispossession of the audience, their limited and alienated participation masked by the aspirational language of cultural capital, education and historical authenticity.

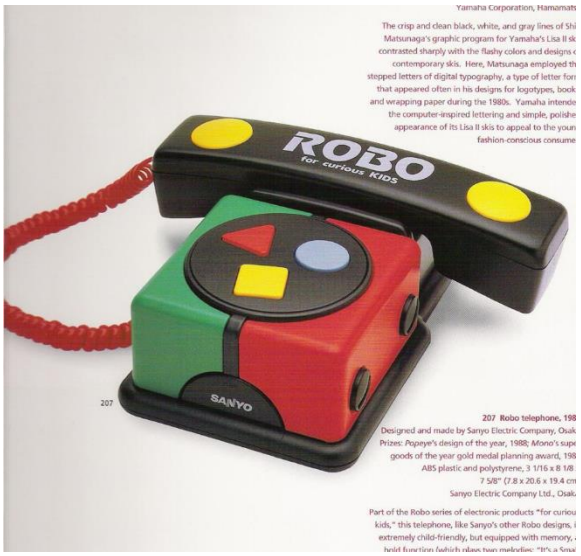
Nostalgia and the ROBO Phone

Although the 1980s saw nostalgia in Japan being articulated in a retro-boom that spanned products, popular culture and theme parks, at this time there was also another type of nostalgia being enacted that, although did not appear to be part of the retro boom, was the articulation of another type of retro desire that hid within it more complex motivations and potential for play. This is

[724] Hamilton-Oehrl in Linhart, Sepp, and Sabine Fruhstuck, *The Culture of Japan as Seen through its Leisure* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998) pp. 237-241.
[725] Hendry in Guichard-Anguis & Moon, 2009, pp. 132-133.
[726] Hendry in Guichard-Anguis & Moon, 2009, pp. 132-133; (Appendix I, Sakakaiyama Interview, pp.73-74) – Notably he says that the pavilion was made of plastic, everything was fake, and moreover it was a remote and strange location – but in the Bubble this didn't matter because everything was just made out of 'Bubble money'.
[727] In Hendry & Raveri, 2002, p. 289.

encapsulated in the ROBO Phone (Figure 38), which in its accidental popularity with young women, appeared to be part of a new range of playful consumer domestic goods, not only in Sanyo's ROBO range (Figure 39), but also Sony's My First Sony range (Figure 40).

The ROBO telephone, with its simple geometric shapes, colourful matt plastic, and comically exaggerated extra-large screws, was originally designed by the Sanyo Electric Company in 1987 to be a children's toy as part of the ROBO series of electronic products for children. With easy to push buttons over a standard telephone pad, it was usable as a normal telephone, and had other functions such as memory, a hold-function, volume control and automatic redial. Intended for the under-5s it became surprisingly popular with young Japanese women who adopted it for its fun colourful design[728].



Clockwise from Left

Figure 38: ROBO Telephone, Sanyo Electric Company, 1987
Kathryn Hiesinger, and Felice Fischer, Japanese Design: A Survey since 1950 (Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1994), p.175

Figure 39: My First Sony, Sony, 1987
Japan Industrial Designers Association, Nippon purodakuto: dezainā no shōgen, 50-nen! (Japan: Bijutsu Shubbansha, 2006) p.114

Figure 40: ROBO Series, Sanyo Electric Company, 1988
Japan Industrial Designers Association, Nippon purodakuto: dezainā no shōgen, 50-nen! (Japan: Bijutsu Shubbansha, 2006) p. 115

[728] Kathryn Hiesinger, and Felice Fischer, *Japanese Design: A Survey since 1950* (Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1994)

While Japanese women were articulating a desire for greater liberation through the reclamation of their bodies and sexuality, they were also conversely part of a cute, childlike trend that was widespread in Japanese youth culture in the 1980s[729] manifested even at work in their performance of *burikko* (child-like adult woman)[730]

Like many youth cultures, cute style emerged out of the disruption of the student protests of the late-1960s, originating through the heightened use of unsanctioned children's comics as a sign of rejection of the prescribed academic canon[731]. Gathering pace through the 1970s as it was quickly commercialised, a childlike aesthetic manifested itself through handwriting, speech, dress, products and paraphernalia, cafes, shops, and even food, permeating all layers of consumer and popular culture to flourish in the consumer culture of the 1980s. Even banks and airlines utilised cartoon characters as a way of attracting customers through the power of cute branding[732]. Primarily used to mean cute, *kawaii* has adjoining connotations of shyness, embarrassment, patheticness, vulnerability, darlingness, lovability and smallness[733]. By extension, it has also been (rather brutally) applied to frailty and even physical handicap / disability as a marker of adorability[734], while in other cases, it is a signifier for innocence, youth, charm, warmth of spirit, openness, naturalness and of course, childhood[735].

While appearing superficial and charmingly spontaneous, Kinsella notes that *kawaii* is in fact a studied performance, using an idealised imagining of childhood for a variety of motivations. These can range from women gaining favours from men through a *kawaii* charm offensive, to expressing a celebration of youth and freedom before settling down into domestic responsibility and mature adulthood.[736] Miller for example notes that the sweet Lolita style conveniently 'defangs adult female sexuality, prolonging a surface expression of innocent girlhood'[737] onto which male fantasies of docile compliancy may be safely projected.

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[729] Kinsella, in Skov, Lise and Brian Moeran, *Women, Media and Consumption in Japan* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1995) pp. 220-254.
[730] Lo, Jeannie, *Office Ladies Factory Women; Life and Work at a Japanese Company* (New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1990) pp. 42-43.
[731] Kinsella, in Skov & Moeran, 1995, pp. 250-251.
[732] Allison in Allen, Matthew and Rumi Sakamoto, *Japanese Popular Culture: Critical Concepts in Asian Studies Volume IV, Globalising Japanese Popular Culture: The Coolness of Japan* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 143.
[733] Kinsella, in Skov & Moeran, 1995, p. 222.
[734] Kinsella, in Skov & Moeran, 1995, p. 236.
[735] Kinsella, in Skov & Moeran, 1995, pp. 238-240.
[736] Kinsella, in Skov & Moeran, 1995, pp. 244-245.
[737] Miller, in Allen & Sakamoto, 2014, p. 61. For more on *kawaii* culture and specifically the impact of Hello Kitty on international shōjo or girl culture, see also Christine R. Yano, *Pink Globalisation: Hello Kitty's Trek Across the Pacific*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2013

Thus, the ROBO Phone, although intended for children, was quickly appropriated by young women as part of this *kawaii* trend[738]. However how this was possible can be seen if we take Susan Stewart's[739] analysis of nostalgia objects, against which the ROBO telephone can be categorised as toy, souvenir and kitsch, all at the same time.

At its simplest level, the ROBO phone can be seen as a pure toy, taking its form from the childhood toy phones of the past. Its attraction at this level lies in this very fact, for as a toy it embodies an interior fantasy world made manifest in physical form, enabling the users to transcend lived reality and interact with an alternate interiority. For this to work, the material 'authenticity' of the object is key, as the greater the detail, the more significant and effective the object as toy is, and the ROBO telephone's playing with detail and scale in its overlarge screws is important in determining its efficacy as a toy in both its gigantic exaggeration and miniaturisation in its reduced toy-like functions.

Yet it is this very character of detailed and over-exaggerated replication that also makes it both kitsch and inauthentic, and as a replica of a childhood toy phone that incidentally works as a real one, it invokes the copying of a nostalgic item from the past that bears the hallmarks of kitsch.[740] According to Stewart, kitsch is the popularisation of the antique, and like Baudrillard, sees it as the destruction of intrinsicality, deriving from an overabundance of materiality.[741] Thus the ROBO phone as kitsch item is not just inauthentic, but in its excess and superficiality is also ironic, split into the contrasting aspects of past and present, mass-production and the individual subject, oblivion and reification.

However, unlike Baudrillard, Stewart sees kitsch as serving purposes other than superficial sentimentality and the aping of the cultural norms of the upper classes, for through kitsch, consumer culture itself becomes the subject and the nostalgia becomes that of the populace itself. Unlike personal effects and family heirlooms, kitsch objects do not include individual autobiography,

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[738] It is also notable that although not necessarily reminiscent of childhood, the aesthetics of the Nissan Pike cars fit perfectly in with the stylistic requirements of *kawaii* – small, rounded and cute. The popularity of the design, taking the car manufacturing industry by surprise (and much like the surprise of Sanyo to ROBO Phone), shows how far the establishment were from subcultural trends on the ground, and the consumer power of these subcultural groups.

[739] Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2007)

[740] Here we also see that marrying up of seemingly incompatible nostalgic aesthetics with technological modernity that invokes Disneyland's insistence on technological wonder housed in sentimental nostalgia that makes up its kitsch identity. (Raz, 1999)

[741] '… the kitsch object offers a saturation of materiality… which takes place to such a degree that materiality is ironic… the desire for the kitsch object… marks the complete disintegration of materiality through an ironic display of overmateriality. The inside burst its bounds and presents a pure surface of outside.' (Stewart, 1993, pp. 167-168)

but instead a collective identity, becoming the souvenirs of the era rather than the self, and in their own way represent the temporality that is in all retro objects. In this way, they 'accumulate around that period of intense socialisation, adolescence, just as the souvenir proper accumulates around that period of intense subjectivity, childhood.'[742]

In this way, the ROBO phone as an item heavily evocative of childhood perfectly fits the distinction and appeal of a souvenir, fulfilling the function of providing a narrative, not of direct lived experience, but rather an invoked idealised childhood, '…a childhood manufactured from its material survivals. Thus, it is a collage made of presents rather than a reawakening of a past… constructed from a set of presently existing pieces. And it is in this gap… that nostalgic desire arises. The nostalgia is enamoured of distance, not of the referent itself.'[743] Consequently the telephone becomes what Shields[744] has termed 're-enchanted' through losing any original context and re-appropriated for a different symbolic use, that of restoring and projecting an idealised notion of childhood, in a way similar to that of all commodified objects. However, according to Stewart, this '[…] can be seen as a response to an unsatisfactory set of present conditions… so the restoration of the souvenir is a conservative idealisation of the past and the distanced for the purposes of a present ideology.'[745]

It is in this context that we can see the ROBO Phone, rather than accidently adopted by young adults, like the children's comics in the 1968 student protests, become deliberately adopted as part of a wider trend for childhood among adults. For inherent in the ROBO Phone is also *kawaii*'s potential use as expression of dissent and rejection of the present. Kinsella notes that even as the 1970s and 1980s marked new low levels of student activism and political engagement, cute style at this time was on the ascendancy, using its extreme passivity and expression in consumption as a different practice of youth protest[746]. Notably, although young men were equally attracted to the *kawaii* aesthetic[747], it was young women who were the highly visible leaders of this trend, signifying through their clothes, food and manner their disengagement and rejection of mature adulthood and all its responsibilities. However instead of active protest and demand for change, *kawaii* followers deliberately retreated into the past of their childhoods, seeing in their idealised individual

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[742] Stewart, 1993, p. 167.
[743] Stewart, 1993, p. 145.
[744] Shields, Rob, *Lifestyle Shopping: The Subject of Consumption* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992) p. 99
[745] Stewart, 1993, p. 150.
[746] Yano (2013) also notes how kitsch items such as Hello Kitty too act as transgressional objects, allowing adults to act below their maturity level as a kind of comfort against potential traumas.
[747] Young men attracted to *kawaii* culture, see in it the freedom from social and professional expectations and responsibilities that are required of Japanese adult men. Emulating *kawaii* culture mannerisms and fashion, they typically are attracted to other *kawaii* girls/women, both in real life and through illustrated mediums such as manga and anime, contributing to the development of the notorious *rori-kon* of Lolita-fetishisation of young *kawaii* girls.

histories the freedom, space and naturalness that was felt to be missing from the adult realities of modern Japanese society. In this we can see the deliberate turning around of the controlled *reja* (leisure) of the 1980s so pushed in the building of theme parks and golf courses, back to the more original *asobi* (play) that held within it the freedom of potential creativity and self-expression.

The height of *kawaii* culture, like many other booms at the time, coincided with the 1980s and its rampant consumerism, materialism, investment opportunities, leisure, and celebration of female emancipation, individualism and youth culture. As such, its association with young women, youth culture and high visibility through its expression in superficial products, fashion and services, made it a target for criticism as a logical extension of anxieties about Japanese youth and the extreme materialism of the Bubble. Calling them 'the moratorium people'[748], *burikko* as *kawaii-shinjinrui* were accused of being selfish, irresponsible, manipulative and squandering of men's, and by extension Japan's, hard work and hard-won wealth in thoughtless and superficial consumption. Although undeserved, as women were both excluded from the main structures of work anyway and also targeted as consumers to drive the economy forward, the accusation of irresponsibility may be relevant when applied to women's main social position as nurturers and homemakers. For in adopting the cute aesthetic, women were in essence rejecting their adult female sexuality in favour of regressing to childhood, thereby abandoning their reproductive responsibilities and the lifetime of drudgery and subservience implied within. For women in patriarchal Japan, unmarried youth would be the pinnacle of their status, at peak social, financial and sexual currency, from where legitimised sexual fulfilment in the form of marriage would spell an ever-downward trend. Mackie for example, notes how in the girlscape of *shōjo* culture, there is a horror of the reproductive sexual body and a rejection of the masculine, articulated in large part by its absence in which gender itself is circumvented. In this overemphasising and insistence of innocence, she sees 'a rejection of the fate of defloration, or being reduced to a sexualised body, of the potential transformation into a maternal body.'[749] It is therefore perhaps no surprise that the 1980s are also noted for being a time in which single-person households were on the rise, and women delayed marriage in ever increasing numbers.

However, it is in its ability to transcend that is kitsch's (and included within this, the ROBO Phone) enduring legacy, for according to Stewart, the value of kitsch is not in its use-function, but in its form and relation to the contemporary. 'Their collection constitutes a discourse on the constant re-creation of novelty within the exchange economy.'[750] Being emptied of real significance as copies of the past, kitsch items are unanchored from the values of time and are free to adopt the

[748] Okonogi, 1978, cited by Kinsella, in Skov & Moeran, 1995, p. 250.
[749] Vera Mackie, *Reading Lolita in Japan* in Aoyama, Tomoko and Barbara Hartley (eds.), *Girl Reading Girl in Japan* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 194.
[750] Stewart, 1993, p.167

fluctuating styles and values of the market, and while Baudrillard sees this as a regrettable effect of the mass-consumer-producer system, Stewart sees this as a form of 'metafashion', in which,

> '[…] the collection of handmade objects translates the time of manual labour into the simultaneity of conspicuous waste. The desire for the kitsch object as either souvenir or collected item marks the complete disintegration of materiality through an ironic display of an overmateriality. The inside bursts its bounds and presents a pure surface of outside. The kitsch object symbolises not transcendence but emergence into the speed of fashion. Its expendability is the expendability of all consumer goods, their dependence upon novelty as the replacement of use value and craftsmanship.'[751]

By becoming fashionable contemporary objects and thus relinquishing their connection to temporality, kitsch objects collapse the 'narrow and deep space' of the popular into the 'deep time and narrow space' of the antique[752]. However, while Baudrillard would view this as merely limited aspiration to the collecting practices of the upper classes, Stewart sees this as a more empowering jumbling of class relations, the very adoption of practices enabling the classes to cultural pretentions. This is something also touched upon by Bourdieu, who in the examination of the role of various classes in the production of culture and its capital, sees in kitsch its potential for re-appropriation by the creative classes, linked in no small way to its inherent irony and intense superficiality that lends itself to mutation and re-appropriation.[753]

Thus, from the sweet *kawaii* style of the 1980s, epitomised in the white frilly socks and sweet foods of young women, cute takes a turn, becoming altogether stranger, darker, and more perverse, speaking to the mutations and perversions that kitsch allows in its unanchored materiality. Consumer forces take over, appropriating the sweetness of 1980s *kawaii* for the economy and Japanese global soft power, manifesting as the face of 'Cool Japan' with the blessing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)[754], while on the back of Hello Kitty's ambiguously silent visage Sanrio makes a grab for international status[755]. Meanwhile back at home, girl culture itself becomes strange, ditching its good girl image for the edgier *gyaru* (girl) street fashions that included among

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[751] Stewart, 1993, p. 168

[752] Ibid - In this we also see Boym's notion of nostalgia as individual narrative and as a way of conquering time. (Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (USA: Basic Books) 2001)

[753] 'Intellectuals and artists have a special predilection for the most risky but also most profitable strategies of distinction, those which consist in asserting the power, which is peculiarly theirs, to constitute insignificant objects as works of art, or more subtly, to give aesthetic redefinition to objects already defined as art, but in another mode, by other classes or class factions (e.g., kitsch). In this case, it is the manner of consuming which creates the object of consumption, and a second-degree delight which transforms the 'vulgar' artefacts abandoned to common consumption, Westerns, strip cartoons, family snapshots, graffiti, into distinguished and distinctive works of culture.' (Bourdieu, 2010, p. 279)

[754] Miller, in Allen & Sakamoto, 2014, p. 59.

[755] Yano, in Allen & Sakamoto, 2014. Also, Yano, 2013

many styles, the bleached hair, deep tan and light makeup of the *ganguro* in the late-1990s. Of the *kawaii* style, Lolita too undergoes a transformation, mutating and fracturing the original little girl cute into the multiplicities of punk and gothic Lolita (*panku rorii*, *gosu rorii*), *guro kawaii* (grotesque cute), *busu kawaii* (ugly/homely cute), and even the often misunderstood ironic manic-cute or hyper-cute.[756] Men meanwhile, in the shock of the recessionary decades, take on even more feminised traits, to become the gentle and retiring *sōshokukei danshi* (grasseaters/herbivores) of the early-2000s, using the *kawaii*-established practice of disengagement to protest against and reject the masculine ideals that marked the previous century. It is in these darker and altogether more perverse mutations later on that we see thus see *kawaii*'s true potential as a form of dissention and expression, in which cute moves on from simple protest and resistance into the realms of satire, parody, ridicule and subversion.

Spent! Spent! Spent! Exhaustion in the Bubble

In this chapter, we have seen how the pressures of the Bubble manifested itself in a turn to the past, as symbolic rejection of the unrelenting speed of the present. However, the Bubble Economy had another effect hinted at by this nostalgic desire; that of exhaustion and tiredness. For while the majority of the Bubble culture had been characterised by speed and excess in investments and asset values as well as lifestyles, consumption and work, so this had conversely led to a feeling of exhaustion by those having to service it. Recounted anecdotally by Dentsu executive, Sakaitani, he suggested that by the end of the Bubble people were becoming exhausted,[757] and this manifested itself in several ways.

Whiskey Advertising in *Brutus*

One of the ways in which this tiredness during the bubble can be seen is in beverage advertisements, especially those targeted at men, working at the forefront of the Bubble Economy. Among Japanese office practices a great emphasis is placed on informal networks and relationships for the smooth running of business, and which the men especially have to participate in, in order to better their opportunities for promotion. Practically speaking this translates into committing many out-of-office hours to socialising with colleagues and business associates in activities such as golf, karaoke, and especially drinking in bars. While technically leisure activities, these are actually disguised work

[756] Miller, in Allen & Sakamoto, 2014, pp. 61-66 – There is also the *hime gyaru* (princess girl) style, as featured in the film, *Kamikaze Girls* (Tetsuya Nakashima, Toho Company, 2004), that takes its inspiration from an imaginary Rococo aesthetic – but is its own distinct style and should not be confused with the Lolita style.
[757] See Appendix I, Sakaitani Interview, pp.84-85

functions, often (during the Bubble) paid for at company expense, and Smith notes how Japanese culture drinking is used to cement social bonds, supporting existing structures of hierarchy and status through the ritualised conferment of respect, obligation and responsibility[758]. It is against this background that drink advertisements in *Brutus* magazine can be read, for with so little actual personal time to spend on leisure, unlike the women to whom leisure activities were being marketed to, for men the options were limited to more passive pursuits they could pursue in and around work, such as music listening, cultural information gathering, and of course, drinking alcohol.

Thus, drinking becomes a masculine activity that extends to both work and leisure, making it one of the few leisure options to be easily marketed in men's magazines. If we examine the beverage advertisements in *Brutus* magazine, the majority of the drinks advertised are alcoholic at an average of nearly 8 advertisements per issue, tying in with the idea that drinking alcohol was an acceptable pastime among Japanese *salarymen*. Of these, nearly 7 out of 8 advertisements are for spirits, with only 1 on average for beer, with whiskey by far the most prolific. In addition, there is a range of advertisement sizes, spanning a third or half page, full page and two-page spreads. Of the less than full-page advertisements, these tend to be for foreign brands of spirits, while the two-page advertisements are mostly Japanese brands, suggesting that Japanese companies were willing to spend to dominate the market. Finally, although the foreign brands of spirits outnumber the local Japanese brands, on closer inspection these mostly appear to be licenced for distribution by Japanese companies, especially Kirin, who appears to be a strong player in this sector[759].

What this tells us is that rather than beer or traditional Japanese liquors, spirits and especially whiskey was the alcohol that had strongest marketing presence in *Brutus* magazine, and Smith notes that while the consumption of alcohol in general rose tenfold after 1950 as incomes increased, whiskey skyrocketed by 5,500% between 1960 and 1980.[760] The resources that Japanese alcohol companies had and their commitment to their brand presence was reflected in the size and quality of their advertisements and magazine space they bought, and even with foreign brands Japanese companies used their influence through licensing agreements to ensure they controlled this sector of the market. Any foreign brands without Japanese industry help appear to have, at least in *Brutus*, limited advertising presence, with not just half-sized advertisements, but also much more simplistic and direct design and advertising copy, showing a less sophisticated and more straightforward method of selling. While whiskey has a strong cultural connotation in Japan, especially among

[758] Smith in Tobin 1992, pp. 143-158.
[759] See Appendix II, Brutus Magazine Data, pp.269-275
[760] Smith, in Tobin, 1992, pp. 147-148.

Japanese work culture in the 1980s with a 1000-yen bottle of whiskey being an ideal gift[761], high taxes on foreign alcohol imports would also explain why domestic brands were also favoured.

Of all the whiskey brands advertised it is Suntory Whiskey that has the strongest presence. Featuring in nearly every issue studied with many as double-page spreads, placed near the beginning of the magazine, and more than one type of product, Suntory Whiskey appears to have the commercial edge over its competitors in terms of exposure for this market. Likewise, the quality of its advertisements appears to be high, with nuance and crafted appeal in its copy as well as the design and overall concept. Unlike many of the other advertisements for other brands, which more often than not describe the material qualities of the spirit (for example, its lack of 'bite', origin such as London or Italy, or how it can facilitate a good time), the Suntory Whiskey advertisements are more philosophical and nuanced in nature, evoking abstract qualities such as gender relations, nationhood, and friendship – concepts that elevate the advertisements to modes of being rather than mere consumption[762].

These concepts can largely be categorised into 3 groups: time, respite and agency. If we examine the first category, we can see that at its most basic level, these Suntory Whiskey advertisements use time as an indicator of the whiskey's quality. Copy such as *'Don't wait 7 years and the malt looks pitiful / bad'*[763] and '*This is a whiskey that is a 15-year old thing. Suntory whiskey aged 15'*[764], indicates that time is measured in years. While there is a reasonable connection with whiskey and its aging process, coupled with close-up images of whiskey in a glass or glass decanters against simple backgrounds, more than just the production quality of whiskey, what is evoked is a feeling of stillness that accentuates the mood of slow time, space, and patience.

However, the measurement of years is not the only way in which time appears to be articulated. Instead relationships also give it structure and meaning. In *Brutus*, Issue 126, the Suntory advertisement contains the copy: *'Friends, returned home leaving little left behind of a good time.'*[765] (Figure 41). Accompanying this the image depicts a bright crystal decanter set against a flat black background, its outline in white light making it appear jewel-like and crystalline, with amber dregs of whiskey at its bottom emphasising the quantity consumed. Time in this case has been not accumulated but instead has been spent, drunk, like the whiskey, on good times and friendships. In this way, like Baudrillard's assertion that time becomes a precious resource as the demands of the

[761] Smith, in Tobin, 1992, pp. 143-158.
[762] In this we can see the use of the 'soft-sell' approach discussed earlier in the chapter. Instead of addressing the benefits of the product directly to the audience through a 'hard-sell', the values and qualities of the product and brand are inferred obliquely through the creation of an impression of mood and atmosphere (Miller, 2006, p. 178, p. 191.
[763] *Brutus Issue 126: 01/01/1986 and 15/01/1986* (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1986) pp. 42-43.
[764] *Brutus Issue 141: 01/09/1986* (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1986) pp. 76-77.
[765] *Brutus Issue 126: 01/01/1986 and 15/01/1986* (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1986) p. 150.

systems of mass-production and consumption become more demanding, so the spending of time on leisure and relationships and not as productive labour or in active consumption of things and services, becomes in itself a demonstration of luxury, value, and essential human qualities.

Figure 41: Suntory Whiskey 'friends' advertisement
Brutus Issue 126: 01/01/1986 and 15/01/1986 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1986) p. 150.

The second category, that of respite, can be seen in at least three of the advertisements studied. While the images are deceptively simple, often showing just a close-up of the whiskey in its bottle, in a glass, or held up to a man's face, the copy accompanying these images are comprised of statements that appear to address deeper problems. The first, *'The world, full of hurt. Once in a while, lightly let's go. Man's good taste. Suntory Reserve'*[766] (Figure 42) follows an image of a close-up of a shirt-wearing, smiling salaryman, leaning on a hand holding a glass of whiskey against his face. Appearing mature and relaxed, he is a warm counterbalance to the 'hurt' of the world.

[766] *Brutus* Issue 154: 01/04/1987 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1987) pp. 4-5

Figure 42: Suntory Whiskey 'salaryman' advertisement Brutus Issue 154: 01/04/1987 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1987) pp. 4-5

The second advertisement is of a full bottle of whiskey, horizontal and dynamically bobbing on a surface of clear water, with the copy, 'This is one cup of buoyancy.'[767] (Figure 43).

Figure 43: Suntory Whiskey 'buoyancy' advertisement Brutus Issue 205: 15/06/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989) p.26

[767] *Brutus* Issue 205: 15/06/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989) p.26

Finally, confidently placed on a finished granite surface is a full Suntory labelled whiskey bottle, with accompanying full glass, offset by a deep blue background. In white, the copy reads, 'It is the harmony of Japan.'[768] (Figure 44)

Figure 44: Suntory Whiskey 'harmony' advertisement Brutus Issue 216: 12/01/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989) pp. 4-5

In all the above advertisements, the readers are offered not just whiskey, but solutions to perceived and assumed issues of personal distress, tiredness, and discord. In the warmth of the whiskey-drinking salaryman's face is comfort and escapism from the harsh realities of the world, in the forward-seeming dynamism of the bottle sloshing in the water the energy and buoyancy promised in the copy, and in the golden/amber glowing confidence of the whiskey bottle set against the calm of the blue, the harmony of a nation. In these advertisements, we also see the 'turn away from the West and return to Japan' motif that Yamada[769] describes, in which advertisements, reflecting Japan's growing confidence, from the mid-1970s onwards turned away from using 'Western approval' in their narratives to reincorporating Japanese cultural forms of expression. However, while undoubtedly speaking to a Japanese audience through Japanese cultural expression, central to the draw of these advertisements is an acknowledgement of a disquiet about the self and the world that they address; a world of hurt, exhaustion and discord, terms which seem more suited to the recessionary period of the 1990s than the 1980s of the Bubble Economy.

[768] *Brutus* Issue 216: 12/01/1989 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1989) pp. 4-5
[769] Shoji Yamada, *Reidentified Japan: Cultural turns in television commercials after the 1980s*, in Segers, Rien T. (ed.) *A New Japan for the Twenty-First Century: An inside overview of current fundamental changes and problems* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008) p. 147.

The final advertisement studied in this series was found in a *Brutus* issue from 1987[770], and in a two-page spread depicts two old withered men, standing holding long wooden poles, their tanned skin and dark clothes set against a burnt dusty orange background that echoes the amber of the Suntory whiskey (Figure 16). With their dirt-encrusted clothes, lived-in faces and unshod bare feet they appear to be labourers, and the rough poverty of the advertisement feels at odds with the normally glossy and elegant image of other Suntory advertisements in this series. Centrally imposed over the image is the bold white blocky copy, proclaiming, 'Within whiskey is my independent country.'

Figure 45: Suntory Whiskey 'burakumin' advertisement
Brutus Issue 166: 01/10/1987 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1987), pp.4-5

While seemingly incongruous with the luxury image of whiskey, the short narrative at the bottom titled 'Hello' and the author's name of 'Nakagami Kenji' provide some clues as the meaning behind the advertisement. Nakagami Kenji (1946-1992) was a prominent literary author whose origins came from the disadvantaged *burakumin* community of Japan's outcasts. First published in 1974 and winning literary awards in 1976 and 1977, his works deal with the themes of the hardships of people living in the *burakumin* communities. Nakagami was the first post-war writer writing about and from the *burakumin* community to make it into the mainstream, and during the 1980s his writing made for a rare example of dissonance against the homogeneity of Japanese society, and especially that of the poor and disadvantaged during a time of economic prosperity[771]. Although he

[770] *Brutus* Issue 166: 01/10/1987 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1987), pp.4-5
[771] Yoshiko Yokochi Samuel, *The marvellous in the real: Images of Burakumin in Nakagami Kenji's Kumano saga* in Blake Willis, David and Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, *Transcultural Japan: At the borderlands of race, gender, and identity* (Routledge: London and New York, 2008), pp. 181-195

did not publish in 1987, the short story, about characters in a mountain village, appears to feature Akiyuki, a character from his first major novel, The Cape, and can be seen as a narrative about *burakumin*.

It is with this in mind that the advertisement comes together. The image itself, striking with its burnt orange and sympathetic portraiture of two normally unseen members of society, is one of a series by photographer, Ueda Yoshihiko [772]. Commissioned in 1987 by Suntory, the series features a range of East Asian poor (presumably *burakumin*) across ages and genders staged in the same set as this advertisement, and ends with a portrait of Nagakami himself[773]. While working on a central theme of *burakumin* through the portraiture and literary connections, the dissonance these features provide in an advertisement about Suntory 'Royal' whiskey reflects not only literary and artistic aspirations as well as political comment about *burakumin*, but also a wider comment about the underdog and the underprivileged in society, and their strength and resilience. The copy, with its allusions to independence and nation-building, appears to frame these figures as tough, determined, and rugged, rather than weak, poor and dirty. Even their outcast status is reframed as independence and resistance, the literary and artistic connections implicit within the advertisement casting these as heroic nation-builders desiring a better system, their tanned leathery skin a direct contrast and challenge to the race and class values of the white *bihaku* skin of Japanese normative beauty[774]. Meanwhile the striking imagery and colour echo the fantastical aesthetic of the magical realism so present in Nakagami's writing that he uses to challenge the hegemony of rational thought. This is strengthened by Nakagami's own position on *burakumin*, seeing in their stories both oppression of the state and an unspoilt beauty of authentic being, something lost in the intellectual and spiritual bankruptcy of contemporary Japan.[775] In this way Suntory Whiskey invites the reader to relate to the outcast as hero desiring his own independent state, and while this may on the one hand tie in with the surrounding debate around Japan's growing national confidence, on the other, it indicates the presence of a real discord in the narrative of national prosperity, questioning its abundance in the face of the disadvantaged. However, by acknowledging the presence and agency of the *burakumin* it also acknowledges the presence of Others who are not

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[772] Yoshihiko Ueda, Yoshihiko Ueda Portfolio (2015) <http://www.yoshihikoueda.com> [accessed 19th June 2015]

[773] Ueda Yoshihiko, *Yoshihiko Ueda Portfolio Works 1987; Kenji Nakagami Suntory (2015)* <http://www.yoshihikoueda.com/#/p/1987/20> [accessed 19th June 2015]

[774] *'… the bihaku mode is a type of restorative of traditional values. Bihaku allows the greatest gender and class contrast with the leathery skin of the labourer, with his "labourer sunburn" (rōdōyake). These conventional norms are also deeply nationalistic, so the return to pale skin is a return to old-fashioned Japaneseness, a type of beauty nationalism.'* (Miller, 2006, p. 37).

[775] Samuel in Blake Willis and Murphy-Shigematsu, 2008, p. 191.

foreign but Japanese. In this way the salaryman is also recast as an individual – stoic, rebellious, and invited to reclaim his own agency in a new Japan that is magical and real.

Energy drinks in *Brutus*

However, although making up the bulk of the beverage advertisements in *Brutus*, alcohol is not the only beverage with a presence in the magazine. Second to the alcohol advertisements are 'nutritional' drinks[776] or '*genki drinks*' the more common term in Japan for energy drinks. Although stimulants in modern drinks have been used since before the 20th century, notably the caffeine and cocaine in early Coca-Cola, it was Japan that produced the first mass-marketed energy drink in 1962 by the Taisho Pharmaceutical Company. Called Lipovitan D, it was sold in small, brown glass bottles in pharmacies aimed at hardworking salarymen, arriving in the middle of the miracle economy years to help salarymen power through their work[777]. By 1965 Lipovitan D was selling at an annual 100 million bottles, doubling this in 1970 and then again in 1980[778], showing how the rise of the energy drink market in Japan coincided with the narrative of nation-building, work and economic growth.

The Bubble of the 1980s was no different, with energy drinks becoming part of the hardworking, hard-playing lifestyle of the working man, and in *Brutus* we can see a rise in advertisements for supplementary drinks, not just for Lipovitamin D (Figure 46), but also Oronamin C, Calorie Mate, Suntory Sports Drink NCCA, Sea Max 1000, and Alinamin V[779]. While the magazine issues early on in the Bubble have few numbers of energy drink advertisements, by 1988 they become a regular presence in the magazine, and using terms such as '100-yen horsepower', 'compressed gas cylinder', 'liquid energy', 'super businessman', and 'workaholic', it is clear that rather than increased capacity for leisure or sports, the purpose of energy drinks was to increase stamina for work. These lines

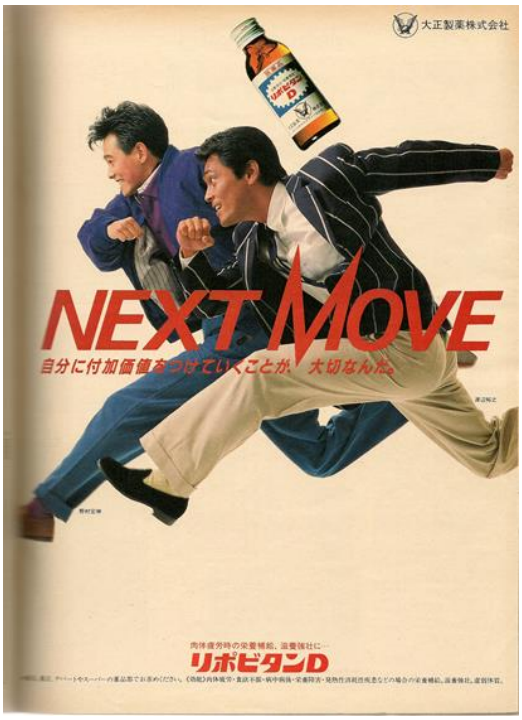

Figure 46: Lipovitamin D advertisement
Brutus Issue 184: 15/07/1988 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1988); p.84

[776] 栄養ドリンク (*eiyō dorinku*)
[777] Svend Hollensen, *Essentials of Global Marketing*, (Essex and New Jersey: Financial Times Prentice Hall, 2008) p. 186
[778] The New York Times, Japanese Energy Drink Is in Need of a Boost (19th July 2002) <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/07/19/business/japanese-energy-drink-is-in-need-of-a-boost.html> [accessed 01st September 2015]
[779] See Appendix II, Brutus Magazine Data, pp.269-275

of copy often accompany images of a working lifestyle, either of dynamic and charismatic looking businessmen (Japanese and Caucasian), or the coffee cups, beer glasses and paperwork debris to working life (Figure 47). The issues of 1988 notably contain 3 different energy drink advertisements per issue – half the average of alcohol and three times as much the average for energy drinks throughout the series studied. In addition to energy drinks, Miller notes that during the 1980s food and pharmaceutical companies in general started to produce new enriched foods, claiming benefits that outstripped their nutritional value. Dubbed 'functional food' and later 'food with a specific health claim' (*tokutei hokenyō*), [780] they included health-boosting foods and diet foods alike, showing that women as well as men were being aimed at in this new consumable, and coinciding with the boom in investment and the new consumer markets of health, leisure, body-conscious fashions, sport and fitness[781].

Figure 47: Alinamin V advertisement Brutus Issue 184: 15/07/1988 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1988); pp. 60-61

[780] Miller, 2006, p. 162.

[781] There is much to be said about the connection of women to food in Japan (too adjacent to this project for more in-depth study). From the obvious connection between food, weight and appearance, diet and size have also been the site in which issues around cultural values and the influence of globalised cultures and modernity have been contested (Miller, 2006, p. 161). In addition to the traditional Japanese concepts of discipline, struggle and perseverance there is also an equal desire for personal restriction as an expression of control in the face of late-capitalist overabundance. However conversely women are also often portrayed as un-rational beings whose unfettered enjoyment and irrationality is a useful tool in the consumer aims of capitalism. Where men are positioned to inhabit the Japanese ideals of restraint and rationalised production, women's unrestrained desire may be fetishized through their enjoyment of food, symbolised by the sweet, snack-eating cute foods of the *burikko*. The only place where this may be reversed is in the dynamics of sexual relations, where women are required to maintain the innocence of sexual restraint, while men are allowed or even in some cases required to display an unrestrained, aggressive and dominant sexuality.

This anxiety around women and food can be seen in contemporary literature, where female characters are portrayed as fixating on food or suffering from eating disorders (Miller, 2006, p. 161) Tellingly, in *Hanako* magazine, there are often little to no recipes for home-cooked food, instead offering a plethora of restaurants, cafes and delis at home and abroad. During interview Matsuo Mika too described being taken out by male admirers, wined and dined in fancy foreign restaurants at their expense. In this we can see Miller's (2006, p. 174) argument that by dieting, women were rejecting domesticated roles of food preparer and nurturer, the fertile 'progenitor of future salarymen'. Arguably this was also achieved through the symbolic eating of sweets by the *burikko* and the dining out as the OL, in both cases avoiding being the woman in the kitchen.

However, by 1989 and into 1991 there appears a different strategy, with copy relating to themes of work/life quality, or inner spirit. The advertisements for the energy drink, Chiovita (Taiho Pharma) appear to encapsulate this change (Figure 48). Depicting mythological references interpreted in a modern textile style, colourful and vibrant against a black background, and with corresponding packaging of hand-drawn roots, animals and plants common to East Asian medicine, the supplementary drink draws on references to old East Asian mysticism and medicine for its health benefits rather than modern workplace energy, as does the accompanying name, 'Chiovita phoenix jewel vitality S' and copy, 'The spirit of the jewel is attached.' Interestingly, in the last advertisement contains the copy, 'If you know anxiety, vitality of the jewel', indicating that these health drinks weren't only for providing additional energy for work, but that there was also a market among working men for combating stress and anxiety.

Figure 48: Chiovita advertisement Brutus Issue 241: 01/01/1991 and 15/01/1991 (Tokyo: Magazine House, 1991); p. 102

Overall while whiskey and energy drinks alike were riding the Bubble wave of work and consumption in a hyper-inflated market, they were also acknowledging and addressing underlying anxieties and desires for time. With Suntory Whiskey, this was encapsulated by the slowing down of time, to the stillness of a close-up, the reduction of elements to an atmospheric mood, and the positioning of oneself as Other to a harsh and rigid system. With energy drinks, it was a speeding up, an acknowledgement of the need to buy time, buying energy, health and fitness compressed into a small bottle. In this way, the binaries of slowing down and speeding up can be seen as metaphors for the other contradictions in the Bubble – of women's emancipation and restriction, their engagement and denial, of men's patriarchal dominance and corporate subservience, their institutional influence but lack of personal agency, and Japan's financial wealth and relative poverty of life quality.

Super-Genki

As expressions of exhaustion and tiredness go, nothing is more oppositional and particularly attuned to the perverse postmodern logic of the Bubble Economy, than a style that came to characterise the end of the Bubble. In an interview with Dentsu employee, Sakaitani, he referred to the late 1980s penchant for cartoonish characters in advertising that included cartoons as mascots, hyper caricatures, and super-humans. While this can be linked to both the 'Go faster!' *ike ike don don* and cute *kawaii* trends that also formed the work and consumer experience of the Bubble, in his opinion, these were specific totemic manifestations of hyper-energy he called '*super-genki*' (*sūpā genki*), that conferred additional energy to society. *Genki* in Japanese refers to lively, healthy, energetic, and is in common usage as everyday greeting as well as ordinary adjective. Thus, *super-genki* refers to a super energetic and healthy quality that has hyper-energetic connotations.

A prime example can be seen in the advertising campaign for the energy drink, Regain. First introduced in 1988 by Sankyo Co. Ltd., trying to tap into the expanding 'functional food' market, Regain was a popular energy drink aimed at Japanese salarymen. While the *super-genki* quality of energy drinks campaigns can be felt in some of their advertising, the medium which suited the hyperactive nature of *super-genki* was television, through which Regain had a wide-reaching and popular campaign.

The 1989 television commercial for Regain[782] features a Japanese salaryman flying in an aeroplane filled with foreigners. Attired in a suit, he appears young, ambitious, energetic, pictured dynamically in various cut scenes of him: sitting in the plane; opening a briefcase filled with Regain cans; against a darkened sky with a globe struck by electricity; astride on one of the side engines of the aeroplane; standing triumphantly on the steps leading out of the aeroplane; being kissed and awarded garlands of flowers; dressed as a sword-wielding samurai; and finally in the back of a limousine with an older Caucasian fellow businessman. Throughout this while keeping a deadpan face, his mouth makes exaggerated shapes to accompany the robust singing and marching music of the theme song, 'Sign of Courage':

Black and yellow are a symbol of courage.
Can you fight for 24 hours?
Regain, Regain, Regain, Our Regain!!!!!
There is a symbol of courage on my attaché case.
Can you fight around the world?
Businessman, Businessman, Japanese businessman!!!!!
Hoping to have paid vacations,
(I am going to business trip to) Beijing, Moscow, Paris and New York

[782] YouTube, 【CM 1989-91】三共 Regain 30 秒 × 7 (24th September 2012) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=746v_877dzI> [accessed 05th September 2015]

Regain, Regain, Regain, Our Regain!!!!!
Hoping to get a raise,
(I am going to business trip to) Cairo, London, Istanbul
Businessman, Businessman, Japanese businessman!!!![783]

What we know of the commercial is that yellow and black were the chosen colours for Regain, and accompanying the marketing campaign were the slogans 'Are you able to switch from OFF to ON?' and 'Can you fight for 24 hours?'[784]. The latter was chosen as Buzzword of the Year in 1989[785]. Aimed at the Japanese salaryman, the Regain commercial painted him as a heroic figure, and the song was immensely popular during this period, capturing a certain zeitgeist of the time. Other Japanese companies, schools, police stations, government offices, and even the Economic Planning Agency were said to have requested copies of the song from Sankyo since its initial broadcast[786]. Set alongside an international crowd and travelling by plane to some tropical island for business, he is the ideal corporate samurai, garlanded with flowers and kisses, sitting in limousines, business trips are portrayed as paid vacations, and he is young, virile, and self-confident. Portrayed quite literally as a samurai in one shot, he is the Regain's version of Shima Kosaku, the idealised salaryman in the manga of the same name.

Figure 49: The hyperenergetic corporate samurai, Regain television commercial, late-1980s/early-1990s, film still, Regain Television Advertisement (Video), YouTube, 【CM 1989-91】三共Regain 30 秒×7 (24th September 2012) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=746v_877dzI> [accessed 05th September 2015]

[783] Seesaa blog, *Can you work with the Japanese Shoshain for 24 hours? Role model of Japanese shoshain* (11th October 2007) < http://iiihou.seesaa.net/article/60103725.html> [accessed 10th September 2015]
Another set of lyrics for what appears to be an extended tv performance version can be found here:
Lang8, *The Proof Of Bravery--A Cool Japanese Businessman Song* (17th July 2013) < http://lang-8.com/636813/journals/977975873988717399958114077499856168> [accessed 10th September 2015]
[784] Suntory, *News release: Regain Energy Drink New Product Announcement* (21st May 2014) <http://www.suntory.com/softdrink/news/pr/d/SBF0145.html> [accessed 10th September 2015]
[785] Ibid
[786] LA Times, *Japanese Embrace Satirical Theme of TV Jingle : Advertising: A tonic's tongue-in-cheek tribute to hard-working businessmen has the whole country singing and executives poking fun at their own image.* (16th January 1990) <http://articles.latimes.com/1990-01-16/business/fi-249_1_japanese-businessman> [accessed 10th September 2015]

From 1989 to 1991, Regain aired several more along the same theme. All feature the same Japanese salaryman, travelling the world on business, with the next three even more hyped-up than the first. Shot on location in Venice (reflecting the expanded budget), the heroic salaryman is shown speeding to various business meetings, brandishing the required accruements of the Japanese salaryman – the business suit, blocky 1980s mobile telephone, even golf is used as a conceit (in the fifth instalment of this Regain series). Meanwhile appearing as a spectre are appearances of the traditional samurai as the embodiment of the spirit of the salaryman (and Regain-bestowed energy), while crowds of international businessmen applaud approvingly at the salaryman winning and saving the day for his company. In the second commercial there is even a front page newspaper extract that says (in English) 'Japanese Businessman Pulls it Off', underlining the success and heroism of the salaryman[787].

However just as Shima Kosaku is an idealised manga figure, so this is a hyper-energised version of the salaryman, and there are indications that its popularity was in part also self-aware and ironic[788]. The resolute stoic face of the corporate samurai contrasts with the exaggerated militarised singing, and combined with the jerky movements and the sudden cut scenes all have the effect of making him out to be more than human – robotic and dynamic to the point of being superhuman[789]. While necessary for the heroism and thus appeal of the character, this *super-genki* hyper quality of the Regain commercials could also be seen as an epitome of the hyper feeling of the Bubble itself, a potent mix of business, ambition and international recognition with success, celebration and frantic energy.

Yet this articulation of *super-genki* can be read as more than just a materialisation of Bubble Economy energy, for this hyper-energetic style can also be seen as a wider part of bubble culture. In Sakaitani's assertion of *super-genki*'s hyperactive quality, he observed that this came from a perverse feeling of exhaustion and that people needed the totemic energy conveyed by these hyper characters to carry on.[790] However on looking at the Regain series, by the last two commercials in 1991 the feeling suddenly becomes gentler, cleaner and more muted, set as it were on a tropical idyll and set to less strident music[791]. This may indicate instead a slowing down of pace as the Bubble starts winding down in the early 1990s. Yet after the Bubble bursts, *super-genki* doesn't go away, but becomes entrenched in modern Japanese popular culture, manifesting itself most notably in

[787] YouTube, 【CM 1989-91】三共 Regain 30 秒 × 7 (24th September 2012) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=746v_877dzI> [accessed 05th September 2015]
[788] Ibid
[789] Or alternatively, as a parody of the stiff and formal Japanese businessman (ibid).
[790] See Appendix I, Sakaitani Interview, pp.86-87
[791] YouTube, 【CM 1989-91】三共 Regain 30 秒×7 (24th September 2012) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=746v_877dzI> [accessed 05th September 2015]

the cultures of pop music, manga, anime and cosplay. The Bubble period instead appears to be the start of a *super-genki* trend rather than a one-off moment in time.

In a sense this creation of a *super-genki* aesthetic can be felt in the notion of the *Übermensch*, or super-man. According to Nietzsche in 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra', *Übermensch* represents values that are set by humans themselves, and in doing so rejects outside non-human values, such as religion based on an otherworldly deity, which are viewed as inherently suspicious, drawing humans away from the world. In this way, it is proclaimed as the ultimate goal of humanity, taking on as it does recognition of the world, and the full ownership and agency of humanity of itself. While notably Nietzsche's work has been linked to the early-twentieth century's movements in eugenics and fascism, the values of independence, agency, and materialism can also be felt to chime with 1980s Japanese politics of economy, industry, and foreign relations. As such the Regain super-*salaryman* can be viewed as a type of Japanese corporate *Übermensch*, who incorporates those values of ultra-confidence, agency and materialism, and against which normal Japanese *salarymen* were meant to measure up to.

However, in addition to this, there is also yet another interpretation of *super genki*. Deriving from his work on sign and its replacement of real signification through the late-capitalist system of mass-production and consumption, Baudrillard was the first to coin the term 'hyperreality'. Referring to the creation of signs with no actual referent, hyperreality does more than just blend the real with the sign, but instead the sign becomes a referent for something that does not actually exist. In this way, it creates a copy world in which signs come to take the place of reality, and to which desires are directed and fulfilled. Within this process, using the terms 'simulation' and 'simulacra'[792], Baudrillard argues that with the development of the systems of mass-production, capitalism, consumption, and mass media technologies, man becomes increasingly alienated from reality, during which process the sign begins to take over reality, first imitating it, superseding it, and finally replacing it altogether. By the end of the process consumers' experiences have become so artificial that no pretence to the real is even needed, and signs merely have to refer to other signs in a system of total equivalency that signal the hyperreal system.

Thus, the hyper-energised *super genki* characters of commercials such as the Regime *salaryman* are also indicative of a hyperreal system taking place in Japan during the latter years of the Bubble. Conditions such as increased capitalisation, extreme consumerism and mass-production on a globalised scale, and an overflow of media technologies such as print, music and television,

[792]'Simulation' refers to the way in which reality becomes blended with signs through a process of imitation, to the point where the signs lose their original referent, while 'Simulacra' refers to signs and copies of signs that have no real original referent/reality to begin with.

altogether create the perfect conditions for hyperreality to occur. While Japan, in its ascendancy in the 1980s collided with the spectre of postmodernism and postmodernity, many theorists, researchers and writers attempted to apply postmodern theories to the study of Japan, or indeed had their theories applied by the Japanese in the study of themselves[793] Since then, as the Lost Decades took their toll and postmodernism fell out of favour, writings on this subject receded. However, as Ivy and Bartal note[794], the aesthetic styles of postmodernism made considerable impact on the advertising and commercial designs of Bubble Japan. These used a multiplicity of approaches to create distinctly intriguing and complex forms of communication that remain or indeed reinforce a Japanese style that is not bound to one particular form, but inhabits a dynamic practice of approach.

It is with this in mind that we examine the Nissin Cup Noodle and Alinamin V commercials between 1989 and 1991 at the height of the Bubble. During this time, it was common practice for Japanese advertisers to use foreign actors in their commercials, and according to Yamada[795], reference to the West started in the late-1960s, with foreign actors being used from the early-1970s onwards. These early commercials used a strategy of tacit approval from the West, however, from the mid-1970s and as Japan's international status started to rise, there was a turning away from the West and back to Japan. Finally, by the 1980s the use of traditional Japanese elements[796], blended with the casting of famous foreign celebrities such as Woody Allen and George Lucas[797] and shot in exotic locations were commonplace, made possible by the financial abundance and consumer drive of the Bubble.

In 1989 Arnold Schwarzenegger, already a Hollywood star, had by then filmed some of his most defining and iconic roles, including The Terminator (1984) and Predator (1987), with others (Total Recall (1990) and Terminator 2 (1991)) to follow soon after. During this period of the late 1980s, early-1990s, Schwarzenegger starred in a number of prominent Japanese commercials in which he moved away from his tough-man Hollywood role to play humorous characters more in line with his comedy film work. Known affectionately as '*Shuwa-chan*' in Japan[798] it is important to note that he did not play other characters, but inhabited an exaggerated character as himself, utilising his strong brand to promote the product. Some of these include advertisements for beer and coffee, however

[793] Notably, Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, Miyoshi & Harootunian (ed.) et al (1989), Ōtsuka, Eiji and Azuma, Hiroki (in Matthew & Sakamoto, 2014); Arnason & Sugimoto (ed.) et al. 1995, Fuminobu, 2005
[794] Ivy, 1995; Bartal, 2015
[795] In Segers, 2008, p. 144.
[796] For example, in many of the iconic Shiseido advertisements, elements of traditional culture such as Japanese festivals (*matsuri*) are used to sell its make-up.
[797] Often under secrecy clauses that prohibited distribution outside of Japan.
[798] Kotaku, Brian Ashcraft, *Thank you Arnold Schwarzenegger for the Japanese Commercials* (23rd May 2014) <http://kotaku.com/thank-you-arnold-schwarzenegger-for-the-japanese-comme-1580552368> [accessed 10th September 2015]

his best-known commercials at this time were for Nissin Cup Noodles and the energy drink, Alinamin V.

In the Alinamin V advertisements, the main premise behind his character is that he is a 'Demon V' energy demon who inhabits the small brown energy drink bottle[799]. Like a genie, on opening he whooshes out, using sophisticated 1980s graphics to add to the dynamism, or indeed rides the bottle, on his way rushing somewhere through space. Generally laughing manically, wearing glittery clothing and spikey hair, he is pictured full of hyperactive manic energy as he delivers the tagline: *Chichin bui bui, daijōbui* [800] . Originating from a nursery rhyme, the *pui* is changed to *bui* to echo the V of the drink's name, invoking through its childish incantation the magical realism that makes sense of the hypermanic energy and unreal situation of Schwarzenegger as a genie in bottle. In another set of advertisements, he plays a hapless salaryman (complete in suit, spectacles, neatened hair and Japanese office colleague extras) who, in the face of overwhelming everyday challenges such as getting berated by a boss at work[801], losing at a game of mah-jong or singing badly at a work-function karaoke[802], he quickly runs out, swigs back the Alinamin V drink, and immediately transforms into the 'Demon V', thereby winning over the situation and saving the day. In all of these Schwarzenegger is an incongruous sight, not only for his setting in an all-Japanese environment, but in his considerable physical presence that either sits comically with his role as a Japanese salaryman and humorously grimacing attempts at communicating in Japanese body language, or heightened by the craziness of the V Demon.

Figure 50: Schwarzenegger as harassed salaryman in Alinamin V television commercial, 1980s, film still
You Tube, Arnold Schwarzenegger Japanese Commercial 5 (04th Jan 2014)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ae5kZZDlSbQ>
[accessed 18/03/2017]

Figure 51: Schwarzenegger as the hyperenergetic Alinamin V demon, television commercial, 1980s, film still
You Tube, Arnold Schwarzenegger Japanese Commercial 5 (04th Jan 2014)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ae5kZZDlSbQ>
[accessed 18/03/2017]

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[799] Yamada in Segers, 2008, p. 144.

[800] ちちんブイブイ、だいじょーブイ。'[T]he original is '*Chichin puipui itaino tondeke*' (a 'magical' incantation to comfort infants when they have hurt themselves)' (Yamada in Segers, 2008, p. 149) – and indeed, there is one Alinamin V advertisement in which Schwarzenegger uses the bottle as a blow-flute to comfort a child crying after being bullied, thereby reinforcing the cultural connection.

[801] YouTube, *Schwarzenegger Japanese Energy Drink Ads* (31st August 2012) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRLe826lyao> [accessed 10th September 2015]

[802] YouTube, *Arnold Schwarzenegger Complete Japanese Commercial Filmography* (06th May 2009) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jcfI0gf9oDc&feature=youtu.be> [accessed 10th September 2015]

In the Nissin Cup Noodle commercials, aired around the same time, Schwarzenegger plays a much more faithful character to his role as a strongman. Shown lifting cars, kettles, rowing boats, punching huge masses of dough, and even, dirty, vest-wearing and wielding a piece of machinery as a red mountain blows up behind him, parodying his role in the 1990 film, Total Recall.[803] While Schwarzenegger is stoically silent, accompanying a few of these commercials are the taglines, 'Schwarzenegger eats' [804] and, 'Father is a Man' [805]

Figure 52: Schwarzenegger as tough man in Nissin television commercial, 1980s, film still YouTube, Arnold Schwarzenegger 1989 - 91 Nissin Cup Noodle Commercials (23rd May 2014) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcH1v-VdAiA> [accessed 10th September

In these Nissin and Alinamin V commercials we see Schwarzenegger playing the ultimate *Übermensch*. Whether hyper and manic (epitomised by the laughter), or super strong and voiceless, he becomes a two-dimensional cartoonish character, the overstated presence or absence of the voice heightening the unrealness, and aided by his exaggerated size and foreignness (as Austrian native, American export, and robot Terminator). Moreover, as a European turned American, bodybuilder and businessman turned Hollywood star and Kennedy[806], and even man into robot (albeit on film), Schwarzenegger was the ultimate symbol of transformation and internationalisation perfect for a Japanese nation in flux and in need of an energy boost[807].

Furthermore, seen in context with the Suntory Whiskey and Regain energy drink advertisements, we can see how Schwarzenegger is the last in a chain of changing male signifiers in the Japanese

[803] YouTube, Arnold Schwarzenegger 1989 - 91 Nissin Cup Noodle Commercials (23rd May 2014) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcH1v-VdAiA> [accessed 10th September 2015]
[804] *shuwarutsuneggā taberu* シュワルツェネッガー食べる
[805] *otōsan wa otoko desu* お父さんは、男です
[806] He married Maria Shriver in 1986
[807] Yoshimi would say that this was another example of the 1980s discourse of techno-nationalism in advertising, which, on encountering the international, becomes more hybrid and transgressive. 'These are not straightforward expressions of the national image equated with technological excellence. Rather, each of these advertisements negates any such equation. They are not expressing the 'ideal' of the American way of life, nor are they appearing as the side-liners that will make the Japanese technical excellence look even better. Rather they are playing the transgressional role, in that they are 'foreigners' yet they are not 'foreigners', and they are 'Japanese' yet they are not 'Japanese.' (Yoshimi, in Allen & Sakemoto, 2014, p. 53)

commercial sphere. According to Miller[808], the period of the 1950s to the 1970s saw a masculine ideal based on the rugged and bewhiskered visages of Western actors such as Sean Connery and Charles Bronson. However, from the 1980s men's fashion started to tend towards a smoother look that was tanned and outdoorsy, implying the activity of 'an outdoor sports life or youth and robustness. It suggests that the man is dedicated to work-related activities, such as corporate-sponsored golf'[809] – and moreover that he is successful enough to escape the unhealthy pallor of an inner office. Thus, in the Suntory ads we can see in the close-up face of the salaryman the self-assured quiet confidence of the early masculine model that resonates with the 1950s-1970s. In the Regain commercials, the Japanese salaryman has had a boost to become the smooth-skinned, youthful but powerful, 'master of the universe', charting a change from understated masculinity to hyper-corporate masculinity. In the following decades after the Bubble, Japanese men go further along the path for a more consumer-based feminised body that become the *sōshokukei danshi* (grasseaters/herbivores) of the early-2000s. In these changes, we can see in the male body as much as the female the struggle to realise an idealised nationalist masculine body that is inherently Japanese.

Meanwhile, the hyperreal nature of Schwarzenegger's Nissin masculinity (strong and silent) is not one for Japanese men to emulate, but stands as a model for postmodern masculinity, to exist within the hyperreal spaces of commerce and advertising. In another Nissin commercial[810], opening to the soundtrack of a triumphalist march, Schwarzenegger is positioned against the blue sky, dressed in bright pink t-shirt and trousers. Tanned and beautiful, with slicked back bronze hair and holding a mock torch and trident, he strikes a heroic pose, appearing as an Olympian hero as he revolves round and around. However, as the camera zooms in, the trident becomes an oversized plastic fork, the torch a Nissin cup noodle container with mock steam coming out, and zooming out, his revolving pedestal is a giant cup noodle container, situated to the side of a dusty backwater American road. Unperturbed, Schwarzenegger strikes heroic pose after pose, while old and dirty trucks roll past, ignoring him, and finally, as if in on the joke, he robotically mimics eating, alternately grimacing holding noodles up to his face before deadpanning with each revolution.

The tagline at the end, 'Father is a Man'[811], a consistent message for Nissin at this time, does little to alleviate the strangeness of this scene. Neither Japanese nor American, this is a mishmash of collective associations that are skilfully put together to create an artificial unreal landscape in which Hollywood stars are Olympians who eat cup noodles whilst revolving around next to a dusty road.

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[808] Miller, 2006, p. 133.
[809] Miller, 2006, p. 146.
[810] YouTube, Arnold Schwarzenegger 1989 - 91 Nissin Cup Noodle Commercials (23rd May 2014) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcH1v-VdAiA> [accessed 10th September 2015]
[811] お父さんは、男です。O*tō-san wa, otoko desu.*

True to Baudrillard, all elements have become pure sign, emptied and unanchored from their location in time and space to create a situation of true unreality. Even the edibility of the cup noodles is done away with, the oversized plastic fork, cup noodle container torch and pedestal all models, and eating only a robotic pretence. Schwarzenegger's masculinity, once cartoonish, now becomes irrelevant, negated in all-pink, his muscles only superficial signifiers of an empty heroism rather than strength, the tagline gently making a mockery of him.

Figure 53: Schwarzenegger as postmodern übermensch in Nissin television commercial; late-1980s/early-1990s, film stills
YouTube, Arnold Schwarzenegger 1989 - 91 Nissin Cup Noodle Commercials (23rd May 2014) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcH1v-VdAiA> [accessed 10th September 2015]

In this commercial we see the emptiness and brilliance of Japanese postmodern advertising at play. Meaning nothing whilst mocking everything, it encompasses the world in building a new one, making fools of us all while revelling in the foolishness. Clever, ironic and irreverent, the commercial enjoys itself far too much, and in this we see the anxieties of consumer Japan in the Bubble. For in the brilliance, sparkle and pure delight in the cleverness and excitement of superficiality and unanchored materialism, was a worry that Japan would lose its soul, becoming a false landscape peopled by artifice and nothing more, unable to remember how to eat a simple cup noodle much less cook a meal.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have explored how aspects of the Bubble were not what they seemed. One of these is the apparent use of cards in consumer spending, which operated not so much as normal general purpose credit cards, but instead were loyalty and prepay cards linked to specific stores and services. Although the increasing use of cards could be seen as part of a wider narrative of financial liberation and international lifestyle, these cards deviated from our usual understanding of credit extension not just practically, but also ontologically, by changing the nature of credit and the consumer from promising extended labour to the State, to the promise of future consumption. In this way, prepaid cards become a metaphor for the deferred enjoyment of the Bubble and the storing up of collective consumption that were implicit in Japanese industry and investments. Moreover, by unlinking and stretching out the relationships between payer and user, card culture was fracturing the process of production and consumption, making it easier to consume and discard, and thus accelerating the culture of consumption and contributing the feeling of frenzy of the Bubble.

This temporal instability in consumption was also one that was replicated in the nostalgia boom of the late 1980s. As in most postmodern cultures, consumer imperatives act on the past so that it becomes commodified as a foil to the impoverishment of mass-manufactured objects and modern life. However, this process of adoption not only speaks to a Japanese domestication of the foreign, but also that of a superficiality towards nostalgia that separates youth from the old. Authenticity of form and a lack of experience of the past become key to accessing it in this way, as both fragmented and exotic. The 1950s and 1960s particularly resonate as decades that not only hold an escape from the limitations of the present, but also significance to Japan as not too embedded in a pre-twentieth century past (and all the jarring problems of identity politics that are associated with it), nor indeed the problems of a wartime nationalism and defeat. Instead the 1950s and 1960s signify the hope of post-war growth and the limit of memory in the face of collective trauma, whilst also being distant enough to signify an exotic past of urban Japanese modernity.

However, in exploring the past of the miracle economy, parallels are made with the new 'Golden Age' of the 1980s, and in doing so betray the capitalist motives in the commercialisation of retro-nostalgia. A cornucopia of shops, leisure activities, and ultimately goods adorn the pages of the magazine, tied together by the purely stylistic aesthetic of retro that in its superficiality attest to not only the emptying out of significance, but also an allegiance to kitsch. These kitsch objects, labelled as 'neo-kitsch', become emptied out of all signification in order to become vehicles for the imposition of meaning within the realm of consumer desire, ranging from individual to social desires of class and taste. Furthermore, within the Japanese context, as can be seen in Tokyo Disneyland and other themed parks, kitsch as pastiche can also be used for the purposes of exoticising the

Other, and thus re-centering oneself in a discourse of nationalism. However, in order to fulfil the requirements of kitsch, the authenticity of form is paramount, and it is this pastiche that ultimately limits it as a form of entertainment. For in the tightly controlled performance of kitsch is the foreclosure of disruption and uncertainty, within which the agency of the participant in play (asobi) is turned into the passivity of the audience in leisure (reja), the dispossession of which is masked by the aspirational discourse of culture, education and historicity.

In the emptiness and limitations of the retro-trend there was one area in which the possibility of transformation and disruption was at play. Namely that of childhood through the cute *kawaii* trend. With its roots in the 1960s student protests and gaining pace through the 1970s, kawaii manifested itself predominantly among young women in the 1980s through handwriting, speech, dress, food, and in the adoption of cute products such as the ROBO Phone. As a marker (or souvenir) of childhood as collective memory, the ROBO Phone enabled an idealised concept of childhood to be projected, and in doing so signalled not just a celebration of youth, but an active rejection of mature adulthood and the limitations of the present. It thus enabled a turning away from the controlled territory of leisure to the carefree and open possibilities of play. These possibilities became apparent in the following decades when the fluidity and transformative nature of kitsch through its emptiness enabled the mutation and splintering of *kawaii* to take into account the grotesque, the hyper-manic, and the ironic as cultural movements of resistance.

However, this dissatisfaction with the present was not just alluded to by the ready leaning towards the past, but also in attitudes towards time, speed and exhaustion. This can be seen in advertising for alcoholic beverages, and especially whiskey advertisements in men's magazines such as *Brutus*, where the central concepts of time, respite and agency explore and provide alternatives to the harsh realities of working men's lives. Touching upon unquantifiable values of human relationships, essential human qualities, national harmony, and finally the heroinism of the outcast, the Suntory whiskey advertisements invite the reader to engage with an alternative universe in which the endless wheel of capitalist production and consumption is swapped for the infinite space and time of both universal humanism and Japanese cultural nationalism.

Energy drinks on the other hand, their growth in the market coinciding with the narrative of Japanese nation-building and economic development, lean into the frenzy of the Economic Bubble by encouraging the adoption of a superhero mentality to work – that of being able to work beyond normal human capacity with the help of energy drinks and other supplemented foods. This trend for 'functional foods' not only tapped into the hyper-production of the Bubble Economy, but also of the consumer boom in health, leisure, fashion and fitness, and, as had been seen in the change in advertisement strategy of energy drinks as the Bubble goes on, also stress and anxiety at work. As such, the slowing and expanding of time in whiskey and the speeding up and narrowing down

implicit in energy drinks can be seen as one of many binaries of the Bubble, split along the fault-lines of gender, work, leisure, engagement, agency, wealth and life quality.

The dynamism present in energy drinks also had other implications for culture in the Bubble. Combining with the *ike ike don don* and *kawaii* trends, hyper energy, or *super-genki*, became one of the defining features of consumer life in the Bubble. Making itself felt through advertisements for functional foods such as the Regain energy drinks and Nissin Pot Noodles, cartoonish caricatures embodied the totemic energy of the superhuman *Übermensch*, a new hyper-corporate masculine ideal for the Bubble Economy. In doing so it paved the way for a different kind of Japanese national masculinity that would evolve away from the Western Hollywood rugged stars to the smooth-skinned hyperreal consumer masculinity of the 1990s.

However, it was in the very aesthetic of the self-referential hyperreal and hyper-energetic that we see the biggest significance. In the heightened energy of the *super-genki* trend is not only the consumer frenzy of the Bubble reflected, but just like the postmodern process of fractured adoption and reinterpretation of disparate elements, it describes a hyperreal, super-ironic but also commercial and superficial aesthetic that is at once clever and empty, describing perfectly the Bubble of the 1980s. It is this aesthetic and sensibility that is the true cultural legacy of the Bubble, extending far beyond the bursting to take root domestically and internationally as a hyper-Japanese, hyper-Asian style that bridges the East with international modernity, enabling an escape from the shadow of the West and its own historicity.

Thus, we can see how some of the more ambiguous and absurd phenomena of the Bubble were a direct result of the various innovations and strains that characterised the period. Notably in a time of abundant money, it was time that became a defining factor, allowing the possibility of transformation and transcendence from the present. However, the un-anchoring involved in playing with time quickly created the conditions for kitsch, which in turn made itself available for appropriation for protest and subversion. Both these elements of time and kitsch were then put to use as binaries in the drinks industry, promoting both a slowness and a speeding up that echoed other dualisms of the Bubble. Finally, in the hyper-energy aesthetic of *super-genki*, the creation of the *Übermensch*, in his exaggerated brilliance, became a figure of fun and a vehicle for the consumer sparkle and emptiness that was the Bubble Economy.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In this chapter, we explore the end of the Bubble Economy, including the factors and events that marked its ending, key points about the significance of Bubble culture, and how the 1980s Japanese Bubble is remembered and significant today. The chapter will conclude with an overall conclusion to the thesis, its significance in the fields of economic, Japanese and design history, and suggestions for further research.

Bye Bye Bubble

Just like the complex web of conditions that had given rise to the Economic Bubble, so its demise was instigated by a combination of factors that collectively put the brakes on a superheated economy. While most agree that the 1986 Plaza Accord, yen increase and market liberalisation marked the start of the Bubble, opinions differ as to when it actually ended. Estimates put it anywhere between 1989 and 1992, however the truth is that unlike the analogy of a bubble bursting, the end was not a sudden popping of the market, but involved a slow deflation. Events, long in the making, gradually unfolded, each making their mark on the multi-faceted Bubble, until, with just enough air in it to keep the economy going, it collapsed, causing a long wave of chaos whose reverberations are being still felt today.

It has been said that, secure in the previous decades of rapid and continuous growth, people were largely unaware they were living in a Bubble (and answers from interviewees indicate conflicting accounts of this). However, with price escalation seemingly out of control, it was certain that the Bank of Japan knew this was a bubble. Following a change to a tougher governor at the helm[812], and unable to delay any longer[813], the Bank of Japan finally raised interest rates from their low of 2.5% in mid-1989 to 4.25% at the end of 1989. However, with such a bullish market it was forced to raise them again to 5.25% in February 1990, and then again to a further 6% from mid-1990 to autumn 1991.[814]

The first to feel the fallout was the stock market, which lost more than 60% of its value from December 1989 to August 1992, an estimated $2.6 trillion.[815] The yen also finally stopped

[812] former central banker, Yasushi Mieno
[813] There are indications that the BOJ wanted to raise interest rates before, however the 1987 Black Monday stock market crash in markets around the world caused it to delay this till 1989, not wanting to destabilise the global financial system any further.
[814] Itoh, Makoto, *The Japanese Economy Reconsidered* (New York: Palgrave, 2000) p. 88.
[815] Andressen, Curtis, *A Short History of Japan: From Samurai to Sony* (Australia: Allen and Unwin, 2002) p. 181

appreciating and depreciated from 1989 to April 1990.[816] However with inflation still rising and a superheated land market, the BOJ's interest hikes only made their effects felt when land prices peaked in 1991.[817]

There were some who welcomed these changes, seeing the bloated system of overinflated stocks and land prices in need of a good cleanout. The end of the 1980s were also marked by the Recruit Scandal, in which as many as 20 politicians from the ruling LDP were implicated in a 'stock-for-favours' corruption scandal.[818] This was to be a trend that continued well into the 1990s, as corruption allegations against politicians involved with shady land deals further weakened public faith in the government and showed the true moral cost of all the cheap money of the 1980s.

At this point, responding to BOJ and MOF demands, and with many non-performing loans on their books[819], banks started to reduce their property-backed loans to companies and sell off their own assets. With banks making up the majority of credit creation in Japan,[820] credit contraction caused companies to reassess their finances, starting by selling off unprofitable assets overseas before bringing the changes home. What then happened was a 'balance sheet recession'[821] in which falls in asset prices and recalling of loans caused healthy companies to minimise their debts to restore credit ratings. As such the loan market collapsed causing banks difficulties while over-saving in the private sector made itself felt in depressing the economy. Thus, while the period 1988-1990 showed an average annual GDP growth rate of 5.8%, by 1991 this had slowed to 3.3%, less than 1% in 1992, 0.2% in 1993, before collapsing to -2.4% in 1994.[822]

As a result, consumer confidence dramatically decreased, causing more pain to companies, especially in the service, retail and manufacturing sectors. The 1990s were hit by a wave of bankruptcies and corporate restructuring, where the pressures of the decade caused Japanese companies to painfully rethink their management system of lifetime employment and long-term investments into human capital. By the end of the 1990s, unemployment had jumped from 2.1% in

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[816] Obstfeld in Hamada, Koichi, Anil K. Kashyap, and David E. Weinstein, *Japan's Bubble, Deflation, and Long-term Stagnation* (Cambridge (Mass.) and London: MIT Press, 2011) p. 56.
[817] Obstfeld in Hamada, Koichi, Anil K. Kashyap, and David E. Weinstein, *Japan's Bubble, Deflation, and Long-term Stagnation* (Cambridge (Mass.) and London: MIT Press, 2011) p. 57.
[818] Kenneth G. Henshall, *A History of Japan: From Stone Age to Superpower*, 3rd Ed. (London and New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) p. 175
[819] 'As early as 1993 the 21 biggest banks in Japan claimed $145 billion in 'non-performing' loans, and about one-third of that amount was believed to be lost for good, though later it was discovered that much more debt had been hidden through creative book-keeping.' (Andressen, 2002, p. 181)
[820] Wood puts the figure of bank loans as high as 90% of nominal GDP in September 1991, as opposed to America's 37% (Wood, 1992, p. 25)
[821] Richard Koo cited in Kingston, Jeff, *Contemporary Japan: History, Politics, and Social Change since the 1980s* (West Sussex, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell: 2011) p. 26.
[822] Obstfeld in Hamada, Kashyap, Weinstein, 2011, p. 57.

1990 to 5%, the highest since 1960.[823] Savings meanwhile, responding to the uncertainties in the job market, grew from 14% in 1991 to 17% in 1993,[824] further exacerbating the downward spiral in the consumer market[825].

However, what marks the extraordinary end of the Bubble were not only the shake-ups to economic, corporate or indeed consumer confidence, but two events that shook Japanese society to its foundation, making it question the attitudes and practices of the previous 10 years. The first was the Great Hanshin Earthquake that hit Kobe on the 17th January 1995, during which 6,434 people perished; the worst earthquake since the Great Kantō earthquake in 1923. Already reeling from corruption scandals, plummeting land and asset values, and corporate restructuring, the Kobe earthquake seemed to symbolise the unsteady ground of the Bubble Economy on which Japanese confidence and security had foolishly been built.

3 months later, on the 20th of March 1995, the doomsday cult, Aum Shinrikyo, launched a sarin gas attack on Tokyo subway commuters, killing 13, seriously injuring 54, and affecting hundreds more. Following a manhunt for the leader Asahara Shoko[826], the cult's headquarters revealed stockpiles of explosives, chemical weapons, drug manufacturing laboratories, millions of dollars in cash, and prisoners in cells, while attacks on the public continued through shootings, parcel bombs and chemical devices. However, while the Tokyo attacks created a wave of fear and anxiety in an already destabilised Japanese society, it was in the idea of the cult's popularity that caused the most concern. For at the height of Japan's prosperity and confidence, Aum Shinrikyo, preaching spiritual enlightenment, had attracted hundreds of devotees, many of them from the Japanese elite disillusioned with the emptiness of Japanese materialism.

Following this, corporate recruitment freezes[827], increasing crime and delinquent behaviour, instability in the job market and the rise of the 'freeter' economy, crippling mortgages and negative

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[823] Andressen, 2002, p. 181 – although real figures were probably much higher than this, taking into account 'hidden' unemployment.
[824] Andressen, 2002, p. 182
[825] At this point it is worth noting that while Japan had been called on in 1987 to rescue the global financial system from its Black Monday crash, by the time of its own economic crisis in the 1990s, the international community were unable to help. Of the two most obvious candidates, the United States was struggling with its own banking crisis and credit contraction, while Germany was busy absorbing the costs of its unification with East Germany. (Wood, 1992, p. 8)
[826] Caught 16th May 1995.
[827] 'In earlier times, such as the oil shock of the early 1970s, Japanese companies had been reluctant to lay off workers, but this time many felt compelled to do so. Rather than just temporary staff (mostly women) or those in smaller supplier companies being let go, mainstream workers were targeted. Powerful corporations such as Nippon Telephone and Telegraph (NTT), Hitachi and Fujitsu cut permanent staff […] Especially hard hit were middle managers, who were usually thought to be secure in the employment system. Tens of thousands were retrenched and others forced to take lower-level positions. The vaunted system of lifetime employment no longer appeared tenable, and this sent shock waves through Japanese society.' (Andressen, 2002, pp.181-182)

equity, all took its toll on Japan through the 1990s and into the 21st century. As such, the Lost Decade can be seen not only as one marked by an economy lost to prolonged stagnation[828], but also one in which Japan lost its sense of self, turning inward, asking where it had gone so wrong.

The Culture Bubble

Thus, while the raising of interest rates has been attributed to starting the decline, it was not the reason behind the collapse of the Bubble, merely taking away the supports propping up an antiquated system, that had been unready for the new environment of a global financial economy. Unmasking the inefficiencies and inequalities on which the Japanese system ran, the ending of the Bubble showed a system built on male privilege and rigid working practices that entertained low productivity and vast inefficiencies among a rapidly aging workforce. Despite its hyped-up reputation, the Japanese corporate system was ill-suited to operating in a globalised financial economy, and rather than a sign of its superior economic system, the Bubble marked the end of Japan's period of high-speed growth and its painful transition into a new one in the 1990s. In the process of financial liberalisation, its sudden opening up to the wider world meant it was vulnerable to the problems of credit-abuse on an international scale. Loosening the restraints, the various sectors of the economy were allowed to collectively gorge on cheap financing, creating all kinds of simultaneous booms.

For this was what made the Bubble Economy special. Former bubbles had always included the elements of hysterical inflation in commodities,[829] overseas investments,[830] inflationary currency[831], stock markets,[832] and land[833]. However, the Japanese Economic Bubble was the combination of bubbles across all sectors, interrelated with each other and happening at once to create a 'Mega-Bubble'. Land, stocks, shares, investments, currency – all inflated simultaneously. While bubbles inevitably have effects on other areas of the economy and industry, the Japanese Bubble was the first to be so artificially created and inflated as much by its dealings overseas as it was by domestic policies. In a way, it was the first bubble to be created by globalisation, and one in which it had so much international investment and trading in its economy and influence in other foreign economies.

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[828] Prolonged in many ways by confused government policies unwilling to completely discard their tried and tested methods of economic and fiscal governance, and propping up failing industries and undermining any competitiveness with the rising economies of Taiwan and South Korea in their desire to insulate companies from global market forces. (Kingston, Jeff, *Contemporary Japan: History, Politics, and Social Change since the 1980s* (West Sussex, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell: 2011), pp. 15-16)
[829] Dutch Tulip Mania, 1634-1637
[830] British South Sea Bubble, 1716-1720
[831] French Mississippi Bubble, 1716-1720
[832] American stock market, 1920s
[833] Florida Real Estate Bubble, 1920s

However, despite its name, it wasn't only a bubble of the economy, but also a cultural and social one. In encouraging a consumer market, the government unwittingly unleased forces that would use the increased money flow to inflate the Bubble further to encompass other areas, under which influence various cracks and strains formed.

Kokusaika, that slippery byword of the Bubble Economy, became all things to all men, women and organisations, a visage behind which various motivations and agendas could be played. The government used *kokusaika* on the one hand to promote Japanese industry, a consumer economy, and aid its international interests abroad; on the other it used it to heighten a sense of cultural nationalism and regionalism, taking advantage of cheap money markets to artificially prop up ailing industries and areas with cultural tourism.

Companies too found *kokusaika* useful insofar as it could be used to justify an outward expansion of foreign investments, unify and refresh a corporate brand, and encourage domestic consumerism. New industries sprang up, riding on the wave of an outward-looking gaze, and the new service and retail industries of tourism and imported goods benefitted from the 1980s desire for the international.

For the genders, the dualism of *kokusaika* and its *nihonjinron* twin reflected the binaries that men and women found themselves in during the Bubble. For women, *kokusaika* was a seductive lure that promised them emancipation and space to grow, even as it sold them holidays and cheap designer goods. For men, *kokusaika* represented the threat of the Other, heralding in a new world of diminished status which they were not ready to accept. Yet it also promised emancipation from a different kind of drudgery – that of their own hegemonic status, in the restrictions of which some evidently felt trapped.

However, the power of *kokusaika* could only work within the conditions of individualism and a consumer culture, through which people were loosened from their group bonds and prejudices to become freer and more experimental with their selves. For the Bubble was also a bubble of consumption and of the self, in which people used their things to make themselves anew. Rather than 'things that are more than things', perhaps the tagline of *shinjinrui* – the 'new humans' was more apt.

Nevertheless, consumer culture and individualism also had their contradictions, and like the inflated currency and land prices masking a struggling export industry, so the individualism masked the rigid groupism and social hierarchies that fixed everyone in place. Consumer culture too had its role to play in hiding the sheer amount of work piled on exhausted workers, and as a compensation

prize concealed the inequalities and disadvantages women experienced in being automatically disqualified from participating in the wider economy.

Yet consumer individualism also had its other sides. Even though women were gradually making their restricted way into the labour market, ironically it was their enjoyment of leisure and highly visible freedom that was inspiring men to rethink their commitment to work. Likewise, the diversity of consumer experiences available meant that subcultures and subtle acts of resistance could flourish. Even as they manifested as contradictions of hyper-sexual or hyper-cute, of tiredness or *super-genki* energy, the explosion in individual taste and range of consumer cultures, mixed in with the imagined space of the international, meant that there was room for everyone to find a niche.

Culturally speaking, the Bubble Economy has been portrayed as a time of hyper-inflated wealth and relative cultural poverty, with long working and commuting hours, cramped living conditions, striking gender inequality and rampant and superficial materialism, offsetting a wealth that was embarrassingly decadent, especially in light of the decades that followed[834]. The 1990s and 2000s by comparison, are known for being the Lost Decade(s) of economic stagnation at home, but a sudden flowering of Japanese culture, spreading its soft power abroad.

Yet if we examine these cultures more closely, we see that they often have their roots in the 1970s, gaining vital impetus in the 1980s by using the inequalities of the system and the desires for greater individual autonomy and expression to form new genres and win new fans. From *shōjo* manga morphing into hyper-sexual Ladies' Comics, the hyper-feminising of *kawaii* culture, and the yearning of men for beautiful consumption and domesticity, we see these all taking place in the Bubble. While consumer culture and internationalised credit did have its part to play in this, without these individualised desires for self-expression, the subcultures would have fallen on deaf ears.

As it was, when the Bubble finally ended, consumer culture and the desire for individual expression had already been established, and the forms they used were ready to take the next step and expand into an international Japanese style. While the world appeared to rediscover Japan as a modern hip and urban culture in the 1990s, it could be said it was the 1980s in which Japan discovered itself, during which it set up a distinctive style for a new modernity that was entirely its own.

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[834] While in discussion about Japanese leisure, Linhart describes Japanese society as one of 'a "working-bee" or "ant" society with very little free time and freedom' (in Linhart and Frühstück (ed.) 1998, p.3). More specifically, the example he cites refers to foreign criticism levelled at Japan from the ex-prime minister of France, Edith Cresson in 1991, something echoed by Leheny (2003), and McCormack (2001). Leheny in particular cites the diplomat as describing Japan as a nation of 'workaholics living in rabbit hutches' (2003, p.107; see also Penelope Franks, *The Japanese Consumer; An Alternative Economic History of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009) p.185) It is during the period of the Bubble that Japan becomes subject to critique abroad and at home for its poverty in life quality in relation to its extreme wealth.

The Bubble Economy Today

In 2007 the film, *Bubble Fiction: Boom or Bust* opened[835]. In true comedy-action style, the plot revolved around an ordinary bar-hostess having to go back to 1990 via a time-portal Hitachi washing machine, with a mission to find her missing scientist mother and stop the bursting of the Bubble (this she was meant to do by preventing the signing of a fictitious government policy that would enable land to be used as collateral for loans). Disoriented in Bubble Tokyo and missing her mobile phone, struggling debt-ridden Mayumi is awe-struck at the lavish, opulent exuberance of the era. Meanwhile through her the audience can experience a fun and naughty nostalgia for the 1980s, whose sting of the subsequent bursting is alleviated by both the 30-years distance and the comedic fictitiousness of the genre. Mayumi is quickly seduced by the age, and throughout the film we are treated to a smorgasbord of fun Bubble markers: women in shoulder-padded jackets, body-con dresses, 1980s perms, outrageous gold jewellery, tiffany 'open-heart' necklaces, discos, and a champagne lifestyle where money is literally being thrown about to a catchy Japanese pop tune. Other than the evil villains in the shadowy world of government and business, there is nothing to suggest that the Bubble Economy was anything but fun, excitement, and overall good for the country.

By contrast, in 2013, *A Story of Yonosuke*[836] showed in film festivals around the world. Set in the late 1980s, its eponymous protagonist moves from rural Nagasaki to Tokyo for university at the height of the Bubble, during which time he makes new friends, joins the university's samba club, falls in love with an older woman, and dates a *burikko ojōsama* girl. Told through the lens of friends in the present-day reminiscing about Yonosuke, this is a much gentler look back at Japan of the 1980s. Set around university, it equates the simple happiness and dreamy optimism of youth with the fun and carefree attitude of the time. However, by the end of the film we are made aware that just as the friends have all lost touch with the strange and awkward but goodhearted and warm Yonosuke, so the strange and fun times of the Bubble could not last. Instead, reality asserts itself, and everyone has gotten on with their lives, with only their memories of a static Yonosuke and the 1980s fixed as the place of their eternal youth.

In my introduction, I wrote how there appeared little appetite in Japan to revisit the Bubble, the ending of which was the site of so much trauma. Conversely the period of about 30 years seems enough distance to allow a reanalysis of the era. In these two films, we see a renewed desire to

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[835] Japanese title: バブルへ GO!!～タイムマシンはドラム式 *Baburu e go!! Taimu mashin wa doramu-shiki* / 'Go to the Bubble!! Time Machine Drum Formula' ('*Bubble Fiction: Boom or Bust*' dir. by Yasuo Baba (Toho Company, 2007))

[836] Original Japanese title: 横道世之介 / *Yokomichi Yonosuke ('The Story of Yonosuke'* dir. by Shûichi Okita (Showgate Inc., 2013))

literally revisit the 1980s, although rather than relive it, these films only approach it as retrospective, the present acting as a stabiliser and escape route from the 'horrors' of the past.[837] For while the Bubble is portrayed as fun, exciting, youthful and dynamic with energy and possibility, it is also intoxicating, and the message is that this is a place that is fine to visit, but dangerous to stay. Shown as a permanent adolescence, the Bubble is no longer an option, only a theme park; a place of cartoon characters, stunted growth, and a stage through which Japan has already passed and left behind.

In many ways, these are cathartic movies, allowing us to look back on a time of extremes without shame, and thus exorcise the ghost and let it go. Yet though it seems as if Japan is trying to disappear it from its collective memory, Bubble Japan nevertheless lives on, though like its subcultures, it has flown its domestic adolescent coop and gone to greener pastures.

While the Bubble Economy was particular to Japan, it was also particular to the conditions of postmodernity. Manifesting in the spaces and tensions created by old regionalised systems rubbing up against new globalised flows and ideas, the conditions in which the Bubble Economy flourished are replicated anywhere nations are changing their domestic export-driven economies to the faster pace of globalised trade, international money markets, liberalised capital and a consumer-driven economy. Indeed, in the colourful era of Britain after the 1986 'Big Bang' deregulation of its financial markets[838] we see in the soaring house prices, buoyant popular culture of 'Cool Britannia', and popularising subcultures of rave, dance, goth, indie, and more, the intoxicating and indomitable spirit of the Bubble – followed, as is always with the way of bubbles, by an almighty crash and overspend hangover in 2007.

Likewise, as all eyes turn on China, as its stock markets tumbled and overheated property market dominated the international headlines in the summer of 2015, we know that it has spent two decades liberalising its economy and more recently trying to turn it from export-driven to domestic consumption. The rhetoric surrounding China over the last few years echo that of Japan three decades before, though instead of Japanese-style management and corporate samurai, we now have the 'China model' of state-sponsored Asian Capitalism, China's entrepreneur billionaires, and self-comforting reassurances that China's economic power can weather its current storm, despite its slowing economy, accusations of political corruption and rapidly aging population.

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[837] There have, of course, been other nostalgic revisiting of 1980s Japan, notably the popular television show, 'Generation X' – however while these are 1980s-Bubble revisiting, these are representative of escapist cultures that spring up after the Bubble, and not the same as more reflective study. For more on Japanese 1990s television cultures, see Gabriella Lukács, *Scripted Affects, Branded Selves: Television, Subjectivity, and Capitalism in 1990s Japan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

[838] Followed by further deregulation in 1997.

Perhaps it is in this idea of 'Asian Capitalism' that is Japan's true legacy of the Bubble. For in creating the conditions in which subcultures could not only grow, but indeed flourish, Japan in the 1980s was able to come out from under its shadow of the West. Reclaiming not just economic and industrial but cultural autonomy, authenticity and modernity were married into its own modern East Asian identity. While the economy was harder to hold on to, the sense of its own self that individualism fostered and consumerism articulated became the rock on which Japanese people stood and could build on in the shifting sands of the 1990s. Despite their various psychic shocks, they exported it as much as an expression of selfhood as one of the few industries not stagnating. Meanwhile, as the famed 1980s riches of Japan beckoned, other Asian countries have followed suit, using Japan's model to modernise and internationalise their economies whilst negotiating the tricky waters of cultural identity in an old East-West dichotomy. Thus, debt-ridden countries are now courting rich Chinese tourists come to honeymoon in the exotic cities of the West, South Korean K-Pop and film win fans over the world, and uncanny replicas of European-style housing developments spring up in China. With Shanghai Disneyland opening in 2016[839], we see the Japanese Bubble 30 years on, not gone but made anew, Asian-style.

Conclusion

Through this thesis, we have explored the nature of what might be called the cultural character of the Japanese Bubble Economy in the 1980s. Typified by anecdotes of greed, opulence, excess, arrogance, and consumer wastefulness, there were many myths about Bubble culture unsupported by adequate cultural historical research. This research aimed to get behind these stories to see how, through its consumer culture, the Bubble could be seen to affect the lives of ordinary young working men and women at its forefront. Using a mixture of secondary research, magazine analysis, and first-hand accounts, the work explored how the Bubble was portrayed as much cultural zeitgeist as economic force, and in doing so, exposed how underneath the glossy images of consumer goods, company branding, glamorous women, hardworking men, and international travel, there were more ambivalent and unequal narratives of power, access, dissatisfaction, dissention and resistance.

In Chapter One, the contextual background to the Bubble was explored, outlining and interlinking the main players behind Bubble culture, including the drivers for a new lifestyle and leisure economy of liberated consumption, as well as that of the internationalism policy of *kokusaika*. Twinned with the discourse of *nihonjinron* to reinvent Japanese nationalism as poised to dominate global economics and politics, participants in the Bubble were supposed to embody the values of producer-consumer-citizens of a new service-driven globalised tertiary economy. Key participants

[839] Construction started in 2011

in this were the *shinjinrui*, salaryman and office lady (OL), who with differing amounts of disposable money, time and energy, were ideal recipients of this message. However, embedded in these roles were more complex relations integral to their essential placement in a highly stratified and coded society, and this complexity within an environment of increased consumerism could be seen in the development of magazines, which the period sees segmenting further for more specialised appeal based on readers' specific tastes and situations. A section on Baudrillard and Bourdieu was also explored as a way to critically interrogate some of the research material.

In Chapter Two, the broad themes of consumerism were continued, exploring through the consumer-design magazines, *Mono* and *AXIS*, how different strategies of consumption led to their articulation of lifestyle as endless cycles of consumption and cultural acquisition, with magazines acting as key mediators of taste and information. Using fashion and technology as vehicles, different messages and challenges to the status quo were formed, from the rising profile of male fashion and Japanese fashion as a challenge from the periphery, to the use of technology as a collective imagining of a new postmodern Japanese identity of techno-nationalism, whose articulation of a successful modern Asian collectivist capitalism indicated an alternative to the ideological hegemony of Western individualist modernity.

This articulation of ideological challenge to post-war modernity and success could also be seen in the popularity of modern sports, and especially golf, which in its evocation of cultural elitism, not only provided opportunities for social, but also economic advancement and rewards. Other ways in which Japan was challenging the status quo was in its engagement in design as a medium, through which it could promote Japanese culture and interests, and reposition its own centrality within an international community of design. This was a strategy applied by *AXIS* magazine, in which Japanese designers, exhibitions and opinions were employed in an outward-looking nationalism that privileged Japanese discourse over other voices.

This use of design also had its uses in articulating the next stage of Japanese industrialisation to that of a knowledge economy/information society, and a key tool in this was the use of corporate identity and branding. Acting not only as a corporate refresh, but as a marrying together of both work and life values, it diffused the cultural tensions created between Japanese identification with work and the new consumer society, and conveniently not only fulfilled production as much as consumption aims, but also acted as a way to reimagine and promote Japanese life-quality as part of a narrative of global ascension. Thus, despite the postmodern processes of fragmentation and capitalist abstraction that can be seen in the strategies of magazines such as *Mono*, it is in the corporate-nationalism of *AXIS* that we can see the overall meta-narratives of national destiny that counter the claims of postmodernity of the 1980s.

In Chapter Three, it was the centrality of women's consumer engagement to the Bubble that was explored through the magazine, *Hanako*. Coinciding with government policies seen to promote women's interests in the workplace, young working women appeared to be new ideal participants in the consumer-cultures of the Bubble Economy, reflected in the new activities and lifestyle and leisure opportunities of magazines such as *Hanako*. Predicated on their precarious position in a patriarchal framework, young women's participation could be seen as acceptance and cementing of their position, as well as cynical co-opting of their disposable labour and income. However, simultaneously, by occupying the public spaces of the workplace and new consumer-sphere, women were also carving out new distinct identities that moved away from the dominant form of the salaryman/housewife, to that of the empowered consumer-citizen. This in turn pioneered a way for Japanese groupism to reconcile with the demands of Western individualism without compromising essential Japanese identity, seen played out on the body and appearance of the OL, whose carefully negotiated performance enabled her to both inhabit modernity and Japanese femininity.

It is in the spaces of the international that we also see contestation of power and centrality. Whilst at the same time viewed by women as representative of Western ideals of emancipation, self-discovery and self-actualisation, specific geographical and cultural perspectives of the international were still being replicated in hierarchies of representation, with women's disposable income and time being used for the furthering of Japanese interests abroad. However, in the articulation of hierarchy was also an opportunity to reimagine Japan and its place in international culture, and Tokyo became repositioned as one among a community of prominent global cities. Although auto-exoticising, by making itself international, Tokyo's rediscovered otherness allowed for *Hanako*'s female readers to use it as another locus for self-actualisation and alternative to the established order, something also present in the adopted international lifestyles and consumer-goods of the Bubble. In this we see a continuation of a domestication of the foreign in Japanese culture, from which essential Japaneseness becomes strengthened through juxtaposition, while simultaneously women become aligned with the ideals of the international, in a universalist alliance of liberation against the rigidity of Japanese patriarchy.

However, by pursuing these strategies of emancipation, Japanese women were both inadvertently adhering to Western patriarchal hegemony, as well as having their internationalist skills used for the supporting and furthering of Japanese interests at home and abroad. Thus, while young women could be seen as a significant vanguard of the Japanese internationalist project, their essentially marginalised status meant that any meaningful influence was ultimately limited within such an entrenched patriarchal system.

In Chapter Four, the salaryman as a worker/producer cultural construct in the Bubble was examined through the portrayal of lifestyle and leisure in *Brutus* magazine and personal testimonies of interview participants. With open consumption problematic for a masculine narrative of production, male access to leisure appeared to hinge on company-sanctioned activities, such as golf and drinking, with expenses also sanctioned by company finances that in turn helped fuel the Bubble. However, this did not mean men were not involved in other aspects of Bubble consumer culture, and through their work may have been required to keep abreast of consumer trends, while their involvement in production meant they were able to dominate cultural discourse and development.

However, increasing interest in the interior and domestic in *Brutus* appear to show a deviancy away from hegemonic Japanese masculinity, echoed by other trends in cooking, beauty and gardening in male cultures of the same period, brought in under the guise of internationalist discourse and expansion of the consumer market. This comes together in the featuring of the international domestic interior, in whose spaces of utopic living the *Brutus* reader could articulate a desire to escape his own hegemonic status.

Thus, rather than emphasising the ascension of Japanese salaryman masculinity as a dominant ideal, the culture of the Bubble helped to further destabilise it from that of a heroic centrality to one of pitiable impoverishment and declining social and cultural importance. While men were more involved in the lifestyle and consumer cultures of the Bubble than commonly thought, the restrictions placed on them by their own totemic status in relation to the affluence of Bubble culture ensured that it was their own position that became a cause for pity and ultimate destabilisation.

As a final in-depth exploration of Bubble culture, Chapter Five examined specific aspects of the Bubble that contained within them discrepancies and ambiguities that went beyond simple polarisations of gender or work, but instead featured relationships with time itself. Card culture, rather than storing up a debt of labour in exchange for immediate enjoyment, in the Bubble instead created a deferment of enjoyment, used to offset a surplus of work and wealth. In this way, it became a metaphor for the investments of the Bubble itself, and in this deferring and storing, contributed to a temporal instability and a speeding up of consumption culture. Meanwhile, this un-anchoring perversely contributed to a deliberate turn to retro culture and nostalgia in which the golden period of the 1950s and 1960s became a foil to the pressures of the 1980s, while also providing another convenient avenue for more consumption. In this, kitsch was key, providing the stylistic emptiness that characterised the postmodernism of 1980s Japan, but in which we also see the beginnings of *kawaii* culture on a popular mass-culture scale.

However, retreat to the past was only one type of escape, and in the drinking cultures of whiskey and energy drinks we see both a slowing down into infinite space and time, and a speeding up to

that of a hyper-corporate *Übermensch*. These two approaches not only chart the refashioning of Japanese masculinity from that of rugged male to that of smooth-skinned consumer, but in the latter's hyper-energetic and ironic aesthetic was the precursor to the hyperreal *super-genki* quality of modern Asian culture.

By the end of the Bubble, the period of its bursting revealed many inequalities and flimsy foundations that reverberated through the 1990s and into the 21st century. Yet even as there were economic woes, this was also a time of great cultural expansion, where the incubation of the 1980s enabled subcultures and diversification of Japanese modernity to springboard into global culture. This example of soft power meant that even as Japan had begun to tentatively revisit its own 1980s-past, economically and culturally it has already been replicated many times over, not only as accompaniment to other economic bubbles, but specifically as a template for an East-Asian modernity equal to that of the West.

As such, what this thesis does is it re-examines the Bubble from a cultural perspective, reframing it as more than a simple narrative of politics, economics and boom before bust. Instead it is a complex meshing of differing agendas and experiences, ranging from that of a rising outward-looking corporate-nationalism, to perspectives dependant on relative positioning within highly stratified and coded systems, and from which participants were both complicit and rebellious. Rather than being characterised as a unified experience, nor one of pure consumerist individualism, this was a time in which subcultures were becoming further defined and increasingly professional; in which gender norms were being questioned and fluid, and furthermore, from which we can re-evaluate the changing identity of the Japanese salaryman and office lady. In this the individualist tools of consumption, technology, design, company branding, identity, and leisure were key to developing uniquely East-Asian answers to the questions of globalised postmodernity, and in the new examining of these Bubble-era lifestyle magazines, new understandings of Japanese cultures in the Bubble can be drawn and reconfigured. In this way, this dissertation shows not only how consumer culture was a significant part of Bubble culture, but also had more significance and far-reaching effects beyond the economic bubble itself.

Moreover, this research not only applies the methods of cultural analysis to the Bubble Economy, opening up the field, but also brings together a combined quantitative and qualitative approach that sees economic, cultural and design history brought together for more holistic analysis. In doing so, it not only adds to our reading of Japanese design history and that of the Bubble Economy, but also brings in the richness of material visual analysis and the unique perspectives of individual experience to that of economic history, as well as that of economic data to design history.

However, while reframing the Bubble as a culture, this work opens up the field to its potential for more research. As mentioned in the introduction, there are still many other areas specific to

developments in 1980s Japan that warrant further study, from theme parks and resorts, to video game arcades and expositions. Moreover, though relevant, the magazines studied were mainly targeted at a Tokyoite metropolitan urban population, and just as this research highlights the presence of multiple narratives, so the voices of those not featured need to be explored. From housewives and non-corporate men, to those of the elderly and the non-capital and rural residing – their experiences would help to gain a better picture of how the 1980s were as a complete culture. Of particular interest are the children of the Bubble – those who would grow up into the teenagers and young adults of the 1990s, and whose experience of both the boom and the bust create the developmental trajectory of subcultures in Japan. However, in addition to Japanese research, this thesis also adds to the current research on wider cultures of the 1980s, postmodernity, and Bubble economies. As such, other potential areas of further study include how parallels may be drawn between the unique cultural postmodern nature of the Japanese Bubble Economy and other cultures of economic bubbles that occurred after.

As a culture, the period of the Bubble Economy in Japan can thus be framed as not necessarily negative, the ill-conceived rise before the fall, but a time of great developments and rich interpretations. Fostering self-expression, self-discovery, rebellion against corporate hegemony, and subcultural forms that come to later dominate modern understandings of Japanese contemporary culture, this study of Japan's Bubble Economy not only adds to our understanding of the period, but also to that of Asian modernity and cultures of economic bubbles as both economic and design history in the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first century.

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