USE OF THESES

This copy is supplied for purposes of private study and research only. Passages from the thesis may not be copied or closely paraphrased without the written consent of the author.
AMERIKA-MURA: DISCOURSES OF MODERNITY AND IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY URBAN JAPAN

DONALD STUART CAMERON

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of The Australian National University.

August 2002.
Except as cited in the text, this work is the result of research carried out by the author.

Donald Stuart Cameron
Department of Anthropology
Division of Society and Environment
Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies
The Australian National University
This thesis is an exploration of the notion of modernity in the context of Amerika-mura (‘American Village’), a district of Osaka, Japan commonly styled as the centre of that city’s wakamono bunka (‘youth culture’). The thesis begins with a presentation of historical and theoretical approaches to the study of Japan, problematising both essentialist and postmodern treatments. The theme of ‘multiple responses to modernity’ is proposed as an alternative to the notions of ‘culture’ and ‘society’ as a tool for the investigation of mutually constitutive personal and spatial identities in specific contexts. A series of examples demonstrates the complex relationship between such responses, firstly exploring historical contexts in Osaka and Japan in which notions of the ‘new’, the ‘foreign’ and the ‘strange’ have been interpreted, framed and spectacularised.

At the level of the urban environment in Amerika-mura, these responses are shown to range from the ‘framing discourses’ of tourism and planning to nostalgic appeals for a return to a simpler, more ‘authentic’ time and place. At the level of individual engagement with this environment, they vary from the collective project of sutoriito fasshon (‘street fashion’) to the network of unique trajectories which create personal ‘topographies of taste.’ This thesis explores all of the above discourses through a selection of contexts where these intersect with the physical site of Amerika-mura. It draws upon a variety of theoretical approaches from the fields of anthropology, human geography and cultural studies, in addition to a selection of conceptual frameworks proposed by Japanese sociologists. These are deployed in an investigation of Amerika-mura as a ‘microcosm of modernity’, a site in which a unique spatial identity is paradoxically constructed around the juxtaposition of ostensibly disparate elements. Parallel to this investigation, a series of personal narratives is deployed in an exploration of the way in which ‘authentic’ individual identities are shaped both within, and in opposition to, the multitude of discourses mediated through the district.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my grateful thanks and appreciation to the following individuals for their valued cooperation, encouragement and assistance in the preparation of this thesis.

Firstly, I would like to thank the Department of Anthropology at the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Division of Society and Environment of the Australian National University for supporting my research and contributing generously to my fieldwork funding. I would like to express special appreciation for the contributions of my supervisors Dr Sonia Ryang and Dr Kathryn Robinson, my advisors Dr Morris Low and Dr David Moore, former departmental administrator Ms Susan Toscan and current departmental administrator Ms Fay Castles, and divisional administrator Ms Ann Buller. Further, I would like to register my particular gratitude for the invaluable advice and assistance of departmental information technology advisor Ms Ria van de Zandt. In addition, I would like to thank all of the staff and students of the department for their encouragement and feedback related to my research activities. I would also like to thank Mr Keith Mitchell of Publishing, Imaging and Cartographic Services at the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies for his generous assistance in the preparation of the maps included in this thesis.

I would also like to thank my friend Dr Robert Fouser of Kyoto University for his assistance and advice in relation to the selection of my research fieldsite of Amerika-mura. Further, I would like to thank Professor Shūji Yoshida of the Museum of Ethnology in Osaka for his generous encouragement, and for allowing me access to the research facilities of his institution. In addition, I would like to thank Dr Mandy Thomas, Director of the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research at the Australian National University, for supporting my application as Visiting Scholar at the School of Cultural Histories and Futures at the University of Western Sydney (Nepean) from mid-1998 until mid-1999. I would like to thank Centre
Director, Dr Ien Ang, and her staff and students for their warm welcome and kind assistance during my stay.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude and appreciation to the many individuals who assisted me with my fieldwork in Osaka during 1997 and 1999. Although too numerous to mention here, I would like to make special mention of the generosity of my friends Tomoyuki and Yuka Fuma, Peter and Sharon McLaughlin and Tony McLean, all of whom provided me with accommodation during different periods of my fieldwork in Osaka, my friend Yoshihiro Yokogawa who provided me with accommodation during a research trip to Tokyo in July 1997, and my friends Garry McCoy and Michelle and Robert Allen, who provided me with accommodation in Canberra before and after my main research period. I would also like to thank Mr Tsuyoshi Hisada, Mr Kohei Matsunaga, Ms Mariko Higiri, Mr Mark ‘E’ Inoguchi, Mr Koji Akama and Mr Akihiro Umeda, for their extremely generous assistance in relation to my data collection activities. In addition, I would like to thank all of the many other individuals who kindly agreed to be interviewed and photographed during my fieldwork. This research would not have been possible without their cooperation. Further, I would like to express my gratitude to the staff of the Osaka City Central Library for their dedicated work in helping me identify and locate important archival material.

Finally, I would like to thank my father, Don Cameron senior, for his extremely helpful advice and feedback related to my thesis drafts. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to both of my parents and all of my close friends and relatives for their encouragement and feedback during the entire period of my research.
CONTENTS

ABSTRACT i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ii
CONTENTS iv
LIST OF PLATES x
NOTES ON LANGUAGE USE xvi
GLOSSARY xvii

1 INTRODUCTION 1
1.1 Modernity as order, modernity as dream 1
1.2 Modernity and discourse 2
1.3 Modernity and Japan: beyond the frame 5
1.3.1 The essentialist response 6
1.3.2 The neo-postmodern response 7
1.3.3 The anti-essentialist response 7
1.3.4 Beyond binaries 8
1.4 Modernity in context: Amerika-mura 9
1.5 Fieldwork activities and thesis structure 11
1.5.1 Historical narratives 12
1.5.2 Personal trajectories 13
1.5.3 The sutorito (‘street’) as a space of ‘youthful fashionability’ 14
1.5.4 Hip hop: from fashion to lifestyle 15
1.6 Summary of research objectives 16

2 APPROACHES TO JAPAN 18
2.1 Introduction 18
2.2 Japan as labyrinth 18
2.2.1 Essentialist discourses: cracking the code 19
2.2.2 Anti-essentialist responses 23
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Through and beyond essentialism:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Japanese discourses of modernity</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1</td>
<td>Modernity as global/local phenomenon</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.2</td>
<td>Responses to modernity</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Modern moments I: Japan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.1</td>
<td>Space and modernity in Meiji Japan</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.2</td>
<td>Nostalgia, space and identity in the postwar era: reconfiguring the 'Other'</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>'America' in Japan: from imitation to internalisation</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>The Tokyo sakariba: multiple responses to modernity</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>OSAKA AS MODERN CITY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Regional discourses of identity</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Modern moments II: Osaka</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1</td>
<td>Reconfiguring urban space: modernity as prerogative</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2</td>
<td>From Fair to Expo: modernity as dream</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Competing modernities within Osaka</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1</td>
<td>Minami: a historical overview</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Tourist discourses: Osaka as spectacle</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1</td>
<td>The Globetrotter series</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.2</td>
<td>The Blue Guide series: Amerika-mura as itinerary</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.3</td>
<td>The Mapple series: Amerika-mura as a place to play</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.4</td>
<td>The Rurubu series: Amerika-mura as culinary window on the world</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>AMERIKA-MURA: MODERNITY IN MICROCOSM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Locating the fieldsite</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>The historical context: a brief overview</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Bura-bura around the mura: a sensory journey</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Symbolic sites</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.8 Conclusion

6 HIDDEN PLACES, DEEPER SPACES 158
6.1 Introduction 158
6.2 Towards a ‘deeper’ interpretation 160
6.3 Hidden worlds: sites of difference and discovery 164
6.3.1 Apocalypse: the frontiers of commerce 164
6.3.2 Territory: a satanic space 168
6.3.3 Harvest Market Junior: a place for ‘heads’ 171
6.4 Selling a passion: where business meets pleasure 175
6.4.1 Freak Scene: where ‘noise’ meets the sixties 176
6.4.2 Theory and Experiment: authenticating the past through furugi (‘used clothing’) 179
6.5 Hubs of knowledge 182
6.5.1 Wild World: the place for koa (‘core’) people 183
6.5.2 Tank Gallery: the (post)modern salon 189
6.6 Conclusion 196

7 FRAMING DISCOURSES: FROM TOURISM TO SUTORIITO FASSHON 207
7.1 Introduction 207
7.2 From itinerary to catalogue: the fashion ‘mook’ 208
7.2.1 The mook and the sutoriito 210
7.2.2 Mooking the mura: city as catalogue 211
7.3 Sutoriito fasshon: the historical context 217
7.3.1 Sutoriito fasshon as incorporating construct 220
7.3.2 From fasshon (‘fashion’) to sutairu (‘style’) 224
7.3.3 Surface to surface: from street to sutoriito 226
7.3.4 Boon and the kakkoman: linking spatial and personal identities 227
7.4 Sutoriito fasshon magazines: from the editor’s desk 231
7.4.1 Mr Yōichiro Maeda: editor of Boon magazine 232
7.4.2 Mr Akihiro Umeda: editor of Cazi-Cazi magazine 235
7.4.3 Further comments from the editor’s desk 241
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.4.4</td>
<td>Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Theorising the <em>sutoriito</em>: an abstract space?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5.1</td>
<td>Between representation and reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5.2</td>
<td>The <em>sutoriito</em> as framing discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5.3</td>
<td><em>Sutoriito fasshon</em> as public drama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>STANDING OUT IN ORDER TO FIT IN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Street meets <em>sutoriito</em>: the <em>sunappu</em> ('photo shoot')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2.1</td>
<td>The staged <em>sunappu</em>: an invitation to the <em>sutoriito</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2.2</td>
<td>The guerilla <em>sunappu</em>: in the wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2.3</td>
<td>Summary: the <em>sunappu</em> and the production of space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Conformity and differentiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3.1</td>
<td>The ‘psychogeography’ of the <em>sutoriito</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3.2</td>
<td>Standing out while still fitting in: comments from the street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3.3</td>
<td>From <em>miihā</em> to <em>maniakku</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3.4</td>
<td>Theorising the fashion dichotomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>HIP HOP AS LIFE AND STYLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>A historical overview of hip hop in Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2.1</td>
<td>Hip hop: imitation and authenticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2.2</td>
<td>A hip hop timeline: from import to incorporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2.3</td>
<td>Hip hop: the dance scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2.4</td>
<td>Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>Routes and roots: hip hop narratives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3.1</td>
<td>Mr Kōji Akama: shop assistant, <em>Sun</em> (1997), <em>Culture Complex</em> (1999); rap dancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3.2</td>
<td>Mr Akihito Teraoka: employee, Club Flatt; rap artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3.3</td>
<td>Shigechiyo: shop assistant, B-Matic (1997); rap artist, <em>Desperado</em> (1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3.4</td>
<td>Mr Yukio Oki: shop assistant, <em>The Edge</em> (1999); rap artist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.3.5 Mr Masahito Yasuda: co-manager, Colors (1999); rap artist
9.4 A multi-layered discourse
9.4.1 Theoretical approaches
9.5 Hip hop moments
9.5.1 Hip hop moments I: the practice session
9.5.2 Hip hop moments II: the club event
9.5.3 Hip hop moments III: the dance lesson
9.6 The media and hip hop
9.6.1 Hip hop as style: the sutoriito fasshon media
9.6.2 Hip hop as life: the specialised media
9.7 Conclusion

10 CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY
LIST OF PLATES

(N.B. Plates are found in numerical order at the end of each chapter)

Plate 2.1: Map of Japan. 48
Plate 3.1: Map of Osaka. 73
Plate 3.2: Osaka’s grand central boulevard, Midō-suji, looking north from Daimaru department store. My fieldsite of Amerika-mura is located behind the Nikkō Hotel visible in the top left hand corner of the photograph. 74
Plate 3.3: Young visitors to Amerika-mura take a pause from shopping to watch the annual Midō-suji Parade. 74
Plate 3.4: Office buildings and department stores tower over Umeda, hub of the Kita district. 75
Plate 3.5: Commuters and shoppers mingle in the rushed atmosphere of Whity, one of an enormous series of underground malls linking railway stations and department stores in Umeda, Kita district. 75
Plate 3.6: Giant neon signs line the Dōtombori canal at the centre of Minami. 76
Plate 3.7: On Dōtombori, the pedestrianised entertainment street at the heart of Minami. This photograph was taken at the point where Dōtombori meets the Shinsaibashi-suji shopping arcade. 76
Plate 3.8: Bura-bura (‘random wandering for pleasure’): inside the Sennichi-mae arcade in Minami district. 77
Plate 3.9: Looking along Dōtombori. 78
Plate 4.1: Map of Amerika-mura. 106
Plate 4.2: One of the most common entry points for visitors to Amerika-mura, at the corner of Midō-suji [boulevard] and Suomachi-dōri [street].

Plate 4.3: American images on the outside of Sun Village. Opened in 1979, it is one of Amerika-mura’s first multi-tenant shopping complexes.

Plate 4.4: Map of Amerika-mura on the outside of the Tokyo-Mitsubishi bank building on the corner of Midō-suji [boulevard] and Suomachi-dōri [street].

Plate 4.5: Map in the Crysta Nagahori mall on the northern perimeter of Amerika-mura showing member shops of the Amerika-mura Association.

Plate 4.6: Sitting on the central stairway at Big Step shopping complex.

Plate 4.7: View of the Big Step complex from the pedestrian walkway on the second floor of the complex.

Plate 4.8: Triangle Park.

Plate 4.9: Rock performance in Triangle Park.

Plate 4.10: Halloween make-up session in Triangle Park, October 1997.

Plate 4.11: Mod style at Triangle Park.

Plate 4.12: Looking towards Triangle Park (visible in the top right hand section of the photograph).

Plate 4.13: Looking north from Triangle Park. I was based at an apartment at the far end of this street (on the left) during my main fieldwork period in 1997.

Plate 4.14: The Statue of Liberty replica atop the New American Plaza building in the northwestern part of Amerika-mura.

Plate 4.15: Graffiti under the Hanshin Expressway flyover on the western side of Amerika-mura.

Plate 4.16: American flag and a jumble of Japanese and English signs look down on shoppers in the southern part of Amerika-mura.
Plate 4.17: Modernity and tradition: Shoppers walk past the Shinto shrine located in the southern part of Amerika-mura.

Plate 5.1: Ms Mariko Higiri, standing in front of the corner where her Loop cafe was formerly located. (The site is now (1997) occupied by Anthony’s clothing store).

Plate 5.2: Mr Keiichi Morimoto, president, Amerika-mura Association.

Plate 5.3: Mr ‘Mark E’ Inoguchi, disc jockey at FM Osaka.

Plate 5.4: Mr Umemoto, owner of Nest saloon in nearby Namba.

Plate 5.5: Mr Kazuo Maeda’s store Corn.

Plate 5.6: Mr Hirokazu Hasegawa, owner of El Paso bar.

Plate 6.1: Peeling posters and graffiti in alleyway behind Gallage Mart shops.

Plate 6.2: Mr Masahiko Nakabayashi, owner of Apocalypse store.

Plate 6.3: Stairway inside EN Building leading up to Territory store.

Plate 6.4: Darkened entrance to Territory store.

Plate 6.5: Taiki, owner of Territory store.

Plate 6.6: Mr Yūji Nampō in Harvest Market Junior store.

Plate 6.7: Masonna and wife Fusao in their store Freak Scene.

Plate 6.8: Theory and Experiment owner Mr Yasutomi Shiga and his assistant Yuka.

Plate 6.9: Entrance to Tank Gallery.

Plate 6.10: Mr Takaharu Furutani, owner of Tank Gallery.

Plate 6.11: Inside Tank Gallery cafe area. The art display area is found at the rear of the cafe, to the right, and is not visible in this photograph.

Plate 6.12: Closer view of cabinet in centre of Tank Gallery, showing demonstration cassettes left by disc jockeys (on top shelf) and promotional flyers.
Plate 7.1: This feature in the February 1977 edition of Osaka community paper *Wow-Wow* (1977:1) prefigures the *sunappu* ('on-the-street photographic shoots') later used by the mainstream *sutoriito fasshon* media.

Plate 7.2: This illustration in the same publication (*Wow-Wow* 1977:6) provides detailed instruction to readers on how to get 'the edge' over fashion rivals, again prefiguring the rhetoric of later *sutoriito fasshon* magazines.

Plate 7.3: Map of Amerika-mura provided in February 1977 edition of *Wow-Wow* (1977:30-31), offering an early example of the 'mook'-type fashion and city guides which would follow.

Plate 7.4: Front cover of *Boon's Tōkyō Ōsaka shoppu navi '97* (*Tokyo Osaka shop navigator '97*) (*Boon* 1997a:1), discussed in 7.2.1.

Plate 7.5: Map of Amerika-mura provided in *Boon's Tōkyō Ōsaka shoppu navi '97* (*Tokyo Osaka shop navigator '97*) (*Boon* 1997a:95), discussed in 7.2.1.

Plate 7.6: One of the suggested itineraries for visitors to Amerika-mura included in *Ōsaka kanzen shopingu baiburu* (*Osaka complete shopping bible*) (*Fine Boys* 2001:10), discussed in 7.2.2.

Plate 7.7: Fashion or lifestyle? Performing 'punk' in Triangle Park.

Plate 7.8: Introductory page of the Amerika-mura section in *Boon's Za kakkoman* (*The kakkoman*) (*Boon* 1997b:36), discussed in 7.3.4.

Plate 7.9: Mr Akihiro Umeda, editor of *Cazi-Cazi* magazine, in his office.

Plate 8.1: Mr Tatsuya Onoe taking photographs of Takayuki for the *Street Jack* magazine *sunappu* in Triangle Park in August 1997.

Plate 8.2: Close-up photographs of Takayuki's footwear being taken during the above *sunappu*.
Plate 8.3: Part of the feature on Amerika-mura published in the November 1997 edition of Street Jack (Street Jack 1997b:212), including photographs from the 'staged sunappu' discussed in 8.2.1.

Plate 8.4: Mr Sofue (l) and Mr Takahashi (r), the 'guerilla sunappu' team for Osaka-based sutoriito fashhon magazine Cazi-Cazi.

Plate 8.5: Mr Sofue (l) and Mr Takahashi (r) taking photographs for the Machi no me ('Eye on the street') feature in Cazi-Cazi magazine.

Plate 8.6: Part of the Machi no me ('Eye on the street') feature in the November 1997 edition of Cazi-Cazi (Cazi-Cazi 1997:144), including photographs from the 'guerilla sunappu' discussed in 8.2.2. The subject being photographed in Plate 8.5 above is seen in the right-hand centre photograph.

Plate 8.7: Tatsuya, holding open a copy of Fruits magazine with his photograph.

Plate 8.8: Tatsuya's photo in Fruits magazine (Fruits 1997:3).

Plate 8.9: Senior high school students (l-r) Kenichirō, Masakazu, Yoshimi and Momoko sitting in front of the 'fountain wall' in newly-refurbished Triangle Park in late August 1997.

Plate 8.10: Yoshifumi (l) and Tadashi (r).

Plate 9.1: Shigechiyo at B-Matic clothing store.

Plate 9.2: Shigechiyo rapping with team Desperado during a performance at Amerika-mura club I to I in October 1997.

Plate 9.3: Mr Yukio Oki, rap artist and shop assistant at The Edge.

Plate 9.4: Mr Masahito Yasuda and wife Yuki in their store, Colors.

Plate 9.5: Promotional poster for 20th Big Bang event.

Plate 9.6: Naoki (l) and Kōji (r) taking a break from dance practice in Horie, immediately west of Amerika-mura.

Plate 9.7: Kōji (l) and Naoki (r) practicing their routines in Horie.
Plate 9.8: Naoki (m) leading a dance class at EN Studio. Kōji is on the left. 336
Plate 9.9: Hip hop fashion and graffiti on display outside store operated by retail chain Walkin’ Store. 337
Plate 9.10: Senior high school students Saburō (l), Satoshi (m) and Takeshi (r), wearing hip hop fashion. Takeshi strikes a ‘b-boy’ pose of the kind found in rap videos and posters. 338
Plate 9.11: Young shoppers in hip hop fashion in the southern part of Amerika-mura. 339
Plate 9.12: Front cover of the inaugural issue of hip hop magazine Woofin (Woofin 1997a:1). 340
Plate 9.13: Dreadlock, sneaker and suede shoe care are described in the first issue of Woofin under the title “Catalog & Easy How To For B-Boy” (sic) (Woofin 1997a:72). 341
NOTES ON LANGUAGE USE

Japanese words and names are transliterated according to the standard Romaji (‘Romanised character’) system. Long vowels are denoted with macrons (¨) in the case of ‘ä’, ‘ē’, ‘ō’ and ‘ū’. Long ‘i’ vowels are transcribed as ‘ii.’ The only exception is made for the names of large cities (Tōkyō, Ōsaka, Kyōto and Kōbe), where macrons are not shown in the text. Japanese names are written in one of two ways.

In the case of interviewees, names are written in the English order with the surname last, e.g. Mr Akihiro Umeda. In the case of authors referred to in the text, names are written in the standard Japanese order with the surname first, e.g. Mita Munesuke.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Japanese terms and phrases are mine. All Japanese terms (including Japanicised loanwords from English) are denoted in italics, followed by their English equivalents in parentheses. I have attempted to use English equivalents which most accurately reflect the nuances of the Japanese terms, and for this reason have provided more than one English equivalent in some cases.
GLOSSARY

This section includes a list of Japanese terms used in this thesis. Japanicised English loanwords are marked with an asterisk (*).

*bori* (from *hori*)
*dōri*
*fasshon* *
*furugi*
*gaido* *
*karisuma* *

*kōen*
*machi*
*maniakku* *
*miihā*
*mukku* *

*mura*
*riaru* *
*shimbun*
*suji*
*sutairu* *
*sutoriito* *
*sutoriito fasshon* *
*sutoriito fasshon*-shi *
*wakamono bunka*

moat, canal
east-west street (Osaka)
fashion
used or second-hand clothing
guide, meaning guide book
charisma, meaning culturally influential person, role model of style park
town, neighbourhood, (urban) area
imitator
‘mook’, a composite word meaning ‘magazine + book’, catalogue-type guide
village
real
newspaper
north-south street (Osaka)
style
street
street fashion
street fashion magazine
youth culture
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 MODERNITY AS ORDER, MODERNITY AS DREAM

Throughout history, a succession of writers has been fascinated by times and places in which the processes and manifestations of change, flux and juxtaposition have been felt to be most intense and palpable. In this context, few themes have been the object of as much attention as that of modernity. During the past two centuries, the large-scale mobilisation of capital and the consolidation of the system of nation-states have combined to reshape the lives of all of earth's inhabitants. These forces have transformed the physical environment and the way in which it is used and imagined. At the same time, they have radically reconfigured the relationships between individuals and a variety of organisational structures.

One of the most prominent early observers of modernity was Walter Benjamin (Gilloch 1996), who viewed the radical transfiguration of Paris during the 1850s and 1860s with a mixture of horror and fascination. In the destruction of buildings, streets and an entire way of life, Baron Haussman created a new world of straight lines and wide spaces. As noted by Pile (1996),

- a modern phantasmagoria was built; its uniform facades of the tree-lined boulevards acted as monuments to the myth of progress; the streets imposed an order, where previously there had been none; and the 'strategic beautification' of the city bore the moral imprint of the political order (1996:231).

In short, it was a radical attempt to organise and control space through the complete transformation of the built environment. Importantly, it
was based on a belief that the city was an inherently chaotic space which ‘needed’ to be ordered and thereby controlled. Haussman’s project represented modernity as progress, efficiency and order. In this sense, it was both a scientific and a political project, and had an immeasurable effect on helping to create the notion of ‘urban planning’ in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Benjamin was also captivated by another manifestation of modern urban life, epitomised in the glittering domain of the Paris arcades. It was in such spaces that traces of a new age of mass consumption could be glimpsed. Although predating and occasionally clashing with Haussman’s radical project of urban renewal, the arcades represented modernity as dream. Donald (1999) notes that this type of phenomenon was later epitomised and intensified in the context of the grand expositions of the late nineteenth century. He explores how the arcades and fairs both played a role in transforming the city into a phantasmagoric spectacle. While the physical environment of the city was reconfigured as a site of progress, at the level of the imagination, it became recontextualised as a site of fantasy and desire. Modernity itself operated as a site of continuous destruction and reconstruction, a site of both longing and loss.

1.2 MODERNITY AND DISCOURSE
Themes embodied in the project of modernity have also influenced the formulation of scientific and ‘objective’ theories of human behaviour. Many of these have been constructed within the framework of disciplinary discourses which are themselves, like urban planning, the product of a ‘modern’ approach to knowledge, according to which the ‘unknown’ is classified, labelled and incorporated. As Michel Foucault (1973) has proposed, such ‘systems of knowledge’ may be deployed by institutions in order to create a sense of unquestionable authority and exert control and influence over individuals. Throughout this process, there has been a common tendency towards constructing binary relationships, and examining social change around dichotomies such as ‘West’ versus ‘East’, ‘tradition’ versus ‘modernity’, ‘conformity’ versus ‘deviance’. In fields such as psychology, history, sociology and anthropology, the desire to ‘explain’ human behaviour has incited the development of a
plethora of models and theories which seek to create 'order in the chaos'.

One type of model has tended to reduce all social practices to relative locations along a unilinear path towards 'progress'. This was the case with many examples of early anthropology, and notably those which viewed tribal peoples as 'primitives' or 'savages'. Reflecting aspects of the beliefs of early missionaries, this approach exoticised the practices of these groups, and often attempted to obsessively record the details of their lives before their 'pure', 'authentic' (i.e. premodern) and relatively discrete cultures were inevitably corrupted and hybridised under the effects of Western cultural influences. At the same time, as Zygmunt Bauman (1997) has suggested, the very notion of 'culture' has functioned as "an anti-randomness device, an effort to introduce and maintain an order" (1997:131).

In the case of sociology, it was not the inhabitants of 'remote' tribes who were the object of exoticisation, but rather those in 'developed' societies who refused to accept or conform with 'established norms'. Notions such as 'deviance', 'subculture' and 'transgression' were deployed and spectacularised by authors such as those of the Birmingham School of the 1970s in attempts to 'explain' certain practices and, more importantly, the individuals who engaged in them. (Willis 1977, Hebdige 1979) Where anthropology had tended to view people and practices through constructed dichotomies between relatively discrete 'cultures', sociology deployed a binary which opposed 'mainstream society' with 'deviant subcultures'. In addition, this approach was used by neo-Marxist writers such as the Frankfurt School to advocate and exoticise 'resistance' against a supposedly faceless and oppressive capitalist-government monolith. (Adorno 1991) In the case of both disciplines, the existence of such binaries was commonly taken as given, and attention instead concentrated on explaining and documenting their internal dynamics of social groups and the aspects which differentiated them from their various 'Others'.

The postmodern 'turn' from the late 1970s has radically transfigured the academic landscape, problematising all attempts to 'explain' human behaviour in any form. Itself admittedly a kind of 'anti-
discourse’, the body of postmodern writing proposes that the very principles upon which academic disciplines are constructed are flawed. This approach seeks not only to deconstruct binaries, but also to question the truly ‘modern’ distinction between ‘detached’ observer and ‘authentic’ object. The very authority of the academic to ‘explain’ what he or she observes is thrown into doubt.

At its most extreme in the writings of French theorist Jean Baudrillard, this approach argues that the outcome of modernity is a world of surfaces in which objects, places and ideas have been stripped of their ‘intrinsic meanings’. This is the commodified landscape of late modernity, in which mass-production, sophisticated marketing and media manipulation have reduced reality to a series of floating symbols. The postmodern critique has provoked a wide variety of responses, and ignited a new discourse which crosses disciplinary boundaries and increasingly blurs the distinctions between them. While French anthropologist Marc Auge (1995) appears to concur with Baudrillard in his exploration of ‘non-places’, and Japanese sociologist Yoshimi Shunya (2000) (see 2.5 and 2.6 below) speaks of the ‘Disnification’ of society, other writers have refused to accept that the world has become ‘meaning-less.’

In the context of anthropology, Margaret C. Rodman (1992) has proposed an approach to the study of places which moves beyond essentialist cultural assumptions to a notion of ‘multilocality.’ Arguing that places need to be approached from a critical perspective as social constructions, she claims that “for each inhabitant, a place has a unique reality, one in which meaning is shared with other people and places” (1992:643). In the field of human geography, Doreen Massey (1993) has also called for a reassessment of the meaning of places, arguing that “Instead...of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings” (1993:66).

The type of approach proposed by both Rodman (1992) and Massey (1993) engages with the postmodern critique of the notion of privileged or absolute meaning. As such, it is based upon the realisation that spatial identities are neither bounded nor static.
However, rather than following Baudrillard's negativist conclusion that the postmodern 'turn' represents the 'end of all meaning', both of the above authors adopt a positivist approach based on the recognition of the equal validity of *multiple meanings* derived from individual subject positions. According to this approach 'culture' is not imposed from above, but built up from below in specific sites by individuals engaging in specific practices and interpreting the practices of others. In this context, both spatial and personal identities are involved in a continuous process of mutually reconstituting and redefining each other.

### 1.3 MODERNITY AND JAPAN: BEYOND THE FRAME

As an anthropological study of a site located in Japan, my research has forced me to evaluate my own perspectives on modernity and the postmodern critique. This process has entailed an investigation of the ways in which 'Japan' has been constructed and accepted as a template through which to explore and 'explain' specific practices in Japanese contexts. This type of essentialism (further explored in 2.2 below) has proven remarkably resilient, colouring both accounts of the country by visitors from Victorian England and the arguments of contemporary writers in the tellingly-named field of Japanese Studies (Creighton 1992, 1993; Clammer 1997; Hendry 1993, 1995). At the same time, it has formed the bedrock of an indigenous discourse of Japanese identity known as *Nihonjinron* ('Japanology') (Doi 1973; Lebra 1976; Nakane 1973). For these writers, the notion of a Japanese cultural template is apparently too seductive to forsake. Unfortunately, it has led to a dangerously simplistic process by which the variety of practices in Japanese contexts is presumed to reflect an underlying common pattern.

This approach has failed to respond to the postmodern critique, and continues to concentrate on the obsessive listing and 'analysis' of 'authentic' and 'uniquely Japanese' practices. In the context of culture, these range from the tea ceremony to *haragei* ('communicating without speaking') and variations of the 'group-before-individual' theory. In the context of society, these include the time-worn cliches of the *sarariiman* ('salaried office worker') and the *kyōiku mama* ('mother obsessed with the education of her child'). In
relation to the practices of young people, this approach has reflected Western sociology in the formulation of a series of named generational cohorts, thought to share similar values and norms, and in a classification of zoku (‘tribes’) within these cohorts (Across Editorial Office 1985; Iwama 1995). It reflects similar difficulties to those faced by anthropology and sociology as a whole.

Firstly, it perpetuates the notion of ‘Japan’ as a discrete and internally coherent object of study which is subtly contrasted with an ‘Other’ located in ‘the West’. Secondly, it suggests that this object of study may be broken down into ‘type sets’ according to gender, class and age, each of which is taken to share certain distinguishing characteristics. Thirdly, it deftly ignores or overlooks the problematic relationship between subject and object, adopting a detached perspective of assumed authority.

Few nations have undergone as turbulent an engagement with modernity as Japan. Theoretical responses to social, cultural and structural change during the 150 years since Japan’s formal opening to the West have varied according to the political moods and perspectives of both Japanese and foreign commentators. The following section groups these responses into three broad categories.

1.3.1 THE ESSENTIALIST RESPONSE

One such response, reflected in aspects of Japanese Studies and Japanology, attempts to recuperate a sense of distinct cultural identity. This first response tends to be constructed around one of two perspectives, either separating ‘traditional’ from ‘modern’ practices, or arguing that all practices within Japanese contexts have already been recontextualised according to a shared Japanese cultural template. The latter of these two perspectives posits the existence of a uniquely Japanese modernity, in which foreign objects and ideas are magically reconfigured when they enter Japan, becoming themselves incorporated into a Japanese cultural world. Both perspectives are fundamentally essentialist in nature as they do not question the prior existence of an overarching cultural framework known as ‘Japan’.
1.3.2 THE NEO-POSTMODERN RESPONSE

The second response engages with the postmodern critique by styling Japan as a phantasmagoria in which all manner of things is juxtaposed in a thrilling parade of colours and sounds. This is the Japan of which Roland Barthes (1982) wrote in *The empire of signs*, giving impetus to a discourse which later led Jean Baudrillard to style Japan as the ultimate postmodern society. Here, Japan is not a context in which all elements are divided into ‘traditional’ or ‘modern’. Neither is it one in which all elements are recontextualised and incorporated into a Japanese cultural milieu. Instead, Japan is constructed as a giant ‘non-place’, to borrow Auge’s (1995) term, a context in which everything is reduced to a symbol, a parody or pastiche. However, the notion of a postmodern Japan as ‘Other’ implies that other societies are ‘relatively less postmodern’, in the process actually perpetuating a form of essentialism.

1.3.3 THE ANTI-ESSENTIALIST RESPONSE

The third response engages with the postmodern critique firstly by attacking essentialism. The clearest examples of this perspective are found in the anti-Japanology writings of Dale (1982), and in the more measured assessment of Sugimoto and Mouer (1986). This discourse helped to inspire and shape a new series of studies during the late 1980s and 1990s which attempted to explore practices in Japanese contexts without reliance on a presumption of internal cultural coherence. Nevertheless, many writers appeared to become preoccupied with a quest to unearth examples of ‘difference’ in Japanese society, to some extent reflecting the earlier exoticisation of ‘marginal’ or ‘deviant’ groups by sociologists in Western societies (Maher and Macdonald 1995). Examples included studies of the Ainu, motorcycle gangs (Sato 1991), ethnic minorities (Maher and Kawanishi 1995), local cultural practices (Ouwehand 1985), the *buraku* underclass and hostesses (Louis 1992, Allison 1994). While informed by a greater awareness of the dangers of cultural essentialism, these writers nevertheless tended to concentrate on distinctions between certain groups and a presumed ‘mainstream society’.
1.3.4 BEYOND BINARIES

Any attempt to overcome the deficiencies of the above approaches must avoid the presumption and deployment of binaries. In the wider context of anthropological methodology, this entails a return to an emphasis on sites and practices rather than models, an exorcising of the ‘Other’, a further blurring of the distinctions between disciplinary boundaries, and a constant awareness of the role of the subject in the construction of discourse. This process is already far advanced in the field of anthropology, and has helped to inspire the growth of cultural studies as a kind of interdisciplinary theoretical forum. Nevertheless, a critical lag has remained in the case of studies conducted in Japanese contexts.

This thesis is an attempt to accelerate a process of ‘normalisation’ whereby vestiges of essentialism and cultural relativism are replaced by an approach which locates people and practices in Japan within the context of global flows of commodities and ideas. In this context, ‘culture’ is no longer an unconscious force which manipulates and determines human behaviour, but rather an idea which acts as only one of many conceptual tools consciously deployed by individuals and groups in making sense of their environments. The analysis which follows proposes that modernity is located everywhere and nowhere, operating as a global phenomenon which prompts a multitude of local responses which are shaped around numerous discourses. These discourses display certain common themes, invoking the notions of desire and loss noted in 1.1 above. Like Benjamin’s Paris of the nineteenth century, contemporary sites in Japan and other nations may be examined as contexts in which modernity has inspired a particularly ‘thick’ layering of discourses.

As a historic site of engagement and exchange between Japan and the outside world for the past five centuries, Osaka has developed as an urban context in which multiple elements clash, intermingle and coexist. Within this environment, my fieldsite of Amerika-mura has developed from the late 1960s as a place where old and new, indigenous and foreign, ‘authentic’ and ‘false’, have been continuously reconstructed and redefined. The following section
explores my choice of Amerika-mura as a site in which to explore multiple discourses of modernity in contemporary urban Japan.

1.4 MODERNITY IN CONTEXT: AMERIKA-MURA

My fieldsite of Amerika-mura (‘American Village’) is a district in the centre of Osaka, the second-largest city in Japan, and commonly styled as the hub of the city’s wakamono bunka (‘youth culture’). As suggested in 1.3 above, it encapsulates the contradictions and paradoxes of modernity felt in urban environments throughout the world. This is a place which, like Japan, begs to be ‘explained’, and which could easily be approached using binary frameworks such as ‘Japan’ versus ‘America’, ‘deviant youth’ versus ‘conformist adulthood’, even ‘modern’ versus ‘postmodern’. However, I have chosen to instead explore it as a site in which such dichotomies themselves are contested and continually redefined. In doing so, I have been strongly influenced by the work of Foucault, Edensor (1998a, 1998b), and Deleuze and Guattari (1987), whose ideas are further explored in Chapter 3 below. For me, Amerika-mura came to embody the spirit of modernity itself. While Marshall Berman (1982) evoked a world in which ‘all that is solid melts into air’, I viewed Amerika-mura as a site in which distinctions between ‘solid’ and ‘air’ were fluid and mutable. Like San Francisco in the 1950s or Soho in the 1960s, here was a place where binaries were suspended.

This thesis explores four ‘responses to modernity’ in the context of Amerika-mura. The first two responses relate primarily to spatial identity. While the first approach attempts to reify or recuperate a nostalgic sense of collective identity, the second embraces the notion of ‘progress’, yet seeks to impose order on an ostensibly chaotic and rapidly-changing environment through discourses which include urban planning, sutoritto fashhon (‘street fashion’) and tourism. These discourses are merged in places such as Amerika-mura, where attempts are made to organise and control the physical environment, and style it as a site in which to dress up, go shopping, and enjoy the lively atmosphere. Here, the site itself is reshaped, while at the same time framed, exoticised and incorporated. Like Paris in the late nineteenth century, Amerika-mura and Osaka operate as sites in which the notion of modernity as progress, efficiency and order sits alongside that of modernity as dream. Chapter 2 of this thesis
includes examples drawn from historical ‘moments’ in which relationships between individuals and spaces in Japan became recontextualised and reconfigured. Chapter 3 examines the case of Osaka (location of my fieldsite of Amerika-mura), concentrating on instances where the ‘new’, the ‘foreign’ and the ‘strange’ have been framed and engaged with during the twentieth century. Chapter 4 introduces Amerika-mura and explores key sites where the paradoxes of modernity are played out through multiple discourses of meaning.

The second two responses relate primarily to personal identity. The first delights in the vicissitudes of fashion, voraciously devouring news of the latest trends and seeking out ‘must-have’ items. Within the context of sutoriito fasshon (‘street fashion’), individuals seek out techniques of differentiation according to the shared code of the sutoriito (‘street’). While newcomers tend to imitate, more confident visitors to the district attempt to construct unique and flamboyant personal sutairu (‘styles’). At the same time, Amerika-mura operates as a context in which the ‘cool’ space of the sutoriito presented in the fashion media intersects with the ‘real’ streets of an urban neighbourhood. The discourse of sutoriito fasshon (‘street fashion’) and its relationship to Amerika-mura is discussed in Chapters 7 and 8.

By contrast, the second response related to personal identity rejects the collective project of fashion as ‘superficial’, and seeks to construct ‘authentic’ personal identities around specialised networks of shared knowledge, practices and interests. Chapters 5 and 6 examine contexts in which individuals deal in a variety of ways with a perceived ‘dissonance’ between their personal identities and that of the modern-day Amerika-mura as a site of ‘youthful fashionability.’ Chapter 5 examines historical narratives of Amerika-mura, through which a series of individuals invoke a ‘gap’ between a district fondly recalled from the past and a modern-day place in which they no longer fully ‘belong.’ Chapter 6 explores a series of sites around which individuals construct ‘authentic’ personal identities hidden away from the ‘fashionable’ masses surging along the nearby streets.

Both of the above personal ‘responses’ are constructed around different ‘readings’ of the relationship between the individual and the urban environment. While the first is constructed around the notion
of the city as information, the second is constructed around the notion of the city as knowledge. While the first is based on reference to manuals, maps and guides, the second is based on emotion and memory. In Amerika-mura, individuals simultaneously deploy both approaches in their construction of personal identities. Here, the contradictory modern themes of order and desire are simultaneously played out on the surfaces of bodies and in their trajectories through the urban labyrinth.

1.5 FIELDWORK ACTIVITIES AND THESIS STRUCTURE

The preparations for the writing of this thesis included two periods of fieldwork in Amerika-mura: January-October 1997 and January-February 1999. During the first period, I was able to secure accommodation in the northern part of the district, from where I based my fieldwork activities from March until October 1997. Due to the high cost of living, it was necessary for me to work (as an English teacher) at four schools for approximately twenty-eight hours per week. Most of my fieldwork activities were conducted during weekday afternoons and weekends, when the district was at its busiest. During the second period of fieldwork, I stayed with friends from New Zealand and Australia at their homes in nearby Nihombashi and Tanimachi 4-chome respectively.

Before commencing my initial fieldwork in 1997, I had decided to approach Amerika-mura as a site in which young people deployed a variety of techniques by which to create unique personal identities. Influenced by my reading of ‘subculture theory’, such as that of the Birmingham School (discussed in 1.2 above), I was eager to identify and analyse the practices of Japanese ‘punks’, ‘bikers’ and ‘mods.’ On an exploratory trip to the district in December 1995, I had been intrigued by the spectacle of elaborately-dressed young people roaming the streets and sitting around watching the passing parade. I was certain that the site constituted an ideal environment in which to explore both the internal dynamics of ‘subcultural’ groups, and the strategies they used to differentiate themselves from other groups and the ‘mainstream’ adult world.
My early fieldwork was characterised by a sense of disappointment, frustration and alienation. Disappointment due to the dawning realisation that my notion of ‘subculture’ seemed entirely inappropriate in describing the stylistic practices of the young people I was observing and interviewing. Frustration due to the inability to move beyond the surfaces of pink hair, pierced noses and colourful shopping bags to a ‘deeper’ understanding of place. Alienation due to an acute sense of not belonging in the district, viewing myself as too old, too foreign and too unfashionable.

All three problems were gradually resolved in different ways. The first was overcome through an attempt to understand the internal dynamics of fashion, and the processes and practices which linked it to Amerika-mura. The second was overcome by a deliberate effort to seek out individuals whose interactions with Amerika-mura transcended or ignored the context of fashion. The third was overcome as a result of my investigation of the processes by which Amerika-mura was framed, exoticised and incorporated in a variety of discourses, ranging from urban planning to tourism and *sutoriito fasshon* (‘street fashion’). All three of the above responses led to my reconceptualisation of Amerika-mura as a site which both mediated multiple spatial and personal identities, and which embodied what I came to style as ‘multiple responses to modernity.’

The following section explores my fieldwork and research activities, and outlines the framework through which they are presented and discussed in the context of this thesis.

1.5.1 HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

I was interested in exploring the way in which individuals who had witnessed Amerika-mura’s development as a centre of *wakamono bunka* (‘youth culture’) contrasted the district in the early days of its development (in the late 1960s and early 1970s) with the present day. In particular, I hoped to gather a series of ‘origin myths’ which demonstrated how individual memories and narratives construct multiple historical ‘truths’ and help shape personal as well as spatial identities. I interviewed approximately ten individuals who had worked in Amerika-mura during the 1970s, and also questioned many
shop owners, shop assistants and young visitors to the district in relation to their perceptions of historical change since their first visits. These interviews were supplemented by archival research at Osaka City Central Library, where I collected articles related to the district published in mainstream newspapers between 1987 and 1999 (as earlier materials were not able to be searched by computer). These materials are examined in Chapter 5 of the thesis.

1.5.2 PERSONAL TRAJECTORIES

Based on my examination of the historical narratives noted above, I quickly realised that these exhibited a common theme of nostalgia and loss. Many of the individuals I spoke to argued that commercial pressures derived from the district’s popularity among young people had paradoxically caused it to lose its unique character. I became interested in discovering examples of sites, practices and contexts where individuals continued to construct unique personal identities. I realised that while these included the ostensibly ‘commercial’ context of fashion itself, they also included nodes and networks in a multitude of personal ‘topographies of taste.’ Related to this latter context, I made contact with approximately twenty individuals involved in a variety of specialised practices inside and beyond the confines of Amerika-mura.

Rather than purposely create sub-labels such as ‘occult space’ or ‘underground techno space’, for example, I have decided to allow the reader to develop his or her own impressions of how these individuals construct unique or ‘alternative’ identities through a detailed presentation of their personal narratives. The majority of the sites introduced in these narratives are in hidden or obscure locations, many share an overlapping clientele, and all operate as nodes through which multiple networks of specialised knowledge are channelled.

My interviews with the above individuals generally lasted between forty-five and ninety minutes, and were conducted at their shops. My questions were aimed at gaining a sense of their historical engagement with Amerika-mura, finding out about the history of their shops and the motivations for establishing them, and developing an idea of how these sites mediated multiple discourses of spatial and
personal identity. An examination and analysis of their accounts is presented in Chapter 6.

1.5.3 THE SUTORIITO (‘STREET’) AS A SPACE OF ‘YOUTHFUL FASHIONABILITY’

As the centre of wakamono bunka (‘youth culture’) in Osaka, Amerika-mura functions as a key site for the consumption and display of what is known as sutoriito fasshon (‘street fashion’). I was interested in exploring the media and tourism discourses which frame Amerika-mura in this way. This led me to analyse approximately fifty editions of Japanese sutoriito fasshon magazines, interview six magazine editors and staff, and observe two snappu (‘on-the-street fashion shoots’) organised by sutoriito fasshon magazines. Interviews with fashion media representatives generally lasted between sixty and ninety minutes, and were usually conducted in their offices (in Tokyo and Osaka). My questions were aimed at getting a sense of the mission of these publications, and the relationship between the media and ‘fashion districts’ such as Amerika-mura.

In addition, as noted above, I was interested in exploring the ways in which personal and spatial identities were mutually constructed at the points where the sutoriito (‘street’) represented in the media met the physical streets of Amerika-mura. For this reason, I conducted approximately sixty interviews with young visitors to Amerika-mura, sourcing opinions which helped to explain the internal dynamics of fashion as a progressive project of personal authenticity. These interviews were loosely structured, and lasted between five and twenty minutes.

During the interviews, I gathered information on each interviewee’s age, occupation and place of residence, historical and current engagement with the district, perceptions of and opinions regarding historical change, and predictions for the future of the district. In the case of many interviewees, I also asked them about their historical and current engagement with fashion and the sutoriito fasshon media, and about favourite shops and brands. During the second period of fieldwork in early 1999, I also asked most young informants about their movements around the district, in some cases having them mark
these movements on sketch maps. I took photographs of all young interviewees, except in the case of early interviews conducted during April and May 1997.

The theme of *sutoriito fasshon* is explored in Chapters 7 and 8 of the thesis. While Chapter 7 examines strategies used by the specialised media to set up an association between Amerika-mura and the cool, young, fashionable space of the *sutoriito*, Chapter 8 explores how individual practices both consolidate and challenge this association. At the same time, this chapter investigates how fashion’s core dichotomy, that of conformity versus differentiation, is played out in the context of the *sutoriito* in Amerika-mura.

**1.5.4 HIP HOP: FROM FASHION TO LIFESTYLE**

In addition, I was interested in exploring a context in which the discourse of fashion noted above variously merged and clashed with a specialised discourse of authenticity. I chose hip hop as a key example, noting that it operated in Amerika-mura on at least two levels: as one of a series of ‘looks’ in the collective project of fashion, and as a set of specialised practices which certain individuals used to construct ‘authentic’ personal identities around the notion of a shared outlook on life.

In relation to this theme, I conducted interviews with approximately ten individuals currently involved in a variety of practices linked to the notion of ‘hip hop’ in Amerika-mura, including dancing, disc jockeying, rapping and the retail of related music and fashion. These interviews generally lasted between sixty and ninety minutes, and were conducted at a variety of locations, including shops, nightclubs and cafes. My questions were aimed at gaining information about each person’s historical and current engagement with hip hop, and gauging their opinions about the relationships between hip hop and Amerika-mura.

In addition, I attended and observed three major hip hop events at a nightclub in the district during my first period of fieldwork in 1997, and one more during my second period of fieldwork in 1999. I also collected numerous hip hop publications incorporating local Osaka
content, and examined the sutoriito fashhon magazines noted above for examples of how the aesthetic element of hip hop had been appropriated as one of a series of fashion styles. The theme of hip hop is examined in Chapter 9.

1.6 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES
This thesis is an attempt to explore how the global process of modernity is mediated through a specific site (Amerika-mura), helping to continuously redefine the identity of the district and that of the people who move through its streets. In this sense, as noted above, it is an attempt to ‘normalise’ the study of people, places and practices in Japanese contexts by discarding preconceived ‘cultural templates’ and examining specific practices and narratives in their spatial and temporal contexts. It problematises the argument that ‘foreign’ objects become recontextualised in new environments, demonstrating that: firstly, the definition of ‘foreign’ is a subjective one which also includes a wide range of possible interpretations; and secondly, that the very dichotomy situating ‘foreign’ against ‘native’ ceases to have meaning in a context where ‘authenticity’ is constructed around notions other than a perceived common ethnic identity.

This thesis also aims to demonstrate the way in which spatial identity represents a process, a context through which multiple discourses intersect, some seeking to frame and order spaces, others seeking to obfuscate or challenge such attempts. Another goal of this thesis is to show that places are essentially meaning-less, only gaining meanings (and therefore identities) through the practices of individuals and others’ readings of those practices. While these practices include physical acts, they also include verbal and written narratives, in addition to mental images and preconceptions. The thesis also seeks to warn against perfunctory or cursory readings of places, as first impressions will typically overlook the complexity of trajectories and discourses which any singular place mediates. This is not to argue that first readings are any less ‘valid’ than later ones (as there is no ‘ideal level of familiarisation’ with a given place, upon which a ‘valid’ judgment can be made). Rather, it is to propose that hasty labelling of commercial environments such as Amerika-mura as
'shallow', 'superficial' and 'meaningless' link such places to a bleak global process of commodification, and overlook the specificities (histories, discourses and power relations) which all places always retain.
CHAPTER 2

APPROACHES TO JAPAN

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins by exploring historical approaches to the study of Japan. It proposes that the nation has long functioned as an object of exoticisation, spawning a series of discourses constructed around simple dichotomies. The chapter also examines anti-essentialist responses to this phenomenon, and proposes that the notion of modernity, rather than culture, may be deployed in an attempt to understand ground-level responses to historical change at specific sites within Japan. The next section of the chapter presents two case studies which explore significant moments in the history of Japan’s modern experience, and examine their significance in reconfiguring the relationship between the individual and space. The final section considers the theories of Japanese urban sociologist Yoshimi Shunya (1987, 1994, 2000), exploring historical engagements with the notion of ‘America’ in Japan and the spatial dynamics of Tokyo entertainment districts during the twentieth century. Yoshimi’s theories are discussed in an attempt to identify how processes of historical change have influenced the identity of specific urban sites in Japan and the practices performed within them.

2.2 JAPAN AS LABYRINTH

Long before its (controlled) opening to the West in 1868, Japan has presented itself to outside observers as a type of labyrinth par excellence. Indeed, the adjective ‘inscrutable’ has often been applied in descriptions of Japanese behaviour. Beginning with the notes of Portuguese Jesuit priests in the second half of the sixteenth century, and gaining impetus with the rapid increase in contact between
Japanese and Westerners in the late nineteenth century, observers
have tended to exoticise aspects of Japanese social life and highlight
ways in which they may be differentiated from those in Western
nations. In The idea of Japan: Western images, Western myths
(1996), Littlewood suggests that visitors from Victorian Britain
viewed the nation as a “Lilliputian world” (1996:45). He argues that
popular characterisations of the Japanese in the nineteenth and
twentieth centuries have styled them as either benignly quaint or
threateningly alien, citing the example of turn-of-the-century writer
Lafcadio Hearn’s comment that

‘These and other forms of unfamiliar action are strange enough to
suggest the notion of a humanity even physically as little related to us
as might be the population of another planet’ (1996:48).

2.2.1 ESSENTIALIST DISCOURSES: CRACKING THE
CODE

During the postwar era, a flood of publications has attempted to
‘explain’ Japan, beginning in with the publication of Ruth Benedict’s
(1948) The chrysanthemum and the sword. Countless writers, both
native and foreign, have helped to construct the notion that Japan is a
puzzle to be solved; that if only the secret code is found, or the ‘right’
path followed, an ‘answer’ will be uncovered. At times, the
hyperbole has reached extreme proportions, as in Bernard Krisher’s
foreword to Carolyn Parson’s (1989) collection of portrait
photographs, People the Japanese know:

*The Japanese have the reputation of being inscrutable. (…) However
things are not always as they seem. The Japanese are in fact a
remarkably creative and varied people. You have to peel them, like
an onion, to discover that* (1989:xiii).

As discussed in Chapter 1 above, essentialist perspectives on Japan
have typically adopted one of two approaches. The first attempts to
separate ‘pure’ Japanese practices and values from ‘imported’
 usuallly Western) ones. Here, these are considered almost as oil and
water, coming into contact often, but never truly mixing. The second
suggests that all elements, including ‘Western’ fast-food stores and
punk fashion, become automatically recontextualised upon entering
Japan, and that they are always filtered *a priori* through an
overarching Japanese cultural lens.
A succession of Japanese authors has contributed to the essentialising discourse, the entire project spawning an almost evangelical category, *Nihonjinron* ('Japanology'). In doing so, many of these authors have focused obsessively on the construction of abstract models and the identification of 'key concepts' which attempt to 'explain' Japan. This approach has tended to conveniently overlook or ignore actual practices in specific sites, resulting in a vision of Japan as an internally coherent and homogeneous entity which is “so remote from our own in the West that we have immense difficulty understanding it” (Random 1987:11). In a similar fashion to numerous early anthropologists, an eagerness to map out a kind of template through which to ‘understand’ behaviour has led to a situation where behaviour itself is reduced to a series of ritualised ‘responses.’ Lie (1996) argues that “the belief in Japanese homogeneity continued to be strenuously held by many Japanologists” (1996:7), citing the example of American writer Edwin O. Reischauer (1988).

In *Reinventing Japan: time, space, nation*, Tessa Morris-Suzuki (1998) discusses the work of anthropologist Ishida Eiichirō, and argues that his approach played a significant role in the formation of an essentialist model of Japanese culture. She notes that his approach to the study of Japanese social practices was heavily influenced by his exposure to the work of Western anthropologists, adding that

> What is particularly fascinating about Ishida’s work is the way in which it used ideas deeply rooted in the European nineteenth- to early twentieth-century world view as the foundation on which to build a theory of Japanese uniqueness (1998:73).

Morris-Suzuki (1998) emphasises the significance of the American scholar Alfred Kroeber in the formation of Ishida’s theorising of culture as an organism which could be studied according to scientific principles. In addition, she argues that such a focus on scientific methodology led to “a search for order and pattern” (1998:75), a quest which she views as partly inspired by the theories of Ruth Benedict.

Ishida’s essentialist approach has played a significant role in shaping the way in which Japanese cultural practices have been examined and
interpreted by anthropologists and social commentators during the past fifty years (Lebra 1976) However, the two best-known works to be categorised as *Nihonjinron* are Nakane’s (1970) *Japanese society* and Doi’s (1971) *The anatomy of dependence*. While Nakane structures her arguments around the model of a *tateshakai* (‘vertically hierarchical society’), Doi proposes that the notion of *amae* (‘indulgence’) plays a central role in motivating behaviour in Japanese contexts.

More recently, Joy Hendry’s (1993) ‘wrapping culture’ is an example of a ‘template’ based on the premise of culture as a ‘hidden pattern’. An excerpt from the latter author’s recent work *Understanding Japanese society* (1997) (the title offering a clue to her perspective) illustrates the neat, yet dangerously simplistic theoretical framework through which many of these authors approach behaviour in Japanese contexts:

The aim [of the book] is to introduce the world as it is classified and ordered by Japanese people. *The reader is asked to suspend his or her own judgements and assumptions about how people should or should not order their lives, and imagine how a Japanese might see things differently.* There is, of course, great variety in Japanese society, (...) but just as Japanese people learn Japanese as their first language, they also learn to classify the world in a Japanese way, and they learn to perceive things from a Japanese point of view (1997:2). (italics added by the researcher)

A further recent example of narrow and simplistic readings of cultural practice within Japanese contexts is the exploration of the Japanese *depāto* (‘department store’) by Canadian anthropologist, Millie R. Creighton (1992). In her analysis, Creighton views the Japanese department store as a context in which ‘West’ and ‘East’ are juxtaposed, arguing that

As the progeny of both a Western and Japanese heritage, depato market the goods and arts of the West and East side by side. This dual role reflects a deep truth about Japanese culture. The juxtaposition of Japanese (*wa*) and Western (*yō*) has long been essential to the Japanese sense of self. Japanese identity is defined in large part oppositionally (1992:55).

Creighton’s (1992) argument not only implies that there is something which can be described as a ‘Japanese sense of self’, but also
presumes that all Japanese individuals construct their identities in opposition to an ostensibly distinguishable and commonly interpreted 'West'. Her approach does not begin to address the diversity and complexity of practices and interpretations within specific contexts. Relying on a simple 'West' versus 'East' dichotomy, it ignores or overlooks the ways in which flows of specialised meaning (such as musical or artistic scenes) construct discourses which link practices in Japan with those in other geographical contexts. Her approach also fails to allow for historical change, and incorporates all of the basic difficulties found in essentialist writings.

Creighton's (1994) essay on the marketing of children's entertainment in Japan suffers from similar assumptions and generalisations. Here, she examines how department stores and specialised children's play facilities use a variety of techniques which blur the boundaries between education and entertainment. Creighton intersperses her discussion with a series of blatant and simplistic assumptions, including her reference to "the general importance placed on belongingness in Japanese society" (1994:46). She further claims that "Japanese consumer behaviour is coded in the metaphor of a host/guest relationship" (1994:48), adding that "Even the Japanese word for customer, okyakusan, is the same word used for guests to a household" (1994:48). Such comments presume a homogeneous cultural mass, in which all aspects of behaviour (including speech) are performed and read according to a shared code, irrespective of subject position, and regardless of historical or spatial context. This is a world in which multiple discourses, fragmented identities and global flows of information and ideas are reduced to bland stereotypes. It reflects an approach to the study of complex sites which stubbornly fails to move beyond the limiting frame of essentialism, simply substituting the notion of 'society' for that of 'culture.'

A preoccupation with the notion of the 'self' is evident in John Clammer's (1997) work, *Contemporary urban Japan: a sociology of consumption*. Like Hendry (1997) and Creighton, (1992, 1994), Clammer adopts an approach which hovers at the level of 'Japanese society' and rarely descends to the street-level of specific practice. This perspective allows him to make broad, generalised statements
which presume a relatively homogeneous mass, such as his claim that “every Japanese man has a black suit, worn with a white tie to weddings and a black one to funerals” (1997:71). It also leads him to delight, like Hendry, in “quintessentially Japanese” (1997:77) practices such as gift-wrapping.

For Clammer (1997), “an important task in Japanese culture is to dissolve the distinction between having and being” (1997:75), with shopping styled as “an important existential project” (1997:75). He also proposes, like Creighton (1992), that Japan is a context in which the creative juxtaposition of ‘opposites’ is a central aspect of everyday life, constituting “a quality of the Japanese character” (1997:75). Both authors draw upon three of the themes explored in Chapter 1 above, ‘traditional’ Japan versus the ‘imported’ West, Japan as a ‘recontextualiser’ of Western objects and practices, and Japan as a phantasmagoria where disparate elements are juxtaposed in a playful (yet ‘quintessentially Japanese’) pastiche.

Clammer (1997) deals with the issue of global commodity flows by arguing that these do not necessarily dilute a uniquely Japanese approach to consumption, proposing that “Japanese can plunder the network of international trade in order to support an affluent but still unmistakably Japanese lifestyle” (1997:95). He even suggests that Japanese reproduce a sense of cultural identity through “markers of everyday Japaneseness” (1997:98) such as eating ‘Japanese’ food, as “no one goes to ethnic restaurants all the time” (1997:98). At every phase of his argument, Clammer, like Hendry (1997) and Creighton (1992, 1994), implies the existence of a Japanese cultural template, and refuses to adequately examine localised practices, or global flows.

2.2.2 ANTI-ESSENTIALIST RESPONSES

Nevertheless, the past two decades have seen the emergence of a critical discourse which seeks to deconstruct such essentialist notions of Japanese identity. While certain authors have challenged the premises upon which essentialist theories have been developed (Miller 1982, Mouer and Sugimoto 1986, Dale 1986, Yoshino 1992, 1997), others have concentrated on specific practices to demonstrate
the internal diversity within a supposedly homogeneous cultural milieu. The former group of critics typically propose three major flaws in the body of work sometimes referred to as ‘Japanology’. The first argues that attempts to formulate models of ‘Japanese’ behaviour lead to an obsessive ‘matching’ process through which ethnographic data, when used at all, is presented as ‘proof’ that the template exists. Here, the presumption of ‘a Japanese way’ or ‘a Japanese point of view’ is viewed as colouring and constraining any exploration of the diversity of practices which make up real lives in real places throughout Japan.

The second major difficulty with Japanology identified by its critics is its purported lack of historicity, producing what Miyoshi and Harootunian (1989) describe as:

>a conception of Japan as a signified, whose uniqueness was fixed in an irreducible essence that was unchanging and unaffected by history, rather than as a signifier capable of attaching itself to a plurality of possible meanings (1989:xvi).

Rather than viewing the cultural milieu as a fluid construct, in which ‘closures’ and ‘openings’ create a dynamic environment which permits and depends upon change, contingency and mobility, critics argue that the essentialist approach implies that the Japanese operate according to a timeless code to which they are doomed to conform. There is a suggestion, they propose, that the Japanese cultural template suddenly appeared at some unspecified point in the past, or that it evolved up to a certain point and then, for an unspecified reason, solidified into a fixed form which persists to the present day.

The third major flaw in essentialist approaches to Japanese cultural practices identified by critics is its inability to cope with the complexity of flows and relationships which not only differentiate a purportedly homogeneous Japanese cultural milieu from other cultural contexts, but which connect it to those contexts. This criticism implies that ‘Japan’ cannot be taken as the sole or overarching framework through which to examine specific social practices within Japan. It also recognises the possibility that a multitude of other ‘fields of meaning’ may link practices in Japan with those in other countries.
In his review of *Nihonjinron* theory, Harumi Befu (2001) proposes that it sets up a “hegemony of homogeneity” (2001:i), which functions as a type of “civil religion” (2001:105). Distancing himself from what he views as a judgmental tendency in critiques of *Nihonjinron*, he argues that this body of theory should be “considered a cultural phenomenon to be subjected to anthropological analysis, just like shamanism, kinship structure, or ethnicity” (2001:13). Nevertheless, he does not view the development of an essentialist discourse on national identity as unique to Japan, arguing that it should be compared with similar phenomena in other cultural contexts (2001:13).

As noted above, a second group of authors have responded to essentialist discourses by exploring how notions of difference are played out in Japanese contexts. Key examples include Anne Allison’s (1994) *Night worker* and Sato’s (1991) *Kamikaze biker*. Through detailed examinations of the lives and narratives of individuals in a wide variety of geographical and social contexts, they have helped to construct an alternative perspective of Japan which foregrounds practices, not structures. Rather than enumerating common cultural norms, these works explore the wide variety of ways in which individual lives engage with such norms, at times consolidating, ignoring, rejecting or altering them. The only difficulty, as noted in Chapter 1 above, is that by concentrating on ‘peripheral’ or ‘marginal’ groups, such studies tend to overplay the elements which differentiate them from an implied ‘mainstream society.’

### 2.3 Through and Beyond Essentialism: Japanese Discourses of Modernity

Different interpretations of the notion of modernity have played an extremely influential role in shaping notions of Japanese cultural identity. These interpretations have tended to cluster around two positions. The first position in this debate views modernity in opposition to culture. This position is founded on a simple dualism, contrasting a timeless and authentic ‘traditional’ Japanese culture with a ‘modern’ Western lifestyle which is chaotic, fragmented,
superficial and morally corrosive. Here, the pursuit and display of material goods becomes symbolic of hedonism and loss of culture. This perspective reflects the first type of essentialist cultural argument discussed above.

The second position views modernity as vehicle through which culture may be mediated and redefined. It argues that it is possible for Japan to modernise in a material sense without necessarily sacrificing its ‘intrinsic values’ in the process. Here, a uniquely ‘Japanese modernity’ becomes possible. This perspective views culture and modernity as coexistent, and deeply interrelated. Consumption per se does not threaten culture, as the practices involved are already imbued with culture-specific frames of reference and interpretations. This position sets up the possibility of multiple modernities. As such, it became prevalent during the interwar years, when Japan faced the dilemma of “reconciling modernity with tradition” (Hanes 1996:129). It constituted an important element in nationalist rhetoric which sought to promote economic and military development while crafting an increasingly elaborate body of myth around the Emperor and the notion of a timeless, superior Japanese cultural essence. This perspective reflects the second type of essentialist cultural argument discussed above.

A highly influential scholar who wrestled with the dilemma of how to reconcile tradition with technological progress was the ethnographer Kunio Yanagita, whose early interest in the regional diversity of cultural practices in Japan shifted towards an embrace of nationalist discourses during the decade leading up to World War II. Morris-Suzuki (1998) examines the process by which Yanagita came to adopt a unilinear notion of progress in which rural districts were no longer each following their own path towards modernity, but instead considered ‘backward’ in their comparatively slow adoption of singular, national cultural practices. Yanagita came to believe that cultural standardisation was necessary for Japan to function as a strong, modern nation.

What is important to note, however, is the way in which both of the above positions fail to problematise the notion of culture. Both are fundamentally essentialist in nature, the first viewing cultures as
mutually inclusive, the second styling them as each possessing unique resources to incorporate and adapt to change.

2.3.1 MODERNITY AS GLOBAL/LOCAL PHENOMENON

The past two decades have witnessed an increasing sophistication in the examination of social practices in Japanese contexts. This new perspective moves beyond essentialist approaches to culture which view modernity as a threat or an accomplice. Instead, it explores modernity as a global historical phenomenon which provokes a multitude of local responses. While an influential group of Japanese social commentators was calling for an ‘overcoming of modernity’ in 1942, these authors imply that an investigation of modernity itself may assist in the ‘overcoming of culture’ (Harootunian 2000). They explore how responses to change draw upon a multitude of interpretations made by individuals in the course of their daily lives. Such responses need not be collectively categorised as ‘Japanese’ before being examined. While responses to modernity may be framed at the level of formal organisational structures and the nation state, these ‘ideals’ coexist with individual and collective practices, which may derive from interpretations of modernity which are quite different from those imposed or proposed from ‘above.’

A return to the level of practice enables the notion of modernity to be rescued from its culture-loaded nuances. Such an approach permits the investigation of responses to change in specific local contexts without the necessity of deploying an overarching cultural template. It also permits the identification of similarities between responses to modernity which do not employ the notion of local or national culture as key referents.

2.3.2 RESPONSES TO MODERNITY

This thesis is an attempt to contribute to a growing body of discourse which problematises the relationship between culture and modernity in the context of contemporary urban Japan. It is based on an exploration of narratives and practices in a district of central Osaka which in many ways embodies the dichotomy found at the core of
manifested a polarisation around two types of ‘response’, further explored in the next section.

The first type of response centres around the question of how to recapture or recuperate a sense of authentic individual, local or national identity in a world of blurred boundaries, mass production and mass consumption. While this dilemma may manifest itself in various forms of nostalgia, it may be deployed not only in the ‘recovery’ of the past, but also in the ‘creation’ of an alternative present. This type of response entails at least a partial rejection of modernity and the inevitability of chronological ‘progress’. At the national level, it may lead to the formulation of essentialist narratives of identity based on notions of shared values, ethnicity or territory. In the context of the urban milieu, it may manifest itself as a form of ‘urban tribalism’, almost a refiguring of the premodern within the postmodern. It constitutes what Marilyn Ivy (1995) has described as:

>a return to modernity’s before within the future anterior after of increasingly dominant (post)modern regimes of signification, repertoires of consumption, and modes of information”(1995:15).

Here, a yearning for a sense of community based on sentiment, shared perspectives and relatively stable identities typically takes aspects of the premodern as points of reference, if not as outright models to adopt. This response to modernity is constructed around a network of relationships loosely linked through often disparate sites and activities. It invokes notions of sentiment, authenticity and substance in its quest to construct and maintain spatial and personal meaning.

Rather than joining in a breakneck race through time in the pursuit of abstract notions such as ‘progress’, or simply an exciting ‘future’, this interpretation seeks to ignore, or at least suspend the passage of time. It sees the present moment not as a launching-pad for the future, but rather as a context from which to excavate, restore and preserve continuities with a simpler past. Fashion per se is derided or ignored, although this very absence acts as a kind of fashion itself, one element in the expression of shared interests and outlooks.

There are two common narrative tools deployed in this response to modernity. Although differing in perspective, both set up a contrast
between timeless authenticity and placeless consumerism. The first involves narratives which contrast the ‘authentic’ practices of certain individuals in the past with those of the masses in a shallow and meaningless present. Furthermore, it prioritises and valorises a period of time in the past. However, as Ivy (1995) argues in her discussion of nostalgia in contemporary Japan, “the origin is never at the origin; it emerges as such only through its displacement” (1995:22). Here, memory and imagination work to create a sense of a Golden Age which can only be recognised and validated as such after it has already disappeared.

The second involves narratives which contrast the ‘authentic’ practices of certain individuals with the ‘inauthentic’ ones of the masses. It seeks to maintain a sense of internal coherence and ‘deep’ meaning under the perceived threat of stylistic appropriation by individuals and forces associated with the aesthetic, hypermodern approach to contemporary urban life exemplified in the context of fashion. These narratives typically centre around shared interests and outlooks, and are motivated by the desire to differentiate an essentialised self from a fragmented and superficial mass society. Indeed, both of the above types of narrative are attempts to deal with what are seen as the negative aspects of modernity, as symbolised by the homogenising forces of mass media and consumerism. While the first recalls a ‘different’ past, the second constructs a ‘different’ present.

The second response to contemporary urban life is predicated on a notion of progress, where the past is finished, and the present is an ever-mobile context in which to prepare for a future which is always just out of sight over the horizon. This perspective centres around the question of how to compete and distinguish oneself in a fast-paced society in which rapid change is taken as a given, and in which the imperative becomes to stay abreast of, and preferably one step ahead of, the ‘pack.’ Advocates of this response delight in a sense of liberation from notions of essentialised personal and spatial identity. Lifestyles and practices become stylised and commodified, and identities become increasingly fluid. Here, ‘being modern’ involves the pursuit and display of new and fashionable consumer goods, and the urban environment is designed to induce and facilitate
consumption. The individual is motivated to minimise any sense of dissonance between self and other, and there is a prioritisation of the visual and aesthetic elements of urban life.

In this context, fashion (as an expression of the relationship between individual and place in time) takes on a central role. Having begun to play the game, the individual is then obliged to continually move forward, literally and metaphorically forced to 'move on' by the bodies and the eyes of the anonymous crowd. As Stephen Lunn (2002) notes in relation to the 'youth trends' in contemporary Tokyo, "the race is on to have the latest look, hairstyle, make-up" (2002:43). One may stand out from the crowd, but only in certain, implicitly understood ways. And one always runs the risk of being left behind, ignored or, worst of all, derided if one fails to keep up the pace or breaks a rule.

According to this response to the 'modern', urban life is unbearably complex. Meaning is not fixed to any particular place or time, but is fluid and contingent. This state of affairs inspires and necessitates guidance in the form of maps, catalogues and guides, which must be constantly revised as they become obsolete at the very moment of publication. Places and styles become time-sensitive information, are labelled and categorised in order to preclude 'wasted' time and movement. In this type of urban experience, there is an overwhelming prioritisation of the visual, almost at the expense of all other sensory elements. This type of response might be termed 'postmodern', although it is perhaps better thought of as 'intensely modern' or 'hypermodern.'

There are also, of course, a multitude of positions which waver between the two responses discussed above. Such positions seek to maintain a sense of authentic identity while selectively embracing aspects of a 'modern' sensibility.

Paralleling the above discourse is another which does not simply revel in a world of speed, colour and noise, but seeks to frame it, categorise it and control it. This approach is linked to attempts to construct the city as a site of production and consumption, in which the very shape of the urban environment is moulded to maximise
flows of people, information and goods. This discourse takes a number of forms, one involving the reconfiguration of the physical landscape, another involving the framing and theming of that landscape in order to stimulate consumption. Both are examined in the context of twentieth-century Osaka in Chapter 3 below.

2.4 MODERN MOMENTS I: JAPAN

The following section explores two historic contexts illustrating how notions of modernity have developed in Japan during the past century, particularly in relation to notions of urban and national space. The first example examines the shift from premodern to modern notions of space, while the second suggests a postwar transition to the postmodern or ‘hypermodern.’ The first involves a liberation of the individual from an identity and lifepath attached to a delineated space. The second involves a liberation of fixed meaning from space itself, and a decoupling of ‘Japan’ as cultural entity from Japan as geographic territory.

2.4.1 SPACE AND MODERNITY IN MEIJI JAPAN

In his essay, Kikan, kindai, toshi: Nihon ni okeru ‘kindai kikan’ no tanjō (Space, modernity, city: the birth of ‘modern space’ in Japan), Mikio Wakabayashi (1996) explores the radical changes in the nature and role of urban space in Japan during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The collapse of the feudal Shogunate and restoration of the Emperor in 1868 was succeeded by a rapid series of reforms which not only transformed the physical environment of Japanese cities, but significantly altered the relationship between the individual and space in general. Wakabayashi explores how the dismantling of feudal restrictions and the construction of a national railway network helped to construct a sense of homogenous space which could be moved through freely. More significantly, he argues that while feudal Japan was characterised by a match between society and space, the modernisation initiated under the post-restoration Meiji government led to a separation of the two. Suggesting that the introduction of a system of household registration led to a decoupling of the individual from a fixed territorial domain, he proposes that

a distinction was created...between the administrative space within which an individual’s name was recorded and the physical space within individual bodies operated (1996:13).
Whereas cities in the premodern era had been “stages of power” (1996:7) in which “people performed their specified social roles and thereby reproduced the social order” (1996:7), the radical reforms of the late nineteenth century rendered space nominally neutral and liberated individuals from identities inextricably linked to specific sites, restyling them as shimin (‘citizens’) within the broader space of the nation-state.

Wakabayashi (1996) is careful to point out that the above process of modernisation did not advance at an even pace throughout the country, despite the ideal of a homogenous national space. To the contrary, the very notional contiguity which had been constructed between the city and nation at large brought about “a heretofore unknown and extremely powerful dynamic with the city [located] at the centre of the nation” (1996:17). The railway network which connected urban hubs, helped to consolidate and intensify this dynamic, in which the centrifugal pull of the cities as “places which temporally belonged to ‘the future’” (1996:17) led millions to abandon rural areas and the remnants of the restrictive social practices of the past. Wakabayashi highlights the central role of Tokyo in the operation of this dynamic, however notes that other major cities, including Osaka, played similar roles, differing only in degree (1996:17). He further notes how the rail network altered the relationship between time and space within urban areas, making spatially distant parts of the city more speedily accessible than other areas that were geographically closer.

The latter part of Wakabayashi’s (1994) essay explores how the decoupling of space and society led to attempts in Tokyo during the latter years of the nineteenth century to reconnect the two, including the construction of Western-inspired office and ministerial buildings, and the design of modern leisure areas such as Hibiya Park. The purpose here was to create a new sense of order within a seemingly chaotic and fragmented urban environment. However, Wakabayashi argues that all such attempts failed, as they could not embody order or authority in the manner of premodern structures. Such projects could only be interpreted as manifestations of a “spatial distribution of functions within a homogeneous and contiguous urban space” (1996:20).
2.4.2 NOSTALGIA, SPACE AND IDENTITY IN THE POSTWAR ERA: RECONFIGURING THE ‘OTHER’

In *Discourses of the vanishing*, Marilyn Ivy (1995) draws upon Japanese rail travel advertising campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s to explore numerous issues, in particular the relationship between Japan and ‘the outside world’, and the notion of nostalgia. Her treatment offers important insights into the ways in which notions of space and time began to be reinterpreted during this period. The advertising campaigns can be seen, therefore, as both catalysts for change and reflections of changes already underway. The first campaign, Discover Japan, tapped into two dynamics simultaneously, one spatial and the other temporal. It hinted that by journeying to remote places, one could come into contact with a purer, simpler, more authentic Japan. This was a journey through both space and time, to a world untouched by the materialism and pressure of a modern, ostensibly Westernising society. It spoke to the alienation of the office-bound city-dweller, secretly troubled by the sense that something precious had been lost in the postwar rush to rebuild and, later, to fashion a new economic superpower. Ivy identifies how this sense of nostalgic unease was coupled with a more general sense of anxiety which increased in intensity during the 1960s and 1970s, fed by fears relating to military, economic and environmental security. She further notes how such uncertainties prompted “new yet familiar attempts at recovery, both utopian and reactionary” (1995:15).

In her exploration of the 1980s rail travel campaign which replaced Discover Japan, Ivy (1995) draws upon the work of Fredric Jameson (1991) to identify a shifting interpretation of nostalgia among a younger generation of Japanese. She describes how this generation (commonly styled by sociologists as the *shinjinrui*, or ‘new breed’) (*Akurosu Henshūshitsu* 1985; Iwama 1995) had grown up in an environment where imported goods were often more familiar than traditional Japanese ones. Here, there was no perception of loss and desired recuperation, symbolic of Jameson’s “properly modernist nostalgia” (as quoted by Ivy 1995:57). Instead, items old and new, Japanese and foreign, floated as free referents, able to mixed and matched in a playful world of pastiche. Ivy notes how the 1980s
campaign, Exotic Japan, reflected and helped consolidate this shift, suggesting that:

Although referential nostalgia may still dominate much of Japan’s mass culture, the ascendant urban young and trendsetting copywriters and media workers have produced an aggressively evacuated nostalgia: nostalgia as style (1995:58).

However, Ivy (1995) also emphasises the significance of the way in which it reframed Japan. No longer was Japan a nation in which authentic culture only survived in remote pockets, waiting to be (re)discovered before its inevitable extinction. Instead, Japan itself was portrayed as “just like a foreign country” (1995:57), a place where the familiar became the strange. The campaign juxtaposed images of fashionable young Japanese travellers with objects and places in Japan which were linked to historic contact with continental Asia and the West, such as “Chinese-derived festivals” (1995:49) and Victorian dolls (1995:53).

In a similar fashion to Discover Japan, Exotic Japan can be viewed as both a catalyst and indicator of a shift from modernist to postmodernist interpretations of the material and epistemological worlds. On one level, the mooring line which linked present to past was cast away, radically reconfiguring notions of nostalgia from that of desired recuperation of a lost world to that of playful aesthetic experimentation with the material debris left over from past eras. On another level, the dichotomy between Japan=familiar and non-Japanese=strange was inverted, twisted and comprehensively destabilised. The first phenomenon was temporal in nature and effect, undermining attempts to privilege or prioritise historic practices or lifestyles. The second phenomenon was spatial in nature, undermining attempts to delineate and validate specific places, objects and practices in the present as either Japanese or foreign.

Ivy (1995) argues that, in the case of both of the above advertising campaigns, “‘Japan’ endures as the repository of value” (1995:58). I would propose that while ‘Japan’ functioned as a ‘vanishing presence’ in the first campaign, it had become a ‘structuring absence’
in the second. As Ivy notes:

We are led to believe that what is really exotic is a Japan that can montage such disparities with such exciting aplomb. The seemingly indiscriminate cultural mixing and matching that some have taken as the hallmark of modern Japan becomes, in the global matrix of advanced capitalism, the stylish prerogative of an affluent nation (1995:53).

The notions of Japan as ‘vanishing presence’ and ‘structuring absence’ may be deployed in a more general examination of the role of ‘culture’ and modernity in contemporary Japanese life. More specifically, they can be applied to the two responses to modernity which constitute the principal theme of this thesis. While the first can be deployed in attempts to construct and prioritise ‘historical’ practices, places and objects as ‘authentic’, the second can be used to construct and prioritise ‘appropriate’ practices in particular places.

While this section has examined the ‘exoticisation of Japan’, the following section explores the notion that ‘America’ has shifted from an object of imitation and exoticisation to an internalised logic of consumption extending even to urban space in contemporary urban Japan.

2.5 ‘AMERICA’ IN JAPAN: FROM IMITATION TO INTERNALISATION

The United States has played a significant role as ‘Other’ in the formulation of Japanese discourses of identity. Furthermore, the notion of ‘America’ has acted as a locus around which responses to modernity have been constructed during the twentieth century in Japan. Urban sociologist Yoshimi Shunya (2000) has explored this process in his essay, ‘Consuming ‘America’: from symbol to system’. He has also published extensive accounts of the social history of popular entertainment districts (sakariba), which are further discussed in 2.6 below.

Yoshimi (2000) begins his exploration of the historical meaning of ‘America’ in twentieth-century Japan by noting how Tokyo Disneyland, which opened in 1983 on the outskirts of Tokyo, “has been spoken of as “‘America’ in Japan”” (2000:202). He argues that
the "cultural Americanisation of Japan" (2000:202) started much earlier, noting that the middle classes in large urban centres were already being exposed to American consumer goods and Hollywood movies during the late 1920s. He also describes how the mass media of this era carried regular features on American lifestyles and products (2000:203), and notes the role of the fashionable district of Ginza as a stage for the consumption and display of American fashion. He quotes the observations of Andō Kōsei (1929), an early ethnographer who describes the minutiae of the new consumer culture in his *Ginza saiken (Detailed observation of Ginza)*, and notes the prominence of American cultural products. (2000:205) However, he is careful to emphasise that:

the flourishing Americanism in large Japanese cities after the late 1920s was not merely importing American culture but remaking it in Japan. Although 'America' was often said to have swept over Japanese popular culture, the latter was not reduced to dependency on American mass cultural products, but strove instead to naturalize and reinvent them (2000:205).

Yoshimi (2000) argues that in postwar Japan, the notion of 'America' underwent a significant reinterpretation. According to this theory, 'America' shifted from being an ideal to emulate in the 1950s, to a symbol of resistance to established ideology in the 1960s and early 1970s. He explores this process through sociologist Mita Munesuke's (1992) delineation of three periods in postwar Japanese social history. The period from 1945 to 1960, Mita proposes, was characterised by a dichotomy between *riso* ('ideal') and *genjitsu* ('reality'), the period from 1960 until the early 1970s by the opposition of *yume* ('dream') to reality, and the period from the late 1970s by the distinction between *kyokō* ('fiction') and reality (1992:515).

Yoshimi (2000) suggests that 'America' has moved beyond the level of symbol in the last quarter of the twentieth century, and is now "a system of consumption which constructs the Japanese self-identity as consumable, or as something to be colonized" (2000:210). He further argues that the dichotomy between Japan and 'America' disappeared.
during the third period in Mita’s (1992) model, and that this process was not the ‘colonization’ of Japan by American cultural imperialism, nor the mere ‘domestication’ of America into the Japanese context. Throughout the process, Japan has been externalized to the same extent as America has been internalized (2000:220).

Yoshimi (2000) agrees with the approach taken by Ivy (1995) in her examination of postwar railway advertising campaigns, discussed above, paraphrasing her argument that “all of Japan becomes exoticized for the Japanese themselves: here the native itself becomes the foreign” (2000:220). However, this argument suggests that any quest to recuperate a sense of authenticity is futile: there is no longer an ‘Other’ against which a sense of identity may be constructed.

The difficulties inherent within this argument become clearer in the context of Yoshimi’s (2000) discussion of what he terms the “‘Disnification’ of contemporary Japanese society” (2000:215). He suggests that rather than constituting a unique and unusual phenomenon, Tokyo Disneyland, which opened in 1983, symbolises a much wider process through which the urban environment has become dramatised. According to this argument, no longer do people aspire to achieve material comfort, revolutionary goals or utopian fantasies. Instead, they function as actors in staged scenarios, living out their own imagined fantasies and fictions. Yoshimi even proposes that everyday reality in Japan after the 1970s has become an extension of the ‘screen’ created by the media in the same way that [Tokyo] Disneyland is a three-dimensional film. Actually, downtown areas, shopping centers, tourist sites, and even living quarters are indeed losing their depth and width, resembling more and more the flat TV screen (2000:215).

Yoshimi’s (2000) argument parallels that of Donald Richie (2000), who claims that Tokyo is a giant Disneyland, in which all manner of objects float in a world of aesthetic juxtaposition. He proposes that “Japan is the real home of all such concepts as Disneyland has come
to exemplify (sic). To go there is, in a way, to come home” (2000:170). This line of reasoning, however, belies another form of essentialism, discussed in Chapter 1 above, in which Japan is styled as a phantasmagoria. Here, Japan is not exoticised as a mysterious world of unfathomable depth which dares the visitor to unlock its hidden ‘code.’ Instead, it is styled as a place where all aspects of life are reduced to their surfaces, a context where anything and everything is incorporated and stripped of its meaning. Here, Japan does not ‘mystify’ the seemingly familiar, but ‘demystifies’ the strange. Here, depths are reduced to surfaces as the objects of mass consumption.

Yoshimi (2000) and Richie’s (2000) reasoning, like that of the French theorist Jean Baudrillard, is seductive in that it purports to ‘explain’ apparent behavioural tendencies in highly industrialised societies. However, it tends to view the ‘flattening-out’ of meaning as an inevitable and uniformly homogenising process. By focusing on selective examples, such as themed malls, it argues that such environments exert homogenising influences on those who move through them, allowing no room for individual responses and reinterpretations. This type of argument shares similar difficulties to those of cultural essentialists, in that it permits no exceptions, anomalies, hybridity. In short, all inhabitants of (post)modern societies are doomed to eke out meaningless existences between the shiny surfaces of a media-saturated world.

The first problem derives from its failure to address the key issue of the motivation behind consumption. If consumption were truly meaningless, then surely it would not occur in the first place. The second problem is derived from the first, and is based on a presumption of shared motives among visitors to urban environments. This approach also presumes a kind of naive acquiescence and acceptance of a ‘hidden’ commercial agenda according to which pleasure may only be sourced through the purchase of consumer goods. The third problem lies in the inability of this type of argument to address the diversity of activities which take place in supposedly ‘commodified’ environments. For the above reasons, this approach is patently limited in its application to the key themes of this thesis: the multiple responses to modernity and the production and consumption of difference.
Despite his notional embrace of the more radical elements of postmodern theory, Yoshimi (1994, 1997, 2000) nevertheless offers significant insights into the ways in which the project of modernity has been interpreted in twentieth century Japan. His detailed social histories of the sakariba (‘entertainment districts’) of Tokyo in the interwar and postwar eras (explored in 2.6 below) explore shifts in the nature of urban experience. Furthermore, they constitute an example of a discourse which contrasts an ‘authentic’ world of shared sentiment centred on specific physical sites with a ‘staged’ world of performed fashionability which is detached from geographic contexts and innately reproducible.

2.6 THE TOKYO SAKARIBA: MULTIPLE RESPONSES TO MODERNITY

In Toshi no doramaturugii: Tokyo sakariba no shakaishi (‘Urban dramaturgy: a social history of Tokyo’s entertainment areas’), Yoshimi (1987) explores the historical development of four districts in Tokyo. The first area, Asakusa, grew famous for its popular entertainment during the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century, and attracted working-class labourers from provincial areas who had surged into Tokyo during the first waves of industrialisation. By contrast, the second area, Ginza, functioned as a symbol of the moden raifu (‘modern life’) in the late 1920s and 1930s, its red-brick buildings and flashy department store windows symbolising both the outside world and the future (1987:243). It was a place to wander and enjoy the spectacle of the modern street, a practice encapsulated in the term Gin-bura (‘wandering around the Ginza’).

Yoshimi (1987) suggests that Asakusa functioned as a kind of peripheral space of refuge, in which the rural migrants could temporarily forget their disillusionment and ruined expectations of urban life. He argues that Asakusa also operated as a symbolic ‘home’ for those who had left rural areas in search of work and who dared not return in disgrace without achieving some measure of success in the city.
Yoshimi (1987) proposes that while Asakusa was geographically part of Tokyo, at the level of the imagination it lay outside it. He quotes the (undated) reminiscences of Tsurumi Shunsuke, published in 1986:

I couldn’t stand elementary school. I didn’t even go home. When I heard some music coming from nearby a cafe, for some reason my spirits lifted. It was a different world. There was Hyotan Pond in Asakusa, and when I went and sat down beside it, there were other people sitting there, relaxing. They were my friends, you see? I’d become a dropout (1987:245).

As the above quote shows, Asakusa also acted as a kind of portal through which one might journey not only to enjoy a temporary respite from the pressures of urban life, but in order to begin a more permanent exile.

In his comparison of Asakusa and Ginza, Yoshimi (1987) argues that the contrast was not between tradition and modernity, but rather between two different modernities:

Asakusa was also modern, but its modernism was not derived from an abstract notion of ‘foreign=future’, but rather developed of its own accord out of the performances of the people there (1987:246).

Yoshimi (1987) proposes that Asakusa was governed by a dynamic which centred upon notions of sawareru (‘touching/being touched’) and mureru (‘gathering’). This was a place in which the common experience of displacement and nostalgic yearning gave rise to a sense of kyōdōsei (‘commonality’) and shared sentiment. By contrast, he argues, the modernism of Ginza was based on a new dynamic centred upon notions of nagameru (‘watching, looking’) and enjiru (‘performing’). While this dynamic was largely restricted to Ginza during the 1920s, Yoshimi argues that it was not associated with the geographical place itself, and spread rapidly throughout Japan in the decades to follow. In this context, he notes the subsequent rapid growth in shopping areas throughout Japan which borrowed the name ‘Ginza.’

Yoshimi’s (1987) discussion of Asakusa and Ginza is important in that it illustrates the manner in which historical processes of change inspire contrasting responses which shape the atmosphere and activities of urban districts. The processes of modernisation in the
early twentieth century provoked the development of both Asakusa and Ginza as entertainment districts. While Asakusa functioned as a site in which to recuperate a sense of lost identity or construct a new one, Ginza functioned as a site in which to perform a thoroughly ‘modern’ identity through the medium of fashion and conspicuous consumption.

Yoshimi (1987) notes similarities in the case of Shinjuku and Shibuya, which flourished during the postwar era. He describes how postwar economic growth prompted a further wave of migration from provincial districts to the large cities, and that this phenomenon combined with a number of local factors to shape Shinjuku as the centre of a counter-cultural mood in the late 1960s. He points to historic role of the district as a site of ‘marginal’ activities, noting the flourishing prostitution area of Kabukicho, and the yakuza (‘gangster’)-related black markets which sprung up briefly after World War II. He also notes its location as the terminus of several railway lines, which helped to create a chaotic environment in which people of many different backgrounds could mix and congregate without apparent paradox. This was a site ordered by its very sense of instability and juxtaposition. Yoshimi styles it as a place which “had a powerful ability to indiscriminately take in all kinds of people and things while retaining its own unique character” (1987:276).

This very uncertainty acted as one of the key attractions of Shinjuku for young people in the 1960s. Yoshimi (1987) includes the following quotation from the recollections of photographer Watanabe, which hint at the mood of risk and discovery which permeated the district at this time:

‘When you were walking through the area, there was a kind of excited anticipation in just turning the next corner. I felt as though there was something unexpected waiting around the next bend. It was scary, but it was an area full of places that I wanted to go’ (1987:278).

Watanabe’s comments share certain similarities with those of Tsurumi in relation to Asakusa, noted above. For both authors, these districts functioned as a site of discovery, and of crossing psychological as well as geographic boundaries. As Yoshimi (1987) argues in relation to Shinjuku, the district was a place where “people
lose their everyday identities, and can transform themselves into someone else” (1987:278).

In a political climate dominated by debate over renewal of the US Security Treaty, the Vietnam War and the positive and negative effects of the postwar economic ‘miracle’, Shinjuku functioned as a kind of maelstrom of discontent, and was the site of political demonstrations and folk concerts. In addition, it operated as a site of debate and experimentation. Yoshimi (1987) notes the development of a juku bunka (‘Shinjuku culture’), centred around certain cafes which opened during this period. These were frequented by an assortment of left-wing students, young artists, musicians, and hippies. The Akurosu Henshūshitsu (Across Editorial Office) (1995) notes that the latter group was divided into fūten who “had no ideology” (1995:118) and who comprised the majority, and hippies in the Western sense of the term, who advocated social change. The Across Editorial Office (1995) also notes Shinjuku’s central role in the saike (‘psychedelic’) phenomenon during 1968 and 1969, noting the appearance of more than twenty saike-ba (‘psychedelic bars’) in the district. However, it claims that lack of access to LSD and similar drugs in Japan meant that psychedelia ended up being consumed mainly as a style or fashion rather than as an ideology (1995:123).

Both Yoshimi (1987) and the Across Editorial Office (1995) suggest that all of the above groups were typically conflated and referred to as angura bunka (from andaguraundo bunka, or ‘underground culture’), a counter-cultural movement which paralleled certain aspects of similar groups during this period in the United States and Europe. The Across Editorial Office (1995) describes how this group included a wide range of individuals, from unemployed youth to “interi fūten (‘intellectual hippies’), and note that their geographical base was the art cafe Fūgetsudō. This venue “was not divided up like a regular cafe, but took the form of a salon, with round tables permitting a free flow of conversation” (1995:117).

Yoshimi (1987) suggests that the demise of Shinjuku as a site of experimental ideas and fashions was a product of its success, and emphasises the role of the mass media in hastening this process. Rather than spreading the message of anti-authoritarianism and
radical left-wing philosophy to a wider audience, heavy media coverage of the activities of the *angura bunka* appears to have led to a kind of spectacularisation and normalisation of the phenomenon. While its aesthetic aspect helped to ignite a national shift in fashion trends towards casual and rough styles evocative of California, the political agenda of the more radical elements was increasingly seen as unreasonably utopian.

The fourth site explored by Yoshimi in his 1987 work is Shibuya, a district which, like Shinjuku, functions as a transfer point and terminus but which, unlike Shinjuku, does not possess a history as a site of resistance, transgression or experimentation. It is Shibuya which Yoshimi offers as the paramount example of the process of ‘Disnification’ discussed earlier in this chapter. He argues that just as Shinjuku shared similarities with Asakusa, so Shibuya shares common aspects with Ginza. These sites, he proposes, are governed by a logic of performance which is not intrinsic to the sites themselves, a logic which prioritises a shared code of aesthetic valorisation. In *Media jidai no bunka shakaigaku* (‘Cultural sociology in the media age’), Yoshimi (1994) contrasts Shinjuku and Shibuya, arguing that while Shinjuku functioned as a topos where young people went by themselves and gathered, where dramas emerged [from this situation], Shibuya is a space which functions as a stage for the performance of dramas prepared by young people who are already organised into groups [before they come] (1994:202).

Shibuya has developed rapidly from the late 1970s, and is now widely considered as the centre of *wakamono bunka* (‘youth culture’) in Japan. Indeed the whole discourse, further discussed below, now largely revolves around the fashion styles of young people in this district. Alongside the adjoining district of Harajuku, it is commonly featured in tourist and youth-oriented fashion literature as the *hashshinchi* (‘point of origin’, ‘point of transmission’) of the latest trends. Notably, however, these trends are exclusively aesthetic in nature, ranging from the *Shibu-kaji* (‘Shibuya casual’) style of the late 1980s and early 1990s to the ‘Shibuya Girl’ look of the late 1990s.
Yoshimi (1994) notes that there are significant differences in the type of young people who visit Shibuya as opposed to those who congregated in Shinjuku in the 1960s. A large proportion of the latter group consisted of disaffected youth who had come to Tokyo from provincial districts in order to study or find work, many of whom lived in Shinjuku itself (1994:205). However, the majority of the young people who flocked to Shibuya in the 1980s and 1990s were the Tokyo-born children of middle-class families living in the western suburbs of the city (1994:204). This latter group had grown up in an environment in which material affluence was taken for granted, an era unmarked by major political debates in which the mass media reflected and encouraged the development of an increasingly sophisticated consumer market. In this context, he suggests, Shibuya functioned not as a site of ‘resistance’ or ‘revolution’, but rather as the most visible component of a massive media-saturated urban stage.

Mita (1992) shares his perspective, arguing that Since the 1970s, in an urban production on a grand scale orchestrated by capital from the Seibu organization, it has been transformed into a giant amusement park-like space that embodies the hyperreal sensibility in ultramodern fashion (1992:524).

Yoshimi (1994) also points to how the development of Shibuya paralleled the expansion in specialised forms of media, which prominently featured the fashions of young people in Shibuya. Citing early examples of jōhō-shi ('information magazines') such as Pia, launched in 1972, and fasshon-shi ('fashion magazines') such as female-oriented An-An (1970) and male-oriented Popeye (1977), he argues that “urban space became reconfigured as a system of symbols at the level of the imagination”(1994:205). Further, he proposes that these magazines functioned as a kind of script for young people, as the only means of making sense of the modern city of Tokyo, without which it was impossible to understand its complexity, instructing them in relation to where to go and what they could do there (1994:204).

Paralleling his later argument in relation to Disneyland, he argues that this process weakened the importance of yūkiteki-na kankei ('organic relationships'), transforming Shibuya into a site in which movements through urban space were increasingly mediated through engagement
Summarising his discussion of the four entertainment districts, Yoshimi (1994) proposes that Asakusa and Shinjuku function as sites in which dramas are played out by individual actors and where events preserve their distinctive features. In these contexts, he suggests, symbolic differentiation does not take place and disparate elements naturally come to be equalised as “A=B=C” (1994:212). By contrast, Ginza and Shibuya operate as sites in which a mechanism already exists according to which (...) the various symbolic elements of the urban [environment] become condensed into a number of styles, and meaning is attached through a process of differentiation (1994:212).

This process, he argues, leads to a pattern of exclusion, through which undesirable elements are filtered out and ignored. According to this logic, A, B and C remain distinct (1994:212).

Mita (1992) agrees with Yoshimi’s (1994) notion of “frames of exclusion”, arguing that in places like Shibuya, “things exist...on condition that they be ‘cute’, ‘happening’, ‘smart’ or ‘beautiful’” (1992:524). He provides the following example to illustrate this process:

One of the hot dreamers of Period II [the Dream Period from 1960 to the early 1970s, as discussed above], Yamao Sansei, a poet and a charismatic hippie leader, moved to the southern island of Yakushima and became a farmer. He visited Tokyo every year or so, but never changed his style of ragged jeans and boots. By the late 1970s that style was heresy, yet one could still be proud of the acknowledged heresy. But in the Tokyo of the late 1980s, at least in the eyes of the Shibuya scene, he could only feel ‘out of it’. The amusement-park space senses something in those ragged jeans and boots with which it will not coexist. That is the smell of earth, the smell of sweat (1992:525).

This example suggests that the period from the late 1970s onwards has been one in which young people have ‘filtered out’ elements which do not match purely aesthetic sensibilities that have been totally shaped and manipulated by media forces. However, it fails to address numerous issues. Firstly, ‘frames of exclusion’ are not a new
phenomenon, nor are they a modern or Japanese phenomenon. It is possible to argue that individuals and groups throughout history have deployed a variety of tactics to physically or psychologically 'exclude' people or practices which they judged to be 'undesirable'.

While the increased sophistication of marketing strategies may have shaped the way in which these forces have manifested themselves in the case of Shibuya, it would be dangerous to suggest that they did not exist prior to Mita's (1992) 'Fiction Period'. Indeed, a neatly-dressed, perfume-scented and demure young woman may have felt equally 'excluded' among Yamao and his hippies in the late 1960s. Secondly, and importantly, it does not recognise that the parameters of such 'frames of exclusion' may be narrowed or widened by individual 'actors', and that the very definition of what is to be included or excluded is constantly open to negotiation. Here, attempts by the media or commercial enterprises to style a new product as 'cute' may be ignored or derided by the target audience.

Nevertheless, Yoshimi's (1994) concept can be deployed in an examination of what Debord (1996:18) terms 'psychogeography', referring to the way in which places provoke particular kinds of psychological response. However, as noted above, it is important to emphasise that places in and of themselves do not provoke such reactions, but rather the individual readings of that place. As such, the same site may be interpreted as 'safe', 'dangerous', 'quaint' or 'cool' by different actors. For this reason, the 'frames of exclusion' are not imposed by others, but read into situations by individuals. In addition, attempts by others to exclude an individual may be ignored, accepted, parodied, or resisted. A discussion of how this concept is played out in my fieldsite of Amerika-mura is included in 7.3.1 below.

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter began with an overview of historical trends within the body of writing on Japan, concentrating on the influence of the postmodern 'turn' on the notions of 'Japanese culture'. It was suggested that an examination of how the global phenomenon of modernity has been interpreted in specific historical and geographical
contexts may provide an avenue for the resolution of inherent difficulties within essentialist approaches to this subject. The ‘modern moments’ section presented examples of how the project of modernity has reconfigured the relationship between individual and space, at both physical and imaginary levels. The latter part of the chapter examined the notion of ‘America’ at both of these levels, before discussing both themes in the context of Tokyo entertainment districts. The next chapter concentrates on the variety of ways in which the project of modernity has been interpreted within the context of Osaka, location of my fieldsite of Amerika-mura (‘American Village’).
Plate 2.1: Map of Japan.
CHAPTER 3

OSAKA AS MODERN CITY

3.1 INTRODUCTION
This chapter begins by exploring aspects of the regional discourse of identity known as Osakaron ('Osaka-ology') or Osakagaku ('Osaka Studies', noting elements which construct local stereotypes. It further investigates how these reproduce certain aspects of the wider discourse of Japanese cultural identity examined in Chapter 2 above, commonly styling not the 'West', but Tokyo, as the 'Other'. Particular attention is placed on narratives of Osaka fashion, useful in understanding the construction of my fieldsite of Amerika-mura as a 'centre of youth culture'. This section is followed by one which continues the theme of 'modern moments' from Chapter 2, exploring two contexts in which notions of modernity have been interpreted in twentieth-century Osaka. The first example concentrates on the notion of modernity as progress, while the second explores the notion of modernity as dream. The next section of the chapter begins by discussing narratives which contrast the two 'hubs' of modern Osaka, Kita and Minami. This section is followed by an examination of the historical development of the latter district, which includes my fieldsite of Amerika-mura. The final section of the chapter begins an approach to the fieldsite by examining how it is framed in tourist discourses, reflecting on how these discourses draw upon aspects of the notions of modernity as progress and dream in a process of framing, exoticising and incorporating.

3.2 REGIONAL DISCOURSES OF IDENTITY
In many ways, the responses to modernity in Tokyo and Osaka during the twentieth century have reflected the broader national debates
discussed in Chapter 2 above. While aspects of an authentic ‘Japanese’ culture have been evoked in response to the perceived threat of a homogenising Western mass culture, so have aspects of an authentic ‘Osaka’ culture been deployed in defense against the perceived threat of a homogenising Tokyo culture. Shibamura (1999) notes the further role of Edo-Tōkyōgaku, a discourse relating to the identity of Tokyo and its predecessor Edo which developed during the 1980s. He describes how Edo-Tōkyōgaku prompted the growth of a wide range of regional discourses of identity throughout Japan, which included Ōsakagaku (‘Osaka Studies’) (1999:131).

Ōsakagaku encompasses a wide variety of material, from formal social histories of the city (Shibamura, 1999) to semi-academic works on the nature of Osaka identity (Kadono et al., 1994; see below). Among the most prominent publications are Ōsakagaku (1994) and sequel Ōsakagaku tsuzuki (1997), popular works by Ōtani Keiichi which claim to explain this “mysterious city filled with riddles” (amazon.co.jp review), populated by “nazo no Ōsaka-jin (‘enigmatic Osaka people’)” (amazon.co.jp review). While this body of theory suffers similar risks as Nihonjinron in creating essentialist stereotypes, it nevertheless forms a pool of ideas which are drawn upon by individuals and civic bodies in constructing local narratives of identity. Describing Ōsakagaku as “a body of study which clarifies the unique attributes of Osaka” (1999:131), Shibamura nevertheless cautions that “it needs to focus on regional characteristics using universal standards if it is to be taken seriously as a field of study” (1999:131). However, he implies that such regional studies offer the potential to help in overcoming a sense that Osaka is lagging behind in its economic and cultural competition with Tokyo.

Osaka no hyōgenryoku (The expressive power of Osaka) (Kadono, Y., Fujimoto, K., Hashizume, S. and Ito, M. (eds.) 1994) includes six round-table debates about the discourse of regional identity and a series of essays which explore themes such as fashion, architecture, advertising and urban planning. In the preface, titled Ōsakaron wo koete (Overcoming Osaka-ology), the four editors express their desire to move beyond common stereotypes, yet find themselves creating new ones in their attempts to define Osaka and its ‘unique’ attributes.

Washida’s (1994) essay on Osaka fashion, noted above, begins with a positive appraisal of Onoe’s list of attributes, and presents a series of photographs taken in my fieldsite of Amerika-mura, analysing the fashion styles of each subject. He argues that while Tokyo fashion styles are typically characterised as ‘total looks’, in which all items are coordinated, a “fiction” (1994:33) has been created where Osaka style is often seen as something designed to “amuse” (1994:33) or to “deliberately make people laugh”(1994:33). In his analysis of the photographs, he singles out cases where individuals use ‘mismatched’ elements, arguing that this is a key element of Osaka fashion. He views ‘contrast’ as crucial, suggesting that “unless the contrast is stark, you can’t call it Osaka fashion” (1994:36). In one case, he notes how one subject is “using fashionable items, but [the overall look is] not fashionable” (1994:36).

Washida argues that the fashion styles of many Osaka people are “difficult to categorise” (1994:36), however notes the common themes of “dohade (‘over-the-top’, ‘super-brash’)” (1994:40), “do no tsuyosa (‘intensity’)” (1994:42) and senchakudo no tsuyoi koto (‘heavy layering’) (1994:43). He argues that the use of contrast and multiple accessories are designed to attract attention, classic symbols
of the Osaka "medachitagari ('desire to stand out')" (1994:42). However, he proposes that this bold use of contrasts is actually a sign of the weakness of borders and barriers in the Osaka environment. While the Tokyo 'look' incorporates a set of linked elements which do not clash with each other, the Osaka 'look' juxtaposes a set of contrasting elements, demonstrating a confidence to ignore stylistic boundaries.

Later in his essay, Washida suggests two more themes which he believes characterise Osaka fashion. The first is poppu ('pop'), a kind of happy and playful sense of experimentation. The second is Ajiasei ('Asian-ness'), a mood reminiscent of bustling mainland Asian market towns, characterised by random mixtures of disparate elements and a certain brash tone.

The notion of Osaka fashion as brash, exuberant, playful and dynamic is commonly drawn upon in characterisations of my fieldsite of Amerika-mura, introduced more fully in Chapter 4 below. According to this discourse, Amerika-mura constitutes a site of 'intensity', where stylistic and aesthetic frontiers are continuously challenged, traversed and redefined. As such, fashion constitutes a salient context in which Amerika-mura is defined as a site where the exhilarating flows and juxtapositions of modernity can be engaged with directly as spectator and participant. This theme is further explored in Chapters 7 and 8 below.

3.3 MODERN MOMENTS II: OSAKA

The following section explores three contexts in which the notion of modernity was shaped in 20th-century Osaka. The first is the radical transformation of urban space effected during the 1920s and 1930s under the direction of mayor Seki Hajime. The legacy of his approach during the postwar era is also discussed. The second is the 1970 World Expo, held in Senri on the northern outskirts of Osaka. This discussion explores the role of the event in both reformulating the relationship between Osaka, Japan and the world, and in celebrating and problematising the notion of 'progress'. The third explores the flourishing local cultural scene during the 1920s, and highlights the development of a youth culture centred around the
conspicuous consumption of new and foreign material goods and entertainment. (A general map of Osaka is provided at the end of this chapter [Plate 3.1]).

3.3.1 RECONFIGURING URBAN SPACE: MODERNITY AS PREROGATIVE

In the publication, *Osaka machi monogatari (Osaka city stories)*, Kuramitsu (2000) explores the history of Osaka’s main boulevard, Midō-suji [Plate 3.2]. This avenue links the twin hubs of the city, Umeda and Namba, and has been called Osaka’s ‘Champs Elysees.’ He begins his analysis by noting how the city’s preeminent role as political and economic centre was usurped by the newly-renamed Tokyo following the Meiji Restoration of 1868. He then charts the modernisation of the city during the Meiji Period of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, noting the construction of Osaka Station in 1874 and subsequent development of suburban and long-distance railway networks. Of particular significance is his argument that Meiji government policies led to the transformation of the formerly lively district of Semba into a “cultureless place devoted to earning money and the pursuit of commercial interests” (2000:222). Kuramitsu’s interpretation hints at the polarisation of responses to modernity discussed above, and this theme is further explored in the context of Mayor Seki’s urban projects below.

Before introducing Mayor Seki, Kuramitsu notes the significance of the 5th Domestic Commercial Fair, held in what is now Tennōji Park for five months, commencing in March 1903. He also notes that Osaka Station was moved six hundred metres east in 1901 in preparation for the fair, this project creating an open plaza in front of the station.

Kuramitsu discusses how environmental problems became the subject of popular concern during the early years of the twentieth century, prompted by the random juxtaposition of factories and residences. He notes how such concerns helped inspire the adoption of a grand urban plan to transform Osaka into a ‘modern’ city. In a project suggestive of later schemes overseen by Mayor Seki, a narrow tram route was widened to create a wide north-south artery. Kuramitsu describes how the project provoked strong resistance from local residents, in
some cases leading to court action. He adds that resistance was nevertheless overcome, and that in the space of three years from 1906, 90 000 square metres of land was bought up, and 1 200 households were moved (2000:223) Styling the project as “enforced major surgery” (2000:223), he notes that “the modernisation of Osaka [thereafter] progressed rapidly” (2000:223).

Kuramitsu notes how progressive incorporation of peripheral districts into Osaka City and the devastating effects on Tokyo of the 1923 earthquake combined to make Osaka Japan’s largest city in terms of population and area by the mid-1920s. He also argues that the city was at the forefront of modernisation in Japan, continuing to lead as a site for the trial of new urban planning strategies. Its reputation in this field was due in no small part to the contributions of Seki Hajime, a lecturer in Transportation and Social Policy at the Tokyo School of Commerce, who was invited to become deputy mayor of Osaka in 1915. Kuramitsu notes how he was later to serve three terms as mayor, from 1924 until his death in 1936.

Seki had a vision for Osaka, and it involved a radical reconfiguration of urban space. He promoted the construction of residential districts on the outskirts of the city, from which workers would commute using a high-speed rail network. Kuramitsu notes how the template for Osaka’s subway network had already taken shape by 1927, with construction beginning in 1931 (2000:224). Of deeper significance was his system of land-use classification, according to which parts of the city were zoned as ‘residential’, ‘commercial’, ‘industrial’ or ‘yet-to-be-classified’ (2000:224).

Nowhere was Seki’s vision more visible than on the roadway that was to become Osaka’s grand central boulevard, Midō-suji. Kuramitsu explores how the project involved the dramatic widening of the existing street and the simultaneous construction of the city’s first subway line (2000:225). He notes how the project, like its predecessor, encountered fierce resistance from local residents. Not only did the engineering work produce noise and vibrations at levels “which would not be allowed today” (2000:225), it produced significant structural damage in adjoining buildings. Furthermore, the project required the purchase of 108 000 square metres of land, the
resttlement of 1,185 residents, and the payment of the then-huge sum of 8.180,000 yen in compensation to landowners (2000:225).

Kuramitsu details how the new boulevard was completed in 1938, following the opening of the new subway line four years earlier (2000:225). He notes how the thoroughfare was neatly partitioned, with footpaths, slow traffic lanes and green strips arranged along each side of the roadway. He also explains how buildings which fronted the boulevard were required to observe a height limitation and that no telegraph poles were allowed to be constructed (2000:225).

Kuramitsu concludes his discussion with a personal appraisal of Midō-suji. Styling it as “beautiful but boring” (2000:227), he argues that it “pales in comparison” (2000:227) with the Champs Elysees in Paris. While conceding that events such as the annual Midō-suji Parade [Plate 3.3] and the Osaka International Women’s Marathon contribute to the road’s “miryokuka (‘appeal’)” (2000:226), he records his wish that Midō-suji will become “more fun” (2000:226).

During the postwar era, urban development policy has maintained certain important continuities with the legacy of Seki. Significantly, the City of Osaka has formulated a series of ‘master plans’ which reflect many aspects of Seki’s modernist vision for the creation of an ordered and efficient city.

The most recent of these plans, the Osaka 21st Century Plan, formally adopted in 1990, maintains an emphasis on the inevitability and desirability of ‘progress’ as a collective goal. However, progress is typically equated with stimulus of the local economy. In the 1987 publication, Osaka: gateway to the future, local economist and current (2002) mayor Isomura Takufumi notes how the 1990 plan envisaged “a complete revitalising of the region through the implementation of several exciting projects” (1987:42). The publication highlights the examples of the 1990 Garden and Greenery Exposition, the new Kansai International Airport (completed in 1997), the development of a ‘Teleport’, “the junction where (...) international data exchange takes place” (1987:44), and construction of Kansai Research Park (completed during the 1990s) (1987:44).
However, the rhetoric of progress as civic ideology is best encapsulated in the following text by the same author:

it is necessary to modify the city. Such schemes must raise the city's amenities so that many people favorably accept urban living and make full use of the city's facilities. Such events as the Garden and Greenery Exposition and the Midosuji Parade awaken the desire of many to improve the urban environment, and give them the motivation to enjoy the city’s sights and sounds and participate in festivities. The physical act of shaping the city to improve its environment generates employment opportunities. More than that, however, it can encourage people to the city, stimulate their consumption, and thus expand business (1987:45).

Here, the city represents a malleable context where government and business are invited and expected to create an environment in which people are motivated to ‘enjoy’ the urban spectacle and, most importantly, to consume.

In a recent public address, Mayor Isomura emphasised Osaka’s historical role as a site of contact with other countries. Noting that annual visitor numbers had exceeded 100 million for the first time, he expressed his desire that Osaka would become an international city on a par with New York, London and Paris. The City of Osaka website, which includes the above speech, highlights the city’s historic role as an “international cultural crossroads.” It also hints at a uniquely Osaka modernity, arguing that “with an abundance of cultural influences, Osaka has always been a catalyst of new Japanese culture” (http://www.city.osaka.jp/english/glance/index.html). The site features information on a number of events and projects, including the annual Midō-suji Parade noted above, and the development of a promenade along the Dōtombori canal. The description of the parade, the theme of which is “bringing the world together”, includes the following appeal:

We hope that many participants both from within Japan and from all over the world will join us to contribute to revitalizing Osaka and transforming it into a “World City”. Our goal is to succeed at several huge projects planned for Osaka in this new century aiming at the creation of an international cultural city that has its doors wide opened to the world. (http://www.city.osaka.jp/english/events/event_parade.html)
This approach seeks to reconfigure the city as a site of discovery and an object of consumption not only for visitors, but also for those who already live there. Tourist literature constitutes the most obvious example of this process at work, and is further explored in 3.5 below). However, staged local events and projects sponsored by government and corporate bodies also act as vehicles for the transformation of the familiar into the exotic and consumable. Seki’s project was derived from a vision of the ‘modern’ city as an environment in which ‘order’ was imposed on space through physical reconfiguration. Here, the peripheral, the strange, the unusual was pushed aside to make way for a clean, efficient and prosperous city. However, local government and tourism discourses in the 1990s no longer sought to ignore or exclude all such elements, but instead aimed to exoticise and incorporate some of them. This approach reflects an attempt to differentiate Osaka from other ‘destinations’, to spectacularise its environment for its own residents, and to define and control the use of urban space. Here are twin discourses which in some ways reflect aspects of Ivy’s ‘Discover Japan’ and ‘Exotic Japan’, discussed in Chapter 1 above. While a more traditional discourse lists and describes tourist ‘sights’ such as Osaka Castle, marking them off from the surrounding urban environment, a more radical discourse reconfigures the whole city as an exoticised site of ‘exploration’.

Few sites reflect the contiguity of all of the above discourses more vividly than my fieldsite of Amerika-mura, introduced in Chapter 4. This is a place in which attempts are made to impose order in a ‘chaotic’ environment, a place named, framed and listed among Osaka sights alongside its castle and the newly-opened (2001) Universal Studios Japan on the outskirts of the city, a place reconfigured in the broader context of an ‘exciting’, ‘vibrant’ and ‘energetic’ city.

The latter part of this chapter further explores the ways in which Osaka and Amerika-mura are presented in contemporary tourist literature. However, it is important to firstly examine two key examples which illustrate ways in which the ‘new’, the ‘foreign’ and the ‘different’ have been framed in Osaka during the twentieth century.
3.3.2 FROM FAIR TO EXPO: MODERNITY AS DREAM

As noted above, Osaka had undertaken major urban redevelopment projects in preparation for the 5th Domestic Commercial Fair of 1903. Hashizume Shinya describes how it showcased not only domestic products, but included pavilions featuring goods from fourteen foreign countries. He argues that despite its moniker, the event represented an international exposition (2000:125). He also argues that its emphasis on asobi (‘fun’) distinguished it from previous such events, its rides and attractions reflecting a “trend towards the yūenchika (‘amusement park-isation’) of expositions” (2000:126). These attractions included a ‘Round-the-World’ Pavilion. Hashizume notes how the entrance to the pavilion was styled as the Port of Kobe, a historic point of contact with foreign lands, and visitors were taken on a journey through thirteen scenes depicting foreign lands before ‘returning’ to Japan (2000:126).

Shibamura emphasises that the Fair was the first of its kind to attract foreign participation, and that it was Japan’s first true exposition, attracting over five million visitors, a fivefold increase on previous numbers (1999:9). He also discusses how city authorities were concerned about the impressions of foreign visitors, noting the introduction of a pay-by-distance rickshaw system, a drive to improve business practices, and a prohibition of any form of nudity on city streets. Such campaigns, he argues, incited a large number of “cynical complaints” (1999:9) among local residents. He also suggests that the very presence of large numbers of foreigners in the city incited a temporary transformation in the atmosphere, quoting Mayor Tsuruhara’s remark that “with the many foreign visitors, the whole city of Osaka has become an exposition site” (1999:9). It is difficult to gauge from this comment whether the mayor was referring to the perspective of the visitors discovering both the Fair and the unfamiliar city beyond, or that of the locals for whom the once-familiar city had become filled with strange beings.

Almost seven decades later, Osaka again played host to an exposition which helped redefine attitudes towards modern technology and relations between Japan and the outside world. This was the 1970 World Expo, held in the city from March to September 1970.
Shibamura (1999) notes that the exposition was organised and operated as a “national project” (1999:110), despite the role played by Osaka local government authorities and commercial groups in securing the event. He notes their belief that the event would significantly boost the flagging local economy, also benefiting from the enhanced profile of Japan achieved through the 1964 Olympics (1999:110).

Shibamura explains how the exposition marked approximately one hundred years since the beginning of modernisation in Japan, and was also the first of its kind to be held in Asia, both aspects being emphasised in promotional activities (1999:111). More significantly, the theme of the exposition was fixed as Jinrui no shimpo to chōwa (‘Progress and harmony for mankind’) (1999:111). Shibamura notes how this theme responded to increasing concerns regarding the detrimental environmental effects of technological progress, while expressing “the Eastern spirit of wa (‘harmony’)” (1999:111).

However, as Shibamura notes, those involved in preparations for the exposition included a large number of anti-authority figures, including “avant-garde artist” (1999:111) Okamoto Tarō, who acted as chief producer of the various themed pavilions, and who constructed the symbolic Taiyo no To (‘Sun Tower’). His comments suggest that the meaning of progress, and the implications of the entire project of modernisation, were increasingly open to serious debate. Further, they illustrate a narrative response to modernity aimed at remembering and recuperating something lost. This is not a call to a ‘pure’ Japanese culture, but a more general evocation of the premodern and tribal world:
I’m opposed to the theme ‘progress and harmony’. Humanity hasn’t made any progress at all. (...) As for progress, everyone’s slowly killing themselves, all bowing to each other, following the script. This harmony where everyone’s used to the status quo is appalling. (...) If we want harmony, first we have to fight for it. That’s why [I built] the Sun Tower. It’s clear that the expo site is overflowing with modernism (‘modernism’). Against that backdrop, it was necessary to resolutely plant something which would be viewed as completely opposed to that, [something] from the remote past, [something] that would not harmonise at all with its surroundings (quoted from the journal Geijutsu Shinchô by Shibamura 1999:112).

Shibamura notes how Expo was described as a “laboratory for the city of the future” (1999:115), citing the site’s open spaces and waterways, moving walkways and escalators and fully air-conditioned pavilions. He also notes how the pavilions featured aspects of an imagined future lifestyle incorporating the latest technology, and the topical theme of space travel, citing the example of the United States pavilion and its display of moonrock (1999:115). While locating Japan within an international discourse of progress which was itself increasingly viewed with suspicion, Expo ’70 also promoted a form of cultural relativism through the vehicle of national pavilions. Among the most prominent examples was the O-matsuri no Hiroba (‘Festival Plaza’), which featured cultural performances from participant nations (1999:115).

Shibamura documents the series of major urban projects which were undertaken in preparation for the Expo, including the construction of major new road arteries, extension of the subway network, renovation of the district around Osaka Station, and redevelopment of Osaka Castle Park (1999:112). He notes that these projects were viewed in the context of the execution of Osaka City’s latest urban ‘master plan’, and that the symbolic association with the Expo helped in securing the cooperation of local parties whose interests may have been adversely affected (1999:113). He also notes how Osaka City launched a citizen’s movement aimed at “improving public morality and cleaning up the city” (1999:115).
Shibamura notes that the Expo was unprecedented in its scale, with representation from ninety-two nations and thirty-two Japanese local authorities and companies (1999:115). Vastly surpassing expectations, and benefiting from wide coverage in the mass media, the event attracted over sixty-four million visitors, including 1.7 million from overseas (1999:115). In strictly financial terms, the Expo generated over one trillion yen, accounting for 0.53% of GNP for the year 1969-1970 (1999:113). The average number of visits by Japanese was 2.38 times, meaning that a total of more than twenty-six million Japanese visited the Expo, or more than a quarter of the total population (1999:115). From Osaka City alone, 83.5% of ordinary citizens and 99.7% of students visited the event (1999:115).

The Expo was significant not only in terms of its scale, but also because it constituted the first context for many Japanese to directly engage with foreign people and cultural practices. It was held at a time of increasing affluence before the onset of the age of mass overseas travel, in an era marked by mixed feelings of hope and uncertainty regarding the future. As such, it marked a significant moment in the history of modernity in Osaka and the nation as a whole. In retrospect, it marked the pinnacle of a vision of progress as national project and prerogative. As Shibamura notes, in the years to follow, “people’s ‘dreams’ began to follow different paths” (1999:117). Tsuzuki Kyōichi (2000) echoes his sentiments in the preface to his photographic retrospective on the Expo, Instant future, claiming that “those were just about the last days we actually still believed that a bright, beautiful future was coming” (2000:5).

3.4 COMPETING MODERNITIES WITHIN OSAKA

Differing responses to modernity have also been played out during the twentieth century within Osaka itself, shifting between a desire for order and efficiency and a delight in chaos, juxtaposition and indulgence. The clearest example of this phenomenon is the discourse of difference between the twin hubs of Minami (‘South’) (which includes my fieldsite of Amerika-mura) and Kita (‘North’). Osaka’s twin hubs, Kita and Minami, are linked by Mido-suji, the broad thoroughfare built by Mayor Seki in the 1930s which functions as Osaka’s ‘main street’. Kita is centred on Osaka Station in Umeda, and includes the terminals for Hanshin, Hankyū and JR (Japan
Railways) lines, in addition to three subway stations. Minami is centred on no fewer than six separate Namba Stations, including the Nankai and Kintetsu rail terminals, three subway stations and a new JR terminal.

Although both districts function as sites of transit, they differ markedly in terms of historical development, built environment, pedestrian movement and commercial activity. Aspects of these differences are explored in Doi Tsutomu’s (1994) article comparing the two areas. As he notes, Kita began to develop during the Meiji Period with the construction of the National Railways (now JR) terminal and the Hanshin and Hankyū railway terminals and department stores. Importantly, as noted by Matsushita (2000), Kita was also the site of Japan’s first integrated ‘terminal department store’ in 1927, which combined the Hankyū department store and suburban rail terminus (2001:249).

By contrast, the area known as Minami has a much longer history, both as a site of trade and as an entertainment quarter. Known as Nanchi Gōka-gai, the area began to prosper during the Edo Period, particularly following the construction of Dōtombori canal (to the immediate south of present-day Amerika-mura) in 1612 (Doi 1994:14). Prior to the silting up of the river area, the area to the immediate south and west of present-day Amerika-mura, known as Horie, operated as the city’s port. In common with other ports and sites of trade, Minami has also long possessed a reputation as a site of indulgence and irreverent behaviour, ranging from prostitution to gluttony, the latter illustrated in the frequent use of the term kuidaore (‘eat till you drop’) in reference to the somewhat seedy and raucous eating-houses along Dōtombori popularised in tourist literature. In short, it is a place of flux which embodies the paradoxes of modernity more than any other part of Osaka.

As Doi (1994) notes, while the majority of pedestrian movement in Kita takes place either vertically within office buildings [Plate 3.4] or horizontally in underground shopping malls [Plate 3.5], Minami largely operates at ground level (1994:15). Characterising the latter as a site of high kaiyuisei (‘excursivity’), he points out that
Pedestrians may enjoy looking at the external face of buildings. They can see the sky and feel the wind. There is [also] the advantage that the city has a day face and a night face. Further, one can wander around and experience its *meiroteki-na tanoshimi* ('labyrinthine pleasures'). [And] one has to use the footpaths, weaving crablike between parked vehicles (1994:16).

Writing in 1973, Suzuki Jirō points to significant differences in the type of people who frequent Kita and Minami. Styling the former as a postwar creation, he views it as site which is "convenient for tourists and office workers" (1973:182). While Kita is designed to facilitate movement, Minami appears to obfuscate it. While Kita is designed to be moved through, Minami is there to be moved around. Doi (1994) views the two hubs as complementary, creating a balance which contributes to the "miryoku (‘appeal’)" (1994:16) of Osaka as a whole. However, he is careful to point out that simple distinctions between the two district can be misleading, later claiming that the underground malls of Kita also possess a "meirosei (‘labyrinthine quality’)" (1994:16). And just as Kita incorporates elements of the randomness of Minami, so Minami includes aspects of the orderliness of Kita, examples including the gleaming department stores of Shinsaibashi, and the Big Step complex within Amerika-mura itself. Consequently, Doi’s discussion points not so much to absolute differences in the nature of the built environment and activities within each of the two hubs, but rather to two forms of urban experience which are respectively more dominant in each.

Kadono Yukihiro (1990) also theorises the differences between Kita and Minami in his essay, ‘*Interia-toshi Osaka*’ (‘Interior city Osaka’). Sharing certain aspects with the arguments of Washida (1994) in relation to Osaka fashion (introduced in 3.2 above), Kadono suggests that a weak consciousness of boundaries in Osaka has allowed for a creative and playful blurring of the distinction between public and private space. He argues that while Kita contains numerous examples of the ‘exteriorisation of the outside’, Minami includes many cases of an ‘interiorisation of the outside’. While Kita has an indoor mall which contains a river and another with a ceiling depicting the sky, Minami has places such as Dōtombori [Plates 3.6, 3.7] and my fieldsite of Amerika-mura, where magnified versions of indoor
objects (such as dolls) adorn the outside of buildings (Kadono et al 1994:59).

3.4.1 MINAMI: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

During the Tokugawa Period (1612-1868), Osaka functioned as the centre of trade between Japan and the outside world, and Minami was the gateway. As such, it has long possessed a lively and chaotic atmosphere, in which people and goods have mixed relatively free of contradiction or regulation. L Magazine editor Nakashima Jun notes that my fieldsite of Amerika-mura already functioned during this era as a site where “people, goods and information [flowed] back and forth” (http://www.kanken.or.jp/kashi/259/04.html). He describes how the central part of the district was called Sumiya-machi (meaning ‘charcoal dealer area’), and that charcoal from the nearby island of Shikoku was shipped to Osaka and transported up the Dotombori River to be offloaded and traded there.

The Minami district also has a long history as a site of consumption. Hashizume (2000) notes that Shinsaibashi-suji arcade, now a major retail precinct, began as early as the late seventeenth century as a street to wander through which linked the pleasure quarters of Shinmachi with the theatre district of Dōtombori (2000:229). He also describes how retail stores already existed in 1679, and documents how the street’s proximity to the port led it to function as a site in which locals and visitors could come into contact with new and foreign goods. As early as 1898, one commentator was prompted to claim that the entire area was like “‘one giant marketplace’” (quoted in Hashizume 2000:232) Hashizume describes the role of kanshōba, large-scale retail centres in which goods were categorised and arranged in a novel manner which in many ways acted as a template for the modern department store (2000:232).

Shinsaibashi-suji and Dōtombori continued in this role during the Meiji (1868-1912) and Taishō (1912-1926) Periods, and formed the centre of a vibrant consumer culture during the 1920s. In the wake of the 1923 Kantō Earthquake which devastated Tokyo, Osaka briefly took on the mantle of centre of popular culture in Japan. Hanes (1996) and Hashizume (2000) note that Osaka led the way in Japan in adopting a series of ‘modern’ commercial innovations, from the
department store to mass marketing campaigns, and nowhere was this phenomenon more visible than in Minami. Hashizume (2000) notes how the new subway and suburban rail lines greatly improved access to the district, which saw the appearance of “American-style stores” including the massive Tampei House, an “American-style drug store” in 1924 (2000:233). He notes how this site, which even included a soda fountain, became a popular gathering-place for artists and bunkajin (‘cultured people’) (2000:233).

Shinsaibashi arcade also helped to inspire a new form of engagement with urban space during the interwar years, encapsulated in the term Shin-bura (‘wandering around Shinsaibashi’) (2000:232). This term was derived from Gin-bura (‘wandering around Ginza’), an expression used to refer to the flâneur-type movement of visitors to the retail centre of Tokyo described by Yoshimi (1987) in 2.6 above. No longer simply a point of transit or a place to view and engage with new and foreign goods, it was now a destination in itself, a place to wander, browse and enjoy the modern urban spectacle.

Centred around Shinsaibashi arcade and the cafes and theatres of Dōtombori in the Minami district, the 1920s also saw the emergence of a youth culture which revolved around ‘modern’ notions of fashion and conspicuous consumption. Although only representing a minor element of the urban youth population, the modan boi (‘modern boy’) or mobo and modan ēru (‘modern girl’) or moga symbolised and embodied a new form of urban experience. As such, the mobo-moga phenomenon became the focus of a debate on modernity which ranged from the celebratory to the contemptuous.

Elise Tipton (2000) notes the zealous embrace of the growing cafe culture in Ginza (Tokyo) and Osaka by social commentator Murobushi Koshin (Takanobu) in his 1929 essay ‘Kafe shakaigaku’ (‘The sociology of the cafe’). She describes how Murobushi viewed the new style of cafe as the quintessential symbol of “both a universal and a distinctively Japanese modernity” (2000:120) which represented “youth and the future” (2000:120).

However, during this period, cafe culture, the mobo and moga, and Osaka as a whole, became the targets of criticism for the ostensibly
naive, crass and hedonistic adoption and enjoyment of flamboyant fashion, Hollywood movies and Western material comforts. This discourse was largely based on a fear that such practices might corrode ‘authentic’ Japanese culture, most clearly evidenced in social critic Oya Soichi’s 1929 remark that “Osaka is Japan’s America” (quoted in Hanes 1996:95). However, such criticism may also have been influenced by a certain envy among Tokyo social commentators of Osaka’s relative prosperity during this period, combined with a stereotype (which continues to the present day) that Osaka people lacked a refined sense of taste.

Jeffry Hanes (1996) argues that the criticism which was targeted at the mobo and moga was unjustified. He proposes that conspicuous consumption was only restricted to a very small proportion of the population, and that criticism was prompted by nationalist fears of American cultural colonisation (1996:126). He further implies that the forms of behaviour noted were no more than the most recent manifestations of a tradition of exuberant and raucous conduct in the Minami (‘South’) district of Osaka, which had functioned for centuries as a site of popular entertainment. In relation to cafe culture, Tipton (2000) implies that it functioned as a site around which often contradictory interpretations of modernity were constructed, noting that

Japanese observers failed to agree on a definition of the cafe or on its meaning. They were not even agreed on whether it was Japanese or a superficial imitation of the United States. But they all felt very strongly that it must mean something. So, perhaps it is not inappropriate to evoke the contested nature of the site... (2000:134)

Hanes (1996) suggests that the activities of the mobo and moga did not necessarily represent the adoption of Western values by Japanese youth, but rarely amounted to more than aesthetic imitation of American hairstyles and fashion. In this sense, this brief yet highly visible phenomenon may have constituted an early precedent for the playful experimentation with fashion styles which became a common feature of ‘youth culture’ in the postwar era.

Today, Minami presents two seemingly incompatible faces. Neon signs flicker in grimy backstreets around the major railway hub at
Namba, promising alcohol, peep shows, hostess girls and karaoke, while a stone's throw away elegantly-clad young office ladies shop for jewelry and designer clothing in the department stores on the city's premiere shopping boulevard in Shinsaibashi. This unlikely mixture of sophistication and working-class culture contributes to a somewhat carnivalesque atmosphere, and creates an environment in which the fun element of consumption is highlighted [Plate 3.8]. If Baudelaire had visited modern Osaka, this is where he would have felt most at home, as this is the territory of the flâneur. Operating as a kind of urban stage, this is not a mere transit zone, but a destination, a place to come without any particular objective in mind, a place to spend time and enjoy oneself, and a place to enjoy the act of self-presentation and to be entertained by the self-presentations of others. It is also the home of Yoshimoto Enterprises, the most successful comedy entertainment business in the Kansai region and promoter of the two-man Osaka comic routine known as manzai.

Akin to a giant marketplace, Minami confronts the visitor with a continuous succession of sights, sounds and smells. Its appeal has even been described as deriving from its "doro-kusasa (‘lack of refinement’, lit. ‘smell of mud’)” (Mainichi Shimbun 1994). The same author evokes the mood of the district in the following phrase:

[School girls in] sērāfuku (‘sailor-style school uniforms’) hanging around in 180-yen [approx. A$2.50; cheap by Osaka standards] coffee shops filled with the cigarette smoke belched out by worn-out old men and shop assistants on their breaks (Mainichi Shimbun 1994).

While its malls and arcades function as stages on which to pose and perform, Minami also takes a certain pride in its very crassness, ordinariness and lack of pretensions [Plate 3.9]. The area is characterised by a light-hearted and carefree spirit in which life is never taken too seriously. It was in this somewhat disordered environment that my fieldsite of Amerika-mura began to form around the time of the 1970 World Expo discussed above. Indeed, Amerika-mura must be approached within the context of Minami, as the latter area both encompasses and predates this relatively recent creation. Veteran local identity and disc jockey Mr Mark-E Inoguchi claims that "Amerika-mura is the child of Minami", recalling that the larger
district had been associated with shopping for clothes before Amerika-mura had developed or been named.

3.5 TOURIST DISCOURSES: OSAKA AS SPECTACLE

This final section of the chapter explores numerous examples of how Osaka is presented in mainstream tourist literature, concentrating on descriptions of Minami and my fieldsite of Amerika-mura. It examines how aspects of these areas are exoticised, and how particular sites are constructed as points on an itinerary, or framed as contexts in which the visitor may sample and engage with the ‘strange, the ‘new’ and the ‘foreign’. While my fieldsite is introduced in depth in Chapter 4 below, this section approaches the district assuming no prior knowledge, just as a tourist or first-time visitor might do. The first example is taken from an English-language source aimed at overseas visitors, while the other three examples are taken from popular Japanese-language guidebook series.

3.5.1 THE GLOBETROTTER SERIES

Chikyū no arukikata (Globetrotter, lit. ‘How to walk around the world’) is Japan’s most popular tourist guide series, and was achieving annual sales of over five million copies by the mid-1990s (Chikyū no Arukikata Henshūshitsu (Globetrotter Editorial Office) 1995:2). First published in 1979 by the Diamond Big company, it actively seeks first-hand accounts of specific locations from its readers, incorporating these into future editions. Although primarily aimed at the Japanese market, the series also includes a range of English-language versions.

The 1995 English guide to Osaka and the Kansai region introduces Osaka as a “modern merchant city” (1995:10), dividing its coverage into sections on “The Kita” and “The Minami”. Minami is described as “a town full of vibrant people” (1995:18), and the introduction to the district includes a reference to Amerika-mura as a place where “you can feel the high power energy of the young crowds who fill the boutiques and stores of imported clothes and goods” (1995:18). The section on Minami is divided into “Points of interest”, “Restaurants”, “Shopping” and “Nightlife”, and Amerika-mura introduced in the
“Shopping” column between the highrise Semba shopping centre and the Denden Town electrical district south of Namba station. Its brief description of the district styles it as “a New trendy town for young people” (sic) (1995:24), noting that it is “a haven for those wrapped up in the Osaka fashion scene” (1995:24). It makes no reference to Triangle Park, a popular site at the centre of Amerika-mura, but locates the Big Step shopping complex “at the centre of the village” (1995:24). (Both of the above sites are introduced more fully in 4.5 below).

3.5.2 THE BLUE GUIDE SERIES: AMERIKA-MURA AS ITINERARY

The Burū Gaido (Blue Guide) series is published in Japanese by the Tokyo publisher Jitsugyo no Nihonsha, and includes a series of forty regional guide books (1997) and further series describing accommodation and leisure spots throughout Japan. The motto of its guidebook series is “Kyō kara koko no hito (‘From today, I am local’)” (Burū Gaido Kokunai Shuppanbu (Blue Guide Domestic Publication Department) 1997:back dustjacket). The cover of the 1997 version of its Osaka machiaruki gaido (lit. ‘Guide to walking around Osaka’) promises to introduce thirty-seven kosu (‘courses’, here meaning ‘itineraries’) for exploring the city, which is described in Japanicised English as a “pawafuru taun (‘powerful town’)” (1997:cover). Osaka is divided into a ‘Central Area’, ‘Southern and Eastern Areas’ and a ‘Northern Area’, and my fieldsite of Amerika-mura is included as one of eighteen itineraries in the first geographical category.

The Amerika-mura itinerary introduces the district as “Osaka’s new face filled with lively young people” (1997:72), and proposes a route of 1.5 kilometres which takes in five sites in “approximately thirty-five minutes” (1997:24). A plan is provided, showing the number of minutes taken to walk from one site to the next, and a detailed map shows the route as a red dotted line. Amerika-mura is introduced as part of Minami, an environment of “fierce individualism where there’s no point unless you stand out” (1997:24), reflecting aspects of the sutoriito fasshon (‘street fashion’) discourse explored in Chapters 7 and 8 below. The feature also emphasises the brash signs and architecture in the district, such as the Statue of Liberty mounted on
top of the New American Plaza building and the wall mural entitled ‘Peace on Earth’ painted in the 1970s by artist Kuroda Seitarō. The fashion items on display in Amerika-mura are also described as “daitan (‘bold, audacious’)”, “spread out as if they had just been tipped out of a child’s toy box, [the scene] looking like a theatre dressing-room” (1997:28).

The Big Step shopping complex is the third site on the itinerary, and a description of several stores, including Disney Store, is followed by the remark that “it’s fun even just walking around and looking” (1995:73). The next stop on the tour is Triangle Park, which is described as “wakamono ni dokusen sarete (‘occupied by young people’)” (1997:74), using a term normally reserved for military operations. The itinerary recommends a visit to one of the restaurants near the park, and then the local Tower Records store before returning to the starting-point at Shinsaibashi subway station. A brief explanation of “the birth of Amerika-mura” (1997:75) is also provided, referring to it as a place which has “truly stolen the hearts of young people” (1997:75).

3.5.3 THE MAPPLE SERIES: AMERIKA-MURA AS A PLACE TO PLAY

The Mappuru (Mapple) guide book series is produced by large Tokyo publishing house Shobunsha, and its 2001-02 guide to Osaka begins with a six-page colour feature on Universal Studios Japan, the first large-scale amusement park in the region, which opened near the city’s port area in spring 2001 (Mappuru Henshubu (Mapple Editorial Division) 2001). The guide breaks down the city into six zones, each including specific features under the categories ‘miru’ (‘look/see’), ‘asobu’ (‘play/have fun’), ‘taberu’ (‘eat’) and ‘kau’ (‘buy’). My fieldsite of Amerika-mura is featured in the second category, alongside sites such as the Dotombori canal area and the Hanatsuki manzai (Osaka two-man comedy routine) theatre. Like all sites in the guide, a reference number is given for the area’s location on a detailed map contained at the end of the book. Amerika-mura is described as a “pawafuru na wakamono no machi (‘powerful young people’s area’)” (2001:26), where a variety of businesses are “grouped together in a random fashion” (2001:26), and is also characterised as “wakamono no fasshon no jōhōhashshinchi-teki
sonzai (‘entity [acting] as a point of transmission of fashion information for/to young people’)” (2001:26). Visitors are advised that “as soon as you put one foot inside, you will feel the nekki (‘heat’) of the area radiating out” (2001:26). A special section also introduces the Big Step shopping complex noted in 3.5.2 above, including its phone number, opening hours and directions on how to get there.

3.5.4 THE RURUBU SERIES: AMERIKA-MURA AS CULINARY WINDOW ON THE WORLD

The Rurubu guide book series is published by Japan Travel Bureau.. Unlike the Mapple guides introduced above, its 110 (2001) publications concentrate on accommodation and eating-places in the cities and regions of Japan. However, its 2002 guide to Osaka begins, like the Mapple guide discussed above, with a colour feature on the new Universal Studios Japan amusement park (Shuppan Jigyōkyoku Rurubu Henshubu (Publications Bureau, Rurubu Editorial Division) 2001). The Rurubu guide divides Osaka into six areas, three of which are in the Minami area. Amerika-mura is included in the ‘Minami Shinsaibashi’ category alongside Shinsaibashi itself and the newer shopping districts of Minami-semba and Horie. My fieldsite of Amerika-mura is introduced as

a stimulating area full of young people sensitive to trends who have started various mūbumento (‘movements’), a karuchā hasshin eria (‘culture transmission area’) [in the fields of] fashion, music, food, etc (2001:114).

What is interesting about this representation is the use of English loanwords for expressions such as ‘movement’ and ‘culture’ instead of their native Japanese equivalents, undō and bunka respectively. This type of usage implies that these activities are not to be regarded with the same seriousness or accorded the same significance as ‘real’ movements or cultures. In this interpretation, the district is constructed as one in which the tourist may enjoy the thrill of temporary and limited contact with safe and harmless parodies of meaningful ‘resistance’ or ‘rebellion’ in an environment of staged ‘difference’.

71
The guide provides a detailed map, and invites visitors to dine in Amerika-mura, where they may sample its unique mood (2001:114). Among those venues featured include a Vietnamese restaurant decorated with items sourced directly in Vietnam by its owner, who is quoted as saying that “I wanted people to know hommono no Betonamu (‘the real Vietnam’)” (2001:114). A Moroccan restaurant is noted as a “space decorated with items bought in Morocco” (2001:114), while a French-style cafe is described as a place to enjoy a “Provence-style” (2001:114) atmosphere. Together, these depictions style Amerika-mura as a place in which to encounter, both literally and metaphorically, a taste of another world in the comfort and safety of a Japanese restaurant.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored numerous discourses which help to construct the spatial identity of Osaka. Each is involved in a process of ordering, dichotomising, framing and classification, and each depends on a series of practices which reflect the two case studies presented in 3.3 above. While discourses of Osaka identity take Tokyo as their ‘Other’ in a similar way to the ‘Japan’ versus ‘the West’ dichotomy explored in Chapter 2 above, the Minami discourse attempts to distinguish the area from Kita. Within the context of Minami itself, a local identity is constructed around the district’s very juxtaposition of apparently disparate elements. On another level, the tourism discourse uses elements of the latter two discourses to highlight the ‘unique’ aspects of Osaka and its districts as spectacular sites of consumption. In a parallel process, it divides the city into zones, framing and exoticising specific sites. Chapter 7 explores how the specialised fashion media borrow aspects of the tourism discourse in their framing of my fieldsite of Amerika-mura as part of the sutoriito (‘street’), an abstract space of youthful fashionability. However, the next chapter moves beyond guidebook representations to explore the geographic and sensory environment of my fieldsite.
Plate 3.1: Map of Osaka.
Plate 3.2: Osaka's grand central boulevard, Midō-suji, looking north from Daimaru department store. My fieldsite of Amerika-mura is located behind the Nikkō Hotel visible in the top left hand corner of the photograph.

Plate 3.3: Young visitors to Amerika-mura take a pause from shopping to watch the annual Midō-suji Parade.
Plate 3.4: Office buildings and department stores tower over Umeda, hub of the Kita district.

Plate 3.5: Commuters and shoppers mingle in the rushed atmosphere of Whity, one of an enormous series of underground malls linking railway stations and department stores in Umeda, Kita district.
Plate 3.6: Giant neon signs line the Dōtombori canal at the centre of Minami.

Plate 3.7: On Dōtombori, the pedestrianised entertainment street at the heart of Minami. This photograph was taken at the point where Dōtombori meets the Shinsaibashi-suji shopping arcade.
Plate 3.8:  *Bura-bura* (‘random wandering for pleasure’): inside the Sennichi-mae arcade in Minami district.
Plate 3.9: Looking along Dōtombori.
CHAPTER 4

AMERIKA-MURA: MODERNITY IN MICROCOSM

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Amerika-mura encapsulates many of the common themes found in Japanese responses to modernity during the past 140 years. As explored in Chapter 2 above, these include discourses which contrast or combine a delight in the new with a desire to recuperate a sense of authenticity. As discussed in Chapter 3, they also include discourses which attempt to frame the new and the strange, and to impose order on complex urban environments. In the context of the first theme, Amerika-mura embodies the historical role of Minami and Osaka as a site of engagement with ideas and objects which represent the ‘new’, the ‘foreign’ or the ‘different’. In the context of the second theme, it acts as a frame for such engagement, in this way sharing aspects of spectacular events such as Expo 70. Not America but Amerika, it functions as a site in which the idea of engagement with the above notions can be enjoyed without the risk and difficulty involved in travel outside Japan. This role also reflects the mood of the Exotic Japan campaign discussed in Chapter 2 above.

While the idea of America = youth, liberty, exploration, rebellion (America in the context of Mita’s (1992) ‘Dream Period’, also discussed in 2.5 above) played a key role in the early development of the district and its naming, the idea of ‘Amerika’ has diluted this association. This process has led to the reconstruction of the district as a place in which young people are encouraged to engage not with America, but with the above concepts themselves in an abstract sense, through the construct of consumerism and, in particular, sutoriito fasshon ('street fashion'). The naming of Amerika-mura in the early
1970s heralded the beginning of a process whereby the district would be reconfigured as a destination alongside other tourist ‘sights’ such as Osaka Castle and events such as the annual Midō-suji Parade.

Secondly, Amerika-mura offers perspectives on the way in which a sense of personal identity and authenticity has been constructed against and around the processes discussed above. In some ways, this phenomenon reflects how aspects of the social networks found in rural areas have been reconstructed and redefined in an urban Japanese context. Not a real mura (‘village’), the district nevertheless began in the early 1970s as a collection of small businesses linked by close friendships and shared ideals. As the scale of commercial and pedestrian activity burgeoned, many of the ‘veterans’ from the early days began to lament the disappearance of the original spirit and sense of community in the area. However, while a clear, ‘village-wide’ sense of community has all but vanished, this has been replaced by a series of hidden networks centred around particular sites, people, goods, practices and interests. No longer a ‘village’, the district has become a labyrinth, in which the apparent ubiquity of the highly visible fashion project on its streets belies a hidden complexity. This is connected with the role of the district as a site for the production and consumption of ‘difference’, noted above.

While the early Amerika-mura developed on one level in contrast to the glamour and commercialism of Shinsaibashi-suji arcade across the main thoroughfare of Midō-suji (explored in 3.4.1 above), in the late 1990s the district encompassed both facets within its boundaries. While the shiny steel and glass of the Big Step complex at the heart of the district seemed to represent its thorough colonisation by the forces of consumerism, in nooks and crannies, and in unlikely places such as Big Step itself, networks of individuals sought to distinguish themselves from the masses. For some, this desire for difference was played out largely through the construct of sutoriito fasshon itself, explored further in Chapters 7 and 8 below. However others played down the importance of the aesthetic element, using the district as a site in which to pursue specialised interests or ‘alternative’ lifepaths. Their narratives are further examined in Chapter 6 below.
This chapter begins with a geographical overview of my fieldsite of Amerika-mura, followed by a semi-fictional ‘journey’ around the district. These are followed by an examination of two key sites which exemplify the way in which the district as a whole incorporates multiple ‘responses to modernity.’ The second half of the chapter then discusses three theoretical approaches which may be deployed in understanding how singular spaces may simultaneously mediate multiple meanings. (A general map of Amerika-mura is included at the end of this chapter [Plate 4.1]).

4.2 LOCATING THE FIELDSITE

Amerika-mura (or ‘American Village’, as it is called in certain English-language publications) is a district in the Chūō (Central) Ward of Osaka City, Japan. It is also located within the broad cultural district of Minami, introduced in Chapter 3 above. Like Minami, its name does not refer to an administrative division, and its borders are not clearly delineated, however it is generally considered to include the two chō (neighbourhood districts) of Nishi-Shinsaibashi 1-chōme and Nishi-Shinsaibashi 2-chōme. The area is roughly bounded by Osaka’s main north-south thoroughfare, Midosuji, to the east, by two further major thoroughfares, Yotsubashi-suji to the west and Nagahori-dōri to the north, and by the Dōtombori canal to the south (Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha 1996:167). It is easily accessible by four of Osaka’s six subway lines, and adjoins Shinsaibashi subway station. The area contains approximately 3 000 retail outlets (Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha 1996:167), ranging from the large Beams and Ships stores in the Big Step complex at the centre of the district to tiny stalls crammed along the corridors of the EN Building and converted hotel rooms in the Asahi Plaza. The resident population has steadily declined, from 1 596 in 1980 to 757 in 1995. For the past three decades, it has commonly been styled in both mainstream and popular literature as the centre of Osaka’s wakamono bunka (‘youth culture’).

In Amerika-mura, young people wander around shopping malls or sit on street corners, simply enjoying browsing, chatting or watching the passing parade. Rap music blares from shops crowded with sneakers and T-shirts. People line up to buy takoyaki (fried octopus) from a famous street stall. Shop assistants call out to passers-by. The bricks
and paving of the newly-renovated (1997) Triangle Park at the centre of the district are spattered with graffiti and strewn with rubbish. Numerous informants, including fashion editor Mr Keiichi Abe, used the term *gocha-gocha shite-iru* (‘messy, disordered’) to describe their first impressions of the district. Another fashion editor, Mr Jun Nakagaki, noted the existence of a kind of raw, unfocused energy permeating the area, a “power without form (…) without meaning”. Most focused on the sheer volume of people, shops and things which they found there.

### 4.3 THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Narratives of historical change in Amerika-mura are explored in further detail in Chapter 4 below. The following is a brief overview of developments in the district during the past three decades.

Amerika-mura arguably had its origins in 1969, when an innovative cafe was set up on a street corner in an otherwise nondescript neighbourhood by Ms Mariko Higiri and her surfer husband. Its eclectic clientele included surfers, employees of nearby fashion design companies and art students, it became the seed for the development of a somewhat bohemian quarter in an urban pocket which one informant described as the ‘backstage’, contrasting it with ‘front stage’ of the glittering shopping malls and department stores of nearby Shinsaibashi. During the early 1970s, several small shops opened in the area selling American used clothing, surfboards and bric-a-brac, however it remained largely off the beaten track until 1977, when *furugi* (‘used clothing’) became a nationwide fashion trend, and the surfer clothing became part of a ‘look’ as well as the expression of a particular lifestyle.

The area experienced rapid growth during the late 1970s, however suffered a slump in the mid-eighties as fashion trends shifted from *furugi* to the designer brands sold across the street in Shinsaibashi. During this period, many shops were forced to close down, and only one now remains from the original boom period. However, a resurgence in the popularity of so-called *Ame-kaji* (‘American casual’) clothing in the late 1980s combined with a diversification of clothing styles sold in Amerika-mura triggered a second boom, which
has continued to the present day. The construction of a massive retail complex, Big Step, on the former site of a junior high school by a consortium of banks and department stores in 1993 has given further impetus to this boom, although several shopkeepers expressed ambivalence about the benefits which it had brought to the district. The general consensus was that it had led to an increase and diversification in visitors to Amerika-mura, but had simultaneously eroded the unique atmosphere of the district.

4.4 BURA-BURA AROUND THE MURA: A SENSORY JOURNEY

In order to convey a sense of the geography and dynamics of Amerika-mura, I would now like to invite you on a semi-fictional journey. I have chosen the term *bura-bura* as it was used by several interviewees to refer to their movement around the district, and denotes a kind of aimless wandering. It is also the source of the terms *Gin-bura* (‘wandering around the Ginza’) and *Shin-bura* (‘wandering around Shinsaibashi’) noted in 2.6 and 3.3.1 respectively. Our excursion takes in two key sites at which I conducted the majority of my informal interviews with young visitors to the district. These two sites to some extent reflect the two general responses to modernity explored in this thesis. However, neither represents a ‘pure’ example, each incorporating motives and practices linked to notions of both ‘authenticity’ and ‘progress’. At the same time, the journey is intended to highlight the way in which my engagement with the district shifted constantly, from moments of unease to sudden excitement, from blase detachment to earnest conversation.

During this necessarily artificial tour of the district, I will describe the atmosphere of the sites we visit, and of the streets which connect them, pointing out certain people and practices along the way. It is important to note here that many of these activities took place at different times and on different days from each other; the objective here is to explore individual responses to spatial interpretations of physical sites, and how their practices, although sometimes only fleetingly, alter the meanings of these places in both subtle and obvious ways. Woven from a collection of specific observations which actually took place and a synthesis of moods and sensations accumulated over dozens of visits to Amerika-mura, this journey also
seeks to familiarise the reader with certain aspects of the geographical and sensory structure of Amerika-mura, and to demonstrate how movement through the district involves varying levels of engagement with multiple spaces of meaning.

Crossing Midō-suji, Osaka’s main street [Plate 4.2], we head down Suomachi-dōri, the road which bisects Amerika-mura. Before long, we notice a subtle change in the dynamics, feeling a sense of bemusement as we are carried along in a tide of mostly teenage strollers. The pace of those around us is slow, but steady. Many of the young people are carrying bags displaying shop logos with names such as Beams, Hysteric Glamour, Dept. Now and then, a clump of vivid green hair or a pierced nose catches our eye. Music is blaring from many of the shops we pass, and somewhere ahead, a shop assistant holding a large sign is standing in the middle of the street urging passers-by to check out the bargains at his shop. While some of the strollers pause to browse through the clothes displayed in shop windows or outside on the street, others wander in and out of shop doorways. Glances into the doorways reveal a multitude of interiors: some of them exude an air of exotic disorder, with labyrinthine pathways lined by clothes hanging along walls, while others are brightly-lit minimalist studios, reminiscent of the exclusive boutiques across Midō-suji in the Shinsaibashi-suji mall.

To the right, a huge, clown-like Uncle Sam head sprouts from the wall of Tom’s House, one of the oldest (1979) multi-tenant buildings in the district. To the left, cartoon images of American cultural icons adorn the walls of another of the older shopping complexes (1979), Sun Village [Plate 4.3]. And then, further along Suomachi-dōri and also on the right, we come to Big Step [Plates 4.6, 4.7], a seven-storey glass and steel shopping complex which dominates the centre of Amerika-mura. On the benches outside Disney Store at the base of the complex, young people are sitting in ones, twos and small groups, many with shopping bags at their feet. Some are chatting, most simply watching the passing parade. As we walk in front of them, we briefly experience that sense of awkwardness felt on our first visit, suddenly aware of our age and undoubtedly unfashionable appearance. The feeling dissipates, and we pass through the huge entranceway to the complex, noticing more young people sitting
along the edges of the giant stairway as we move down to the lower retail levels. Looking up, we see more young people travelling up to higher levels on the curved escalator. Ordering a Berujian setto (‘Belgian set’; waffle and coffee) from the stall in the lowest level of the complex, we sit down at the side of the stairway and watch as a uniformed security guard asks three teenage boys not to sit against the glass window of a boutique. They comply immediately, if a little reluctantly.

Finishing our snack, we take a free pamphlet available near the entrance and join a group of shoppers waiting by the glass elevators which move up and down the central section of the building. There is a young couple with a baby in a stroller, and three teenage girls carrying shopping bags. When an elevator arrives, we move behind them, and down at the shoppers below as we are transported upwards through the core of the complex. The girls get out at the second floor, perhaps in order to browse through the neat stacks of clothing in the Beams store, while the couple alight at the restaurant floor above. We are alone as we step out onto the fifth floor and walk to the metal bridge at the front of the complex which overlooks the street.

Standing on the steel and concrete walkway five floors above ground, looking down from the top of Big Step onto the central stairway of the complex, and out to Suomachi-dōri, we feel a brief sense of detachment. However, this is short-lived, as we realise that we are being watched by a row of exercise-bike riders lined up along the window of the gym on the sixth floor above us. Returning to ground level using the stairway, we leave the complex and rejoin the crowds further down Suomachi-dōri, noticing a police-box on the left and a small, triangular, paved area. This is Sankaku Kōen (‘Triangle Park’) [Plates 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, 4.12, 4.13], the spiritual, if not geographical ‘heart’ of Amerika-mura, the place where it is claimed to have ‘all began’ thirty years earlier (see Chapter 4 below).

Young people are sitting along the walls or on the circular terrace of steps in the middle of the park, involved in similar activities to those we noticed earlier outside Big Step. In the far left-hand corner of the park, a magazine crew is involved in a sunappu (‘snap’, meaning
‘photo shoot’) session, taking photographs of young people for its next issue. Some of the young people nearby occasionally glance at the proceedings; a few elaborately-dressed teenagers are waiting for their turn to be photographed. Here and there, we notice older men and women with cameras slung around their necks, looking for suitably ‘exotic’ young people to photograph for the albums they create as a hobby. One teenage boy is obligingly poking his pierced tongue out for an excited middle-aged woman to photograph. At one side of the park, just ahead, a group of young people is sitting with drinks alongside a display of hairpins and other accessories which they have made and are attempting to sell. One of them, a boy with bright pink hair, is handing out flyers for the hair salon where he works to passers-by, while an elderly photographer is sitting alongside the group, watching the passing parade. The old man smiles at me, and I smile back, both of us perhaps sensing our common experience of marginality in this young, fashionable place, our status as ‘outsiders.’

Straight ahead of us, we can see a queue of people waiting outside the Kogaryu shop to buy the takoyaki (‘fried octopus’) for which it is famous. Some people stand or sit in the park eating their takoyaki, and we catch the scent of the food topped with mayonnaise. Alongside the shop, young people move in and out of the McDonald’s store. The rubbish bin overflowing with used polystyrene trays and wooden skewers, and look down at our feet to see more trays, skewers, cigarette butts, burger wrappers and plastic bottles littered around the park. Between the park and the food stores, a mountain of orange rubbish bags awaits collection after the weekend masses have returned home.

At the ‘pointy’ end of the park, where Suomachi-dōri meets an unnamed north-south road, masses of strollers converge from four directions, some veering off into the park, others continuing their wandering movement. We overhear a girl ask her friend, “Where shall we go next?”, but miss the answer in the tide of movement. Our eyes rove over the crowd, and we find that the green hair and pierced noses which had caught our eyes only five minutes earlier have become part of an endless blur of ‘fashion’, no longer remarkable or unique. As we weave through crowds of shoppers, we suddenly have
the distinct sensation that we are the only people on the street fully ‘awake’; that everyone else has been drugged into a semi-comatose state by the kaleidoscope of sounds and colours. We realise that almost everyone is either stationary or moving at the same measured pace as we move through the park and off to the left down the north-south road.

Suppressing a mild pang of alienation, we notice that to the right, a huge apartment building is decked out in banners advertising the record and clothing shops on its upper floors. We can just make out a group of young people waiting for the elevator in the dim lobby area. To the left, we pass the shopfronts of Milestone, Walkin’ Store and Uncle Sam; to the right is a huge, brightly-lit store filled with hundreds of pairs of sneakers. While a young shop assistant with bleached blond hair and baggy clothing loiters outside Walkin’ Store, only his occasional calls to passers-by and lack of movement distinguishing him from the strollers, the staff of the sneaker store are all wearing a brightly-coloured uniform, occasionally clapping their hands and calling out to people passing on the street outside. Music blares from both sides of the street, mixing with the voices of the strollers and the calls of shop assistants to form a vibrant cacophony. A girl and her friend are looking at a map of the district in a sutoriito fashhon (‘street fashion’) magazine, perhaps trying to find one of the shops featured in an accompanying article on the area. Just then, a shop assistant whom we know pops his head out from Uncle Sam to say hello. We stop and chat for a few minutes, and he invites us to the club event where he will be working as assistant disc jockey next Saturday night. We promise to attend, before saying goodbye and moving on.

Turning left at the next intersection, we approach a landscaped area in front of the Tōkyū Plaza Hotel on the right. The left hand side of the street is lined by small shops, and ahead of us, a group has gathered at the next intersection. Drawing closer, we realise that an impromptu game is in progress. Three young men aged around twenty are sitting on the ground opposite the Sun Hall music venue, an assortment of boots and clothing laid out in front of them. They have set up a row of Coke cans, and a small noticeboard inviting passers-by to pay 500 or 1 000 yen and try their luck at winning one of the items by
throwing coins into the cans. A group of about a dozen young people is standing around the display, watching as one person tries in vain to cast a coin into a can. The three young men look amused but slightly nervous as they wait for further participants, aware of the illegal nature of their money-making scheme.

Across the intersection outside Sun Hall, a journalist and photographer are squatting down, occasionally watching the game across the road, but mainly observing passers-by. After a while, they jump up and approach a man who has just walked by, the journalist asking him a question. He nods, and they move away from the crowds to take a photograph for their magazine. They thank the man before he disappears back into the crowd, returning to their position at the Sun Hall corner to wait for their next subject to appear. Meanwhile, an Australian anthropologist has appeared from a side-street and walks up to the pair. It appears that they have been expecting him to arrive, and they beckon for him to squat down with them. He does so, removing a pen and pad from his bag and scribbling down their answers to a series of questions. Suddenly, he stops writing as a woman appears at the corner where the coin game is still attracting hopeful teenagers. After a brief discussion with the three organisers, one of them removes some of the clothes from their display and puts them away in a bag. We overhear the photographer tell the anthropologist that the woman was from the nearby shop where the clothes had been bought, and had objected to them being used for the game.

Smiling at the anthropologist and his friends before leaving them to shiver in the bitter February winds, we move further along the street, soon noticing a narrow alleyway leading off to the left. Above the entrance is a sign reading ‘Gallage Mart’, and we see young people wandering in and out of the tiny, cluttered shops along the sides of the alley and along the street outside. We recall having read in one of those sutoriito fasshon magazines that ‘Gallage’ is a combination of ‘garage’ and ‘village’, and make a mental note to investigate the alley on a future visit. Just past Gallage Mart is a Shintō shrine [Plate 4.17], appearing at once out-of-place and perfectly at home in the somewhat postmodern bustle of sights, sounds and smells. And then, we are swept up once again in the masses of shoppers, many now
laden with bulging shopping bags, as they move back out of Amerika-mura onto Midō-suji, perhaps heading to the left to the Ōpa shopping complex or Shinsaibashi subway station, to the right to the railway hub of Namba, or across the road and on into the endless river of humanity moving along the five-kilometre-long Shinsaibashi-suji mall or over the bridge to the glitter and grime of the Ebisubashi arcades. “Where shall we go next?”, we hear someone else ask their friend as we pause for a moment.

4.5 SYMBOLIC SITES
The above narrative explores numerous apparent contrasts and contradictions in the physical and sensory environment of Amerika-mura. Among the most salient of these is the juxtaposition of old and new, messy and ordered. Nowhere is this phenomenon more noticeable than at Triangle Park and Big Step. While both share certain roles as landmarks and meeting-places for the young people visiting Amerika-mura, they also hint at an interplay between two responses to modernity: one delighting in the chaotic jumble of sensory stimuli, the other attempting to impose a degree of order and control. Each is derived from a different definition of Amerika-mura: the first as a place to be ‘free’, the second as a place to consume; the first sharing certain similarities with 1960s Shinjuku, the second reflecting aspects of 1990s Shibuya.

4.5.1 TRIANGLE PARK: THE CORE OF THE MURA
It is somewhat ironic, but perhaps not accidental, that this original icon of Amerika-mura is an empty space. Open to the street on both of its ‘pointy’ sides, the ‘park’ is a small (500 square metres) and unspectacular patch of paving and brickwork, yet its geographical location and historical role have ensured it a continuing central role in the construction of spatial identity in the district. Indeed, landscape architect Ozasa Mitsuhiko (2000) argues that “Amerika-mura and Triangle Park cannot be thought of separately” (2000:30). Lying at the junction of two key roads in the middle of Amerika-mura, it operates as a natural centre of gravity and orientation for many visitors to the district. It was opposite the ‘pointy’ corner of Triangle Park one weekend in 1969 that a certain Ms Mariko Higiri (introduced more fully in 5.2.1 below) saw a ‘For Lease’ sign and
decided to establish a cafe which many accredit as the ‘birthplace’ of Amerika-mura.

On weekday afternoons and weekdays, the park is a throng of activity. Young people sit on the landscaped walls and steps, some eating *takoyaki* from the nearby stand (see above), others chatting to their friends, many silently observing the passing parade. On weekends, it is common to find amateur rock bands playing, media staff taking photographs for *sutoritto fasshon* magazines, and to witness various events organised by the local business association, such as beauty pageants. The park is also a point of transit, offering a shortcut between two of the main shopping streets in the district.

Officially known as Mittsu Park, Triangle Park was a largely bare and dusty patch of land thirty years ago, containing a large children's slide and indistinguishable from countless neighborhood parks in cities throughout Japan. Ozasa (2000) notes that it was first constructed in 1935, taking its name from a nearby Shinto shrine. Its appearance remained unchanged until 1983, when it was paved and redesigned with low walls and a series of circular steps leading down to a sunken area in the middle. The second renovation of the park was undertaken between March and August 1997, during my first period of fieldwork in Osaka, under the auspices of a ‘Beautyfication of Amerika-mura’ project. Both projects were jointly instigated by Osaka City Council and the local business grouping, *Amerika-mura no Kai* (‘Amerika-mura Association’), the second in particular aimed at improving its appearance and function for visitors (i.e. shoppers).

However, attempts to remould the park into a more commercially-appealing image have only partially succeeded. The area remains a somewhat chaotic space relatively free of overt regulation, despite the nearby presence of a *kōban* (‘police box’). A 1994 newspaper article discusses the issue of garbage in the park, highlighting a wider discourse relating to public space. Titled ‘*O-share supotto gomi ni naku*’ (lit. ‘Fashionable spot crying under the garbage’), the article notes that the park produces thirty full household garbage bags per day, increasing to more than fifty on weekends (*Asahi Shimbun* 1994b). It also notes that many young people throw away cigarette butts and leave empty cans in the park, despite the presence of thirty
garbage cans and a cigarette disposal can. A sixty-year old cleaner whose company is contracted by Osaka City to clear garbage from the park six mornings a week (instead of the usual two) is quoted as saying that “They could just stick their hands out and put it in the garbage can, but they don’t bother. It’s awful” (1994b). Interestingly, then Amerika-mura Association president Mr Sakurai is noted as claiming that “if it goes on like this, it’s going to ruin [our] o-share na supotto-zukuri (‘project to create a fashionable spot’) for yangu (‘young people’)” (1994b).

Following the 1997 renovation of the park, metal barricades were finally removed in time for the first weekend of August to reveal a largely unchanged design, the only noticeable differences being a new layer of paving, a pair of statues and a ‘wall fountain’ at the rear of the area. Within a week of the reopening, the park had also acquired a new coating of graffiti and a new layer of garbage, seeming to prove that cosmetic changes may have limited success in altering the spatial dynamics of the site, or in making it ‘neat’ and ‘orderly’. In a broader sense, this development recalls Adrian Rifkin’s (2002) reference to “the pitiful delusion that planning can ever fully coincide with the historicity that shapes it” (2002:125). He also suggests that while planning attempts to ‘frame’ this historicity, it is ultimately doomed to become “nothing more or less than its excess and its other” (2002:125).

The Amerika-mura Association (which included in May 1997 among its members 111 clothing stores, ten restaurants, four shopping complexes and forty-two other members, including a bank and several building management representatives) has undertaken numerous initiatives in response to the garbage problem in Triangle Park, devising a scheme to recycle some of the waste into cardboard. In addition, it has been involved in organising related events such as the free concert held in the park on 21 March 2002 (co-sponsored by FM Osaka and Cosmo Petroleum). After the show, promotional material announced, performers, FM radio disc jockeys and listeners would “come together for a kuriin parêdo (‘clean parade’), walking through Amerika-mura and picking up garbage” (http://fmosaka.net/blueearth/).
4.5.2 BIG STEP: YOUTH CULTURE AS COMMODITY

Completed in 1993, Big Step is a large-scale retail complex located on the 4 300 square metre site in the centre of Amerika-mura formerly occupied by Minami Junior High School. The 13.6 billion-yen (approximately A$150 million) complex was constructed by a consortium of major banks and department store following a tendering process supervised by Osaka City Council (Mainichi Shimbun 1998e). According to figures published by the Nihon Keizai Shimbun newspaper in 1996, the complex was visited by approximately 17 000 people on weekdays and 54 000 people on weekends and public holidays (1996:170). Comprising nine floors (two below ground), each with its own theme, the lower four floors include 79 retail outlets, while the third floor is occupied by a cafe and six fast food or light eating outlets. The combined fourth and fifth floor includes a “multi-event hall” called Coke Step Hall, in addition to the Paradise Cinema and a combined FM radio station (Funky FM 802) and English conversation school. The sixth floor is occupied by Club West gym, while the seventh floor has an upmarket Italian restaurant (Big Step leaflet 1997).

All floors are accessible by elevator, however escalator access is only available for the lower five floors. The two lower ground floors are also accessible from the huge staircase in the middle of the complex, which descends from street level to the B2 floor. There is also a stairwell at the west side of the building leading to all floors. Outside the main entrance to Big Step is a landscaped area along the street, dotted with trees and benches, with a low wall along the front of the complex. There is also a long bench along the rear wall of the building. On weekday afternoons and weekends, dozens of young people can be seen sitting on these benches and walls, and along the sides of the main central stairway leading into the building.

Not coincidentally, Big Step is the most regulated environment in Amerika-mura, a towering glass and steel edifice built by a consortium of banks and department stores with exclusively commercial motives. Young people moving through the cavernous complex appear diminished in size and stature, tiny figures milling around shops, riding elevators and escalators, sitting perched along
the edges of the giant stairway leading into the bowels of the building. This is a space “designed to stimulate desires: to escape, to meet ‘others’ and transcend everyday existence” (Edensor 1998b:214; original emphasis), but whose “theming [further discussed below] directs desire into the cul-de-sac of consumption” (Edensor 1998b:214).

Big Step is also the only area of Amerika-mura where behaviour and movement between and around shops is overtly regulated. Pairs of grey-uniformed guards patrol the various levels of the complex and the walkways and escalators which connect them, an almost invisible yet naggingly pervasive presence which subtly alters the dynamics of the space. The message here is: ‘you are free - to consume’. On one occasion, I noticed a group of boys being asked to get up from the ground in front of a display window where they had been sitting. On another occasion, another group was moved from a fire escape stairway at the rear of the complex. On several other occasions, boys and girls were moved from the centre of the main stairway to the edges. While the second and third examples may have involved safety issues in addition to concerns that the young people were impeding the flow of shopper traffic, all three cases involved a degree of behaviour regulation unique to the complex. Nevertheless, young people did not appear noticeably tense or self-conscious as they moved through the complex, the flow of pedestrian traffic merging seamlessly with the crowds on the streets.

4.5.3 SUMMARY

Triangle Park and Big Step. These two sites are important for a number of reasons in any attempt to ‘understand’ how Amerika-mura functions as a site for the construction of multiple responses to modernity. As noted above, together they act as icons which embody the contrasts and contradictions which the district displays. The former horizontal, the latter vertical, the former old, the latter new, the former chaotic, noisy and permanently littered with rubbish and graffiti, the latter quietly ordered and patrolled by uniformed guards. At the same time, both share certain similarities, functioning as meeting-points, resting places, places to chat or simply attempt to take a break from while a becoming part of the spectacle for those
passing by. In addition, just as the seemingly structured environment of Big Step is open to a certain degree of random or creative behaviour, the apparent chaos of Triangle Park belies a subtle form of order.

4.6 THEORISING AMERIKA-MURA

The ability of singular places to incorporate apparently disparate elements of 'order' and 'disorder' represents a key example of how different responses to modernity are played out in physical contexts. In the Osaka of the 1920s, as discussed in Chapter 3 above, Mayor Seki's grand urban projects coexisted with a vibrant street culture. In Amerika-mura today, large-scale commercial developments rub shoulders with tiny stores overflowing with goods. It is possible to argue that the very juxtaposition which the district encapsulates constitutes a primary factor in its appeal to visitors. Chapter 5 below explores the narrative discourse which contrasts an 'authentic' early Amerika-mura with its supposedly 'commercial' and 'soulless' present incarnation. However, the remainder of this chapter is devoted to an assessment of theoretical perspectives which provide a framework for understanding how places such as Amerika-mura mediate the contradictions which they appear to embody.

Chapter 1 above introduced the notion of places as contexts which incorporated multiple meanings (Rodman 1992) and as continuously-changing constellations of social relations (Massey 1993). The following theoretical contexts each offer further conceptual tools for exploring how complex spatial identities are constructed and negotiated within places such as Amerika-mura.

4.6.1 FOUCAULT'S 'HETEROTOPIA'

Although first proposed in a forgotten series of lecture notes and not published in English until 1986, two years after his death, the notion of the 'heterotopia' developed by French social theorist Michel Foucault has become the subject of renewed attention among cultural geographers and anthropologists. Best known for his explorations of how discourses of knowledge are mobilised in a variety of power relations, Foucault has typically been styled as a doomsayer who
permits no margin for escape from an overarching, subtle and manipulative network of authority. However, his concept of the 'heterotopia' demonstrates a belief in the inherent ability of places to simultaneously mediate multiple discourses of meaning.

Edward W. Soja (1995) lists six key elements of heterotopias, briefly summarised as follows: (i) they are found in all cultures, and can be divided into sites of transition (e.g. honeymoon hotel, military service facilities) and sites of deviation (e.g. rest homes, prisons); (ii) they can change in meaning and form over time; (iii) "the heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in one real place several different spaces, 'several sites that are in themselves incompatible' or foreign to each other" (1995:15). Furthermore,

it is this complex juxtaposition and cosmopolitan simultaneity of differences in space that charges the heterotopia with social and cultural meaning and connectivity. Without such a charge, the space would remain fixed, dead, immobile, undialectical" (1995:15);

(iv) they are typically linked to slices of time (heterochronies), Foucault envisaging them as "compressed, packaged environments that seem to both abolish and preserve time and culture, that appear somehow to be both temporary and permanent" (1995:16); (v) "heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that simultaneously makes them both isolated and penetrable", Foucault arguing that "implicit in this regulation of opening and closing are the workings of power, of disciplinary technologies" (1995:16). Furthermore, they depend upon the construction of "illusions of freedom" (1995:16), such as in the case of the "famous American motel rooms for adulterous sex" (1995:16); (vi) "heterotopias have a function in relation to all the space that remains, an 'external', almost wraparound function that 'unfolds' between two extreme poles" (1995:16). As such, the heterotopia is, according to Foucault, either "a space of illusion that [exposes] every real space as still more illusory" (quoted in Soja 1995:16), or "a perfect/meticulous space" (1995:16) that represents an idealised version of the jumbled and complex world alongside or in contrast to which it operates.

Soja's (1995) definition presents the heterotopia as a site which is capable of incorporating and juxtaposing numerous seemingly
contradictory meanings. Although Foucault uses the term ‘space’ in his definition of the concept, I believe that his use of concrete examples (such as the prison, as noted by Soja above) shows that he also intended the concept to be used in reference to actual places rather than abstract spaces.

However, the task of delineating particular sites as heterotopias remains problematic, as this would imply that other sites do not embody similar paradoxes. It may therefore be useful to explore relative differences in the degree of heterotopic tendencies exhibited by particular sites. This would explain the contrast between the apparently chaotic and often carnavalesque character of sites such as Amerika-mura and the bustling yet orderly nature of the nearby office district of Hommachi immediately north of the district. This is not to argue that Amerika-mura is a heterotopia while Hommachi is not, but rather to suggest that the former district exhibits much stronger heterotopic tendencies than the latter. Furthermore, rather than challenging the norms of surrounding districts, the existence of Amerika-mura may both expose and reinforce them. These concepts are further explored in the discussion of Tim Edensor’s (1998a, 1998b) work in the following section, where he makes a distinction between ‘heterogeneous’ and ‘enclavic’ tourist spaces.

The concept of the heterotopia may also be used to examine the way in which particular places present the appearance of relative disorder while subtly validating and negating particular norms and practices. This would help explain the discomfort felt by myself and other first-time visitors, who find themselves suddenly and uncomfortably aware of their own age and apparent lack of fashionability, a theme further explored in 8.3.1 below. As Edensor (1998a) argues,

> In modern spaces, one’s behaviour, movement and presence may be regulated by a combination of advanced policing methods, the gaze of others and a reflexive self-awareness (1998a:41).

4.6.2 SYNTHESISING SPATIAL THEORY - EDENSOR AND THE TAJ MAHAL

One of the most comprehensive attempts to apply various elements of contemporary spatial theory to specific geographical contexts is Tim
Edensor's (1998a) *Tourists at the Taj* (noted above). Edensor (1998b) explores similar themes in his essay, 'The Culture of the Indian Street'. In the former work, Edensor (1998a) explores the construction of meaning around the Taj Mahal through a variety of practices which relate to the site, and links these practices variously to three spaces: colonial space, sacred space, and national space. His work is of central importance to the theoretical framework of this thesis, as it is one of the first to explore the heterotopic nature of unitary sites, demonstrating how they can mediate multiple layers of meaning through narrative, aesthetic and performative practice In addition, he provides a framework for reconciling aspects of both sides of the 'ideology versus agency' debate discussed above, his approach recognising and incorporating both the 'invisible' web of power relations embedded in spatial contexts and the capacity of individual agents to challenge, subvert or dilute the established meanings which such relations construct and attempt to enforce.

Although he makes little reference to the French theorist Henri Lefebvre, his notion of space appears to share certain similarities with the latter's 'abstract' or 'social space.' His work is also of significant importance in that it provides an approach for exploring place as a dynamic process without sinking into the meaning-less hyperreality of Jean Baudrillard or the 'non-place' of Marc Auge (1995) by concentrating heavily on praxis in all its forms. Further, he demonstrates how elements of Certeau and Foucault's theories may be applied to actual physical contexts.

The first section of *Tourists at the Taj* explores the various practices which create and continuously redefine the monument’s association with the three spaces noted above. These practices vary from the textual (e.g. the production and consumption of tourist literature) to the physical (e.g. visits by Muslim pilgrims and posing for photographs by Western backpackers). All such practices function alongside each other in a unitary place, yet create and redefine meanings in parallel abstract spaces.

Drawing upon the work of David Sibley (1988), Edensor (1998a) makes a further distinction in his description of sites visited by tourists, arguing that these may be loosely characterised as 'enclavic'
or ‘heterogeneous’ in nature, concepts introduced earlier in this chapter. However, he is careful to point out that there are sites which incorporate elements of each of the above two spaces (1998a:60). Citing resort complexes in the vicinity of the Taj Mahal as examples of the former type of space, he describes how they are highly-regulated environments which are designed to stimulate maximum levels of consumption by visitors. Pedestrian movement is channelled, and sensory experience restricted in a world of air-conditioned hotels and shuttle buses, souvenir malls and ‘authentic’ cultural displays and performances. Edensor (1998) argues that the development of such sites is part of a global process whereby space, particularly in the West, is becoming more regulated, commodified and privatised. Multi-functional, hybrid spaces, weakly defined and inclusive, are being replaced by single-function spaces, bounded to assert distinction and sharpen definition (1998:47).

Edensor (1998a) contrasts these ‘enclavic’ sites with ‘heterogeneous’ environments such as those found in less commercial areas of Agra, the city alongside which the monument is located. This latter type of site is characterised by a relative lack of regulation and a profusion of disparate practices. Human movement is relatively random, as the pedestrian has to weave a path by negotiating obstacles underfoot or in front, avoiding hassle and teasing, and remaining alert about the hazards presented by vehicles and animals such as monkeys, cows, pigs and dogs (1998a:57).

In addition, the pedestrian is assailed by heat, dust, insects, and an assortment of scents and odours, his or her experience contrasting sharply to that of the visitor to the ‘enclavic’ world described above.

He argues that Foucault’s notion of heterotopia may be particularly useful in understanding the nature of this second type of tourist space, further noting that such sites often operate as spaces of both danger and desire. He points out the vagueness, yet rich expressiveness of the term, and discusses how Foucault used the term to refer to two kinds of space (place, according to my reading), the first in which “everything is not only accumulated but organised and classified by an ordering regime which places and contextualises all difference” (1998a:42), and the second where a “conglomeration of objects (...) is not composed to form an ordered whole but is placed together
arbitrarily, (...) unfixed, in flux" (1998a:42). He further claims that “contemporary commodified landscapes” and fairgrounds respectively constitute examples of each form of heterotopia, and notes Bennett’s (1995) argument that the more random second type of heterotopia has been replaced by “those which order and contextualise difference” (1998a:42), arguing that “museums [have] replaced individual collections and cabinets of curiosity and theme parks [have] replaced fairgrounds” (1998a:42).

What must not be overlooked is the importance of Edensor’s (1998a) claim that all places are essentially heterotopic in nature. In this sense, both his ‘enclavic’ and ‘heterogeneous’ sites are heterotopic in nature, differing only in their relative degrees of complexity, the latter mediating a relatively larger number of spaces than the former. As he notes in relation to the regulatory forces at work in the former type of context, “if the logic of these codes is unpacked and unpicked, the play of incommensurable differences, usually obscured by the presentation of materials as commodities, becomes apparent” (1998a:44). Similarly, he is careful to emphasise that the ‘heterogeneous’ site is by no means free of regulation, arguing that power remains in a “decentred and contingent” (1998a:44) form.

A principal theme of Edensor’s (1998a) work on the Taj Mahal is the relationship between the contradictory desires for order and transgression seemingly common to all human societies. He argues that in the contemporary world, tourist sites function as heterotopic contexts in which such contradictions may, at least temporarily, be resolved. If this idea is further extended, it may be possible to claim that such sites offer both spatial and temporal ‘freedom’ to those who visit them.

The first of these two ‘freedoms’ results from their segregation or differentiation from the surrounding areas and from the points of origin of those who visit them. The second ‘freedom’ is a product of the division between ‘leisure/holiday time’ and other time, their respective association with tourist sites and other places. This final notion may be compared with Foucault’s concept of ‘heterochronies’, as noted by Soja (1995) in his definition above. As in the example of the carnival, the notion of heterotopia may be used to explore not only
how practices construct multiple spaces in unitary places, but also how the time spent at such sites differs qualitatively from time spent in other, perhaps less complex, environments. Edensor (1998a) alludes to this distinction when he suggests that “weakly classified heterotopic spaces (places, according to my reading) have the potential to facilitate imaginings, epistemological dislocations and memories better than others” (1998a:44).

One further aspect of Edensor’s (1998a) theory which has particular relevance to this thesis is his discussion of what he terms “tourist performances” (1998:61). Referring to the work of Clifford Geertz (1993) and Erving Goffman (1959), in particular their emphasis on the dramaturgical nature of everyday life, he argues that sites such as the Taj Mahal operate as

symbolic stages [which] are incorporated into multiple, overlapping spaces, and thus (...) are fluid entities whose meaning changes and is contested by performers. Accordingly, the sense of what sites symbolise may generate myriad forms of performance on a single tourist stage, in which different roles, scripts, choreographies, group formations, instructions and cues are followed. Indeed, the coherence of culturally specifiable performances depends on their being performed in specific ‘theatres’ (1998a:62).

He argues that the performances (i.e. practices) in particular places create, affirm, and occasionally contest spatial meanings, and that there is an identifiable relationship between the degree of complexity of the environments in which such performances are enacted. While he views performances in ‘enclavic’ sites as “carefully staged and designed so that performance is somewhat prescriptive” (1998a:62), he believes that in ‘heterogeneous’ sites, “stage boundaries are less clear and a wider range of improvisation is encouraged” (1998a:62).

Edensor (1998a) distinguishes between four types of tourist performance, ranging from “team performances” (1998a:65) through highly improvised and slightly improvised performances, to performances where “there are no directors or stage managers, and (...) little evidence of the circumscribed space that constitutes a stage” (1998a:67). He suggests that there is an inverse relationship between the degree to which a particular site is regulated and the extent to which improvisation is encouraged or permitted there, but also
demonstrates how all four types of performance may be found at complex sites such as the Taj Mahal. Further, he argues that any analysis of performance must take into account the importance of the intended audience (1998a:65). While ‘actors’ in a ‘team performance’ (such as a group package tour visiting a ‘must-see’ location) may be heavily influenced by the perceived norms of their fellow group members, those engaging in the least improvised form of performance (such as the curious lone backpacker wandering the sidestreets of a large city) may be more concerned with presenting an approachable and friendly image in order to attract and befriend ‘real’ locals seen to be ‘untainted’ by the commercial nature of mass tourism.

This example also raises the issue of reflexivity, which Edensor (1998a) refers to later in his discussion of ‘tourist performance’, claiming that:

The degree of reflexive awareness of the performer in turn, generates a detachment or immersion that limits or enables a distance from the role being played which conditions the possibility of mobilising a critical awareness (1998a:65).

Edensor (1998a) suggests that apparently similar forms of performance may differ qualitatively for the respective actors concerned, based on the degree to which they are aware of their position in the power relations present at a particular site. The experience of visiting a war memorial as a scheduled ‘stop’ may therefore differ significantly for two package tourists, one a young student eager to capture the beauty of the structure in as many photographs as possible, the second a war veteran intensely moved by the monument’s symbolism.

Concluding his discussion, Edensor (1998a) proposes that “performances specify the relationship between people and the sites they visit” (1998a:67), a concept which is central to his work and which constitutes an underlying theme of this thesis.
4.6.3 DELEUZE AND GUATTARI: SMOOTH AND STRIATED SPACE

Foucault’s notion of ‘heterotopia’ and Edensor’s (1998a) concepts of ‘enclavic’ and ‘heterogeneous’ spaces can also be explored alongside those of French theorists Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987). In their encyclopedic work, *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) explore a wide variety of ideas in the context of modern and pre-modern world history. Here, I will limit my discussion to an examination of how their spatial theories may be deployed in the study of sites of intense flux and juxtaposition such as Amerika-mura.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) offer important insights into the power relations innate to space. Their key concepts of ‘smooth’ or ‘nomadic’ space versus ‘striated’ or ‘sedentary’ space are used as purely theoretical ‘poles’ on a continuum of potential relationships between forces which attempt to impose order and others which attempt to create and maintain ‘gaps’ and ‘flows’ between, around and through such strategies. As such, they argue that:

> we must remind ourselves that the two spaces in fact exist only in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space. (...) We must therefore envision a certain number of models, which would be like various aspects of the two spaces and the relations between them (1987:474-475).

When applied to the spatial dynamics of physical sites, Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) concepts suggest the innate nature of places to function as contexts in which meaning is continuously under negotiation. As proposed above, every place becomes inherently heterotopic, neither wholly enclavic nor wholly heterogeneous, incorporating both ‘framing discourses’ which seek to create striated spaces, and a multitude of narratives and practices which construct alternative notions of ‘authenticity’ in opposition to them, or in the gaps and breaches which they afford, each helping to constitute the other.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) imply that totalising discourses are unable to exist, because striated space needs smooth space: they are
two sides of the same coin. In this sense, they propose, these should not be approached as a dialectical phenomenon, but one which presents infinite potential for multiplicity. In this context, their notion of ‘holey space’ is particularly useful, and the following description of the concept could be applied to the notion of place as a field of continuous ‘openings’ and ‘closings’:

On the side of the nomadic assemblages...it is a kind of rhizome, with its gaps, detours, subterranean passages, stems, openings, traits, holes, etc. On the other side, the sedentary assemblages and State apparatuses effect a capture...put the traits of expression into the form of a code, make the holes resonate together, plug the lines of flight, subordinate the technological operation to the work model, impose upon the connections a whole regime of arborescent conjunctions (1987:415).

However, as Deleuze and Guattari note, “the two segments cannot be separated, simply by relating them to their particular context” (1987:415). In other words, as a heterotopia, Amerika-mura cannot be divided into a commercial, shallow exterior and an authentic, deep interior. Neither can it be separated into enclavic and heterogeneous elements. Its identity is a continuously changing blend of both, the very nature of which is based on subjective interpretation. Here is the paradox at the core of modernity, and which characterises all debates regarding personal and spatial identity: every place and every person is in the process of changing into something or someone which they are not, but each always has a unique identity due to the particular constellations of temporary coherence among multiple elements which they represent at a given time. These elements cannot be separated from each other, as each is constructed in relation to the others. In this way, identity becomes not a state, but a process.

Modernity intensifies the process by which spatial and personal identities change, creating moments of ‘dissonance’ where one cannot or will not ‘keep up with’ the other. Such is the case with the narratives of historical change presented in Chapter 5 below. In these cases, the construct of nostalgia allows ‘veterans’ of the district to temporarily bridge the gap between their negative interpretations of present-day Amerika-mura and the lost ‘Golden Age’ of the past. In the case of other individuals in the district (such as those introduced in Chapter 6 below), ‘dissonance’ is averted through the construction
of social networks and hidden gathering-places linked by shared ‘topographies of taste.’ Even in the ostensibly commercial and shallow context of *sutoriito fashhon* (‘street fashion’; explored in Chapters 7 and 8 below), individual practices share an ambivalent relationship with media representations. Finally, hip hop (as explored in Chapter 9 below) operates as a key context in which identity incorporates both striated and smooth elements: the ordering discourse of fashion and the innate propensity of hip hop itself to obfuscate all efforts at classification.

4.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented a preliminary exploration of the historical, geographical and sensory dynamics of my fieldsite of Amerika-mura. It has examined how the identity of the district is constructed around a particularly intense form of juxtaposition, encapsulating some of the elements operating at a wider level in the context of Osaka (as discussed in Chapter 3 above) and Japan (as discussed in Chapter 2 above). The ‘sensory journey’ and the presentation of two key sites within the district examined how this phenomenon can be observed, experienced and interpreted at the level of the individual on the ground. It was argued that each site, and Amerika-mura as a whole, function as heterotopic contexts in which multiple responses to modernity are continuously played out through the medium of numerous discourses.

While the area is framed as a space of youthful fashionability (further explored in Chapter 7 below), it is also a space of tourism (explored in 3.5 above and Chapter 7 below). At the same time, it was suggested that these forms of discourse had not rendered the district a wholly ‘enclavic space’, to borrow Edensor’s (1998a) term. Instead, in the context of Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) theories, it was argued that they operated as striating elements which shared the district with the smooth elements constituted by a multitude of personal narratives, practices and trajectories. Finally, it was argued that it was this very juxtaposition which provided Amerika-mura with its unique identity as a site in which the processes and outcomes of modernity were felt to be particularly intense.
As noted above, the following chapter explores one context in which a dissonance between personal and spatial identity is evoked: the narratives of nostalgia among the ‘veterans’ who knew the district during the early days of its existence. Through a selection of ‘origin myths’ and accounts of historical change, a theme of alienation and ‘no longer belonging’ emerges. This theme draws upon various elements of a lost ‘Golden Age’ when Amerika-mura was a site of creative experimentation and face-to-face transmission of specialised knowledge, a place imbued with a somewhat dangerous and marginal mood. However, as will be discussed in Chapter 6, many of the elements evoked by the ‘veterans’ still exist in present-day Amerika-mura. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987) might have argued, the striation of space does not eliminate smooth space; it simply leads it to manifest itself in other contexts and in other forms.
Plate 4.1: Map of Amerika-mura
Plate 4.2: One of the most common entry points for visitors to Amerika-mura, at the corner of Midō-suji [boulevard] and Suomachi-dōri [street].

Plate 4.3: American images on the outside of Sun Village. Opened in 1979, it is one of Amerika-mura’s first multi-tenant shopping complexes.
Plate 4.4: Map of Amerika-mura on the outside of the Tokyo-Mitsubishi bank building on the corner of Midō-suji [boulevard] and Suomachi-dōri [street].

Plate 4.5: Map in the Crysta Nagahori mall on the northern perimeter of Amerika-mura showing member shops of the Amerika-mura Association.
Plate 4.6: Sitting on the central stairway at Big Step shopping complex.
Plate 4.7: View of the Big Step complex from the pedestrian walkway on the second floor of the complex.
Plate 4.8: Triangle Park.

Plate 4.9: Rock performance in Triangle Park.
Plate 4.10: Halloween make-up session in Triangle Park, October 1997.

Plate 4.11: Mod style at Triangle Park.
Plate 4.12: Looking towards Triangle Park (visible in the top right hand section of the photograph).

Plate 4.13: Looking north from Triangle Park. I was based at an apartment at the far end of this street (on the left) during my main fieldwork period in 1997.
Plate 4.14: The Statue of Liberty replica atop the New American Plaza building in the northwestern part of Amerika-mura.
Plate 4.15: Graffiti under the Hanshin Expressway flyover on the western side of Amerika-mura.

Plate 4.16: American flag and a jumble of Japanese and English signs look down on shoppers in the southern part of Amerika-mura.
Plate 4.17: Modernity and tradition: Shoppers walk past the Shintō shrine located in the southern part of Amerika-mura.
CHAPTER 5

NOSTALGIA AND THE HISTORICAL DISCOURSE OF AUTHENTICITY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores a key discourse through which processes of historical change are interpreted and narrated in Amerika-mura. One element of this discourse, illustrated in the comments of individuals who visited the district during the 1970s, contrasts an 'authentic' and 'pure' historical Amerika-mura with a 'commercial' and 'soulless' present-day incarnation. Their narratives construct images of a place not unlike Shinjuku in the 1960s, discussed in 2.6 above. This was a site of risk, discovery and camaraderie, an eclectic and marginal site in which individuals with a range of specialised interests and tastes came together and socialised. Another element of this discourse, found in the comments of younger visitors, hints at a different type of risk in the Amerika-mura of the 1990s: the danger of being considered unfashionable. Their remarks suggest that the district now functions not only as a site of social interaction, but also as one in which young people monitor and judge each other according to the shared aesthetic code of sutoriito fasshon ('street fashion'), further explored in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

This is a place which shares elements with Yoshimi’s (2000) ‘Disnified’ space of Shibuya in Tokyo, discussed in 2.6 above. Both of the above groups make reference to a process whereby the district has come to
attract increasingly younger visitors, and imply that this phenomenon has transformed the district from a peripheral site of experimentation to a mainstream site of consumption. However, their comments suggest that the area has always incorporated aspects of both roles, a heterotopic, heterogeneous place in which smooth and striated spaces together construct a site in which juxtaposition is expected, anticipated and enjoyed.

5.2 NARRATIVES OF NOSTALGIA I: ORIGIN MYTHS

During my initial fieldwork in Amerika-mura in 1997, I was able to locate and interview several individuals who had been regular visitors to the district during the late 1960s and early 1970s. All of their accounts suggested that it was during this period that the area now known as Amerika-mura began to take on a unique character. Furthermore, their recollections evoked a simpler, friendlier, more authentically ‘alternative’ place, typically contrasting it what many viewed as its commercialised and shallow modern-day descendant. Deploying narratives of nostalgia and loss, their stories, may also be interpreted as attempts to reclaim a degree of symbolic control over a district which has been transformed beyond recognition since the fateful day Ms Mariko Higiri (introduced fully in 5.2.1 below) stumbled upon a vacant building in a nondescript neighbourhood just west of Midō-suji and decided to open a cafe. Her account of the beginnings of Amerika-mura begins an exploration of how such historical narratives create and contest spatial meanings in present-day contexts.

5.2.1 ORIGIN MYTHS I: MS MARIKO HIGIRI AND THE LOOP CAFE

There are a number of contrasting and overlapping claims regarding the origins of the district, however several people asked about its history mentioned the catalytic role played by one cafe and its co-owner. L Magazine editor Mr Jun Nakajima noted that in the early 1970s, “people who liked clothing” and “surfers” would tell each other, “There’s an
interesting café in Sumiya-machi [former name of the neighbourhood at
the centre of Amerika-mura; noted in 3.4.1 above]". (http://www.kanken.or.jp/kashi/259/04) This cafe was Loop, co-owned
and operated by Ms Mariko Higiri [Plate 5.1], briefly introduced in 4.3
and 5.2 above. Although few visitors to the district nowadays have
heard of her establishment, which closed in 1975, it has achieved a
somewhat legendary status among older shopowners. Established in
1969 on the northwest corner of Suomachi-dōri and the street which
forms the western perimeter of Triangle Park, it operated for
approximately seven years. The crucial importance of this establishment
in attracting local surfers to set up shops in the district and create the
unique atmosphere of what was to become Amerika-mura justifies the
inclusion of its story in some detail. The following is a selection of
extracts from a monthly column on the history of Amerika-mura by Ms
Higiri carried in the regional magazine Meets Regional from May 1997.

(...) I had just finished high school and planned to work in preparation for
a round-the-world trip. Well, [I set that goal] because I had been leading
a carefree daily life. One day, three days before my planned departure
overseas, I was driving with my boyfriend and intended travel
companion along Suomachi-dōri. We crossed Midō-suji heading west,
and at the instant when we turned the bend beside Triangle Park, a sign
leapt out at me: ‘Office For Lease’. At that time, in 1969, most of
America-mura was occupied by the homes of people running businesses
in central Osaka, and there was the icon-like Van Jacket company run by
Mr Ishizu. There were also designers’ offices, and even a slightly
academic mood, but it was really quiet at night. There were places where
you could even drink from ten in the morning, but almost nowhere where
you could go to drink tea. ‘I want to start a shop here where you can
drink coffee until late at night. We can go on the round-the-world trip
anytime. Don’t you think it would be more fun to have a shop here?’
That’s when the really interesting stuff began (Meets Regional 1997a).

She continues her narrative in the following month’s edition of the
Kansai regional lifestyle magazine, Meets Regional:

[Following our marriage], we set about madly getting our cafe ready, and
in no time at all it was open. The wife of a cameraman for whom my
[first] husband had great admiration was running a cafe in [nearby]
Hommachi, and we had her husband design the cafe. Our ‘theme colours’ were orange and dark blue. The walls were blue, the pipe-like table bases were orange, and it was a stylish place with what you might call today a high-tech feel. It was a fun place, my husband (the ‘master’) (...) enveloped in smoke while getting the old coffee brewer we had found to work so we could offer customers home-brewed coffee, rare at the time, and me (the ‘mama’) cheerfully busying about with the thrill of having a place which I felt really suited me.

My husband’s efforts led to a steady growth in our menu, and we were making homemade hamburgers before McDonalds arrived, and delicious pasta. We went to the Printemps factory to buy our bread.(...) We had apple and pumpkin pies, which we made ourselves after looking at recipe books. Being the sort of people who would go all the way to Kobe for a pair of Mancin underwear, it was natural that we put an extraordinary amount of effort into our food selection. It seemed like the menu was growing daily.

At that time, the Van Jacket company’s offices were located nearby, and employees would start coming to the cafe during the daytime...it was almost like an extension of their university lives. The area looked like Aoyama in Tokyo as it used to be, with designers’ offices (including that of [department store] Daimaru above our cafe) and small printers’ shops. However, in addition to Van staff, others who came to drink coffee were just ordinary middle-aged men, and the place would become quiet around 6pm. Even in August of that first year, the customers would taper out at nightfall. People around us would offer all kinds of advice, such as “Wouldn’t it be better to close earlier?” [I would reply that] “I wanted to have a cafe where people could drink coffee until late at night. What’s the use in giving up now?”

That was the whole purpose of setting up the cafe, and it was not at all to do with making a big profit or earning lots of money. If that had been our objective, we wouldn’t have deliberately chosen this location. While being aware of the needs of a waitress we were employing who was older than us, we kept open two more months until 10pm, holding the firm belief that “customers will definitely come”. From that time, I have continued to hold the belief that if you create something good, people will always come. We made plastic matches with our label on the packs, handing them out in Shinsaibashi during quiet times at the shop, and
thought of various ways to attract customers to come at night. And then in September, suddenly the cafe was filled with fashionable university students. The summer vacation had finished, everyone was back at school, and apparently people had heard about the cafe by word-of-mouth (*Meets Regional* 1997b).

The final part of Ms Higiri’s account of the early days of Amerika-mura was carried in the following month’s edition of the magazine:

Students came and stayed in the evenings. It was fun, but we worked very hard. One of my [ex-]husband’s friends was TS, who had been in the same year as him at elementary school(...). Like me, he had grown up with Minami as his garden. One day, TS brought a surfboard to the cafe. This led to his surfer friends starting to come to [our cafe] Loop. At that time (in the early 70s), there was a clear division into three styles, the neat ‘fashion’ represented by Van staff, the ‘dirty’ fashion favoured by the people who like surfing, and the ‘hippy’ style worn by people into music. Everyone was fashionable, and I think it would be an interesting spectacle to recreate [that situation] nowadays.

I can recall that as I was busy working, customers who liked music would freely play records, and outside there was always someone waxing a surfboard. People who were into cars and students on dates used to use the cafe like it was their own room. From around this time, overseas artists started coming [to Japan] and we often handled concert tickets. We even got involved to the extent of chartering a Loop bus for the Rolling Stones concert in 1973 (which was cancelled just before the event). On the day of a concert, we would get together dressed in a particular style according to the artist and go off together in high spirits. No sooner had we noticed that the first group had arrived back from the concert than the whole cafe was overflowing with people, with that artist’s music playing at high volume(...)

Soon, TS, JS, K from Dept [store name] and others headed off to the West Coast and Hawaii to surf. Gradually, the surfing boom arrived. I think those guys surfed more often than anyone else in Japan. Chigasaki and Shōnan [surfing areas near Tokyo] came after that, I’m sure. After they came back, things got really busy again. Surfers would come to the cafe one after the other to hear their stories. The place became enlivened by fashion and music from ‘the source’. We started stocking used surfboards and T-shirts and even sold a car after advertising it in the cafe.
People came to trust me and I gave out all kinds of advice, and this was perhaps because I was a little older than them and used to looking after people as I had two younger brothers. We even travelled to Kyoto for a snowfight, customers divided into two teams, the surfers’ group and the ‘beautiful’ group (those who liked fashion and music).

Those people went out to create all kinds of work that hadn’t existed before. People who assembled all kinds of odds and ends from the neighbourhood, loaded them all in a van and created the job of ‘stylist’. People who had been mere hairdressers transformed themselves into ‘hair designers’. And I think TS was the first person to make surfboards in Japan. It was a period when all kinds of jobs and ideas were born (Meets Regional 1997c).

Ms Higiri recalled in a later interview that it had been a period when “if we thought something was fun, we’d do it”, adding that “we’d rationalise it later.”

Her account of her fateful trip along Suomachi-dōri one afternoon in 1969 illustrates the power which can be generated at points in time when personal trajectories pass through certain places. New meanings are created at such points, life-paths are diverted, places are transformed. In a sense, Ms Higiri’s first encounter with what was to become Amerika-mura encapsulates the forces which link experiences of place to understandings of personal and collective identity. Her description of day-to-day life at the café further highlights how places gain meaning as the points of intersection for numerous such personal trajectories. In addition, her narrative evokes an ‘authentic’ past in which young people followed their own personal passions and placed little emphasis on commercial motives. Further, her account styles the early Amerika-mura as a site richly imbued with the mood of Mita’s (1992) ‘Dream Period’, discussed in 2.5 above, and the fascination with the ‘new’ and the ‘foreign’ encapsulated in the 1970 Expo, explored in 3.3.2 above. However, Ms Higiri’s account is only one of many narratives which compete to describe the ‘birth’ of Amerika-mura.
5.2.2 ORIGIN MYTHS II: AMERIKA-MURA AS ‘BACKSTAGE’

A further account of the early history of the area and the role of Loop is provided by Mr Keiichi Morimoto [Plate 5.2], president of the Amerika-mura Association, in an interview published in a Kansai Electric Company magazine:

This area began to change about twenty years ago. Before that (...) it was a warehouse area for shops and department stores in Shinsaibashi-suji and Ebisubashi. (...) Van [Jacket company]’s headquarters were here [too]. Young people doing design work for Van, (...) various kinds of planners, people involved with display work for Van stores and department stores, copywriters and people from advertising agencies like Hakuhodo and Dentsū, all these people would come in and out of the Van office. There was Van, and Sanyō...and Renown [apparel company] and Union...all kinds of companies had their headquarters here.

Amerika-mura was the backstage, and the front was Shinsaibashi-suji. Then young designers started to drift across Mido-suji [to the area which was to become Amerika-mura]. They felt that over here the canvas was still blank, and that they could do something interesting here in the way of urban design. The economy was healthy, and they called out to the young people minding the warehouses. Usually it would be a family member running the warehouse. (...) Usually, the son or daughter [of a shopowner]. (...) In the end, it wasn’t much fun looking after a warehouse, and by chance there was this cafe called Loop. (...) [Customers there] used to talk about all kinds of things, asking each other which warehouse they worked at and the like. [The design staff suggested to the kids working at the warehouse] to go to the US and learn [about the trends there]. At that time, the easiest place to go to was the West Coast...Los Angeles. (...) So they went over there and studied all kinds of apparel shops. And they brought back surfboards...(...)and jeans and things. As there was nowhere to put them, they put them in a corner of their warehouses.

After that, just at the time when they put them there, the oil shock suddenly arrived, and young people [came to] dislike arcade-style shopping areas. They started coming across Mido-suji, and happened upon the things lying around in the warehouses...jeans and things...things that looked cheap, and started buying them. That was what led to the name ‘Amerika-mura’ being given [to the district]. It was probably
because the jeans and surfboards and things that they bought there had
the label ‘Made in USA’. Once those things had sold, they [the people
running the warehouses] would go back to America, buy more goods and
bring them back. Then they would be sold again. As time went by, the
shops were selling more than those in Shinsaibashi. At first the people
who lived around here didn’t like it. [They would say that] ‘Amerika­
mura’ sounds gocha-gocha (‘messy and disordered’). [But] it didn’t
make sense to get angry at anyone because the name became associated
with the district through a natural process. Those kids who originally
were running warehouses started up shops of their own will, so [in a
sense] it couldn’t be helped. However, the name ‘Amerika-mura’ did not
fade away...it grew and grew...the power of young people is amazing
(Unnumbered pages from unnamed text provided by Mr. Morimoto;
approximate date 1996).

Mr Morimoto’s comments are interesting in that they contrast Amerika­
mura with Shinsaibashi, portraying it as a kind of ‘backstage’ zone, and
his understanding of the early period of its history revolves around a
differentiation between the people and practices of the district and those
of neighbouring areas. His comments also suggest that early growth in
the district’s popularity as a place to visit and shop roughly coincided
with the adoption of a name for the area. It may be proposed that the
naming of the district marked a critical point in its history, as the
collection of warehouses and cafes became a ‘place’ and Amerika-mura
became part of the ‘front stage’ with which it had previously been
contrasted. This issue is further explored later in this thesis.

Mr Morimoto also provided me with a timeline detailing the historical
development. The first item is the opening of Ms Higiri’s cafe in July
1969. It also notes a “surfing and skateboarding boom” in 1975, noting
that the same year witnessed the opening of the “first mini shoppu
(‘small shop’) selling fashion goods in Amerika-mura”, Our House,
followed by the Gallup store. It also notes that the name ‘Amerika­
mura’ became established following the 200th anniversary of American
independence in 1976.

Mr Morimoto’s timeline also refers to the role of the media as a catalyst
in the growth of the district. It explains that Amerika-mura was featured in the local (Kansai region) media in mid-April 1978 as Amerika-mura. An undated and unsourced article (from around 1996) provided to me by Mr Morimoto notes that the district first featured in local BK Channel’s Nyūzu Waido 640 (News Wide 640) programme in 1978, in a feature titled ‘Minami no Amerika-mura’ (‘Amerika-mura in Minami [district].’) It argues that this local feature led to the district’s appearance on the national television show Nyūzu Sentā 9-ji (Nine o’clock news centre) in late April of the same year.

An article carried in the regional magazine Meets Regional further describes the significance of this broadcast, which it dates to 11 April 1978, noting the title “‘Wakamono ga tsukuri, Amerika-mura to yobareru Ōsaka-shi Minami-ku Sumiya-machi’ (lit. ‘Sumiya-machi in Minami Ward of Osaka City, known as Amerika-mura, built by young people’)” (Meets Regional 1998). Mr Morimoto’s undated article (noted above) also describes how the national broadcast prompted an avalanche of interest in Amerika-mura from media organisations, with magazines, newspapers and television stations sending journalists into the district to source material for special reports. It claims that the area could never have become so popular “without the eizo-rashii eizo (‘authentic images’) in the television news featuring young people in the Age of the Image” (undated article noted above).

The above discussion highlights the historical interplay between the practices of individuals within Amerika-mura and discourses which have attempted to frame and categorise the district through a variety of representations. It suggests that the area began to function on at least two levels as early as 1978: as a physical site of creative entrepreneurship and social interaction, and as a spectacularised site of mass consumption in the ‘framing discourses’ of local government and business narratives and fashion and tourism media representations. This theme is further explored in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 below.

Mr Morimoto’s timeline (introduced above) also notes that there were approximately thirty “sāfā kankei no mise (‘surfing-related stores’)” in
1979, a rapid decline in interest from 1980 led to many of the original stores facing bankruptcy in 1981. It describes how an "Amerika-mura Fea (‘Amerika-mura Fair’)" was jointly organised in 1983 by the Amerika-mura Suomachi-dōri wo Utsukushiku suru Kai (Association for Beautifying Suomachi Street in Amerika-mura, the forerunner of current (2002) local business grouping, Amerika-mura no Kai (Amerika-mura Association)) and the Amerika-mura Yunion (Amerika-mura Union), the latter a now-defunct informal grouping of shop owners initially headed (1983) by Ms Higiri. The purpose of the fair, it notes, was to inspire a "tachinaoshi (‘comeback’)" for the district. The timeline further notes the inclusion of Amerika-mura as a "yuniiku taun (‘unique town’)" in 1983 as part of Osaka’s urban planning manifesto, the 21st Century Plan noted in 3.3.1 above.

5.2.3 ORIGIN MYTHS III: VAN JACKET COMPANY AND MODERNITY AS FASHION

An alternative argument regarding the origin of the district is offered by the Van Jacket company noted above, whose employees often visited the Loop cafe during the early 1970s. In the retrospective publication Van Jaketto Hakubutsukan (Van Jacket Museum), (Ought to, inc., 1993), the claim is made that "Amerika-mura was a young people’s district first created by Mr Kensuke Ishizu [company founder and president] as the birthplace of Van Jacket company" (1993:21). In an interview with 83 year-old Mr Ishizu, where he is introduced as "the young people’s guru" (1993:22), he goes on to add that “The only legacies that I have left are Amerika-mura, Aoyama [a fashionable area of Tokyo] and all the many people who have worked at Van” (1993:25).

The Meets Regional article (1998) noted above also emphasises the importance of the Van Jacket to the early development of Amerika-mura, noting the role of President Ishizu in introducing modified American fashion styles to the Japanese market, and pioneering innovative promotional campaigns using nascent men's fashion magazines during the 1960s and 1970s. It notes Ms Mariko Higiri’s (introduced in 5.2.1 above) claim that Mr Ishizu had popularised a
philosophy of fashion which was not based on the idea of “selling things” (Meets Regional 1998:31), but on having “common sense as an international [i.e. globally minded] person” (1998:31).

It is ironic, as the above article notes, that Van declared bankruptcy only a few days prior to the television broadcast in April 1978 introducing Amerika-mura to a national audience. The reporter featured in the broadcast, Mr Tōru Ōtsuka, argues in the article that the early-to-mid 1970s marked a shift in the national mood. He claims that the smart, sophisticated Van look based on the United States East Coast college style had fallen out of favour, partly as a result of its perceived association with the forces and opinions which had led the United States to enter, and ultimately lose, the Vietnam War. He also argues that the relaxed and casual West Coast ‘look’ and lifestyle offered an appealing alternative, particularly as Japan was undergoing a period of economic uncertainty in the wake of the oil crisis. Nevertheless, while Mr Ōtsuka argues that Van suffered by no longer reflecting the mood among youth in the 1970s, he adds the claim that “if it hadn’t been for Van, Amerika-mura wouldn’t have been born” (Meets Regional 1998:31).

A newspaper article written by the same author (Mr Tōru Ōtsuka) introducing Amerika-mura in 1978 provides further insights into the demise of Van, noted above. The article notes Trans Pack shopowner Mr Masayoshi Nishimura’s (30) argument that the Van’s ‘Ivy League look’ is “Tokyo-style, European style”, and his comment that “I just feel that it doesn’t suit Osaka” (Dentsūhō 1978). Mr Ōtsuka explains that while ‘Tokyo-style’ fashion is “hinichijō-teki (‘not for everyday [use]’)”, ‘Osaka-style’ fashion is based on the philosophy which is “fudanchaku-teki (‘for everyday wear’)” (Dentsūhō 1978). He also implies that Amerika-mura developed in Osaka as a home of ‘surfer fashion’ because of the city’s traditional emphasis on practicality and functionality over neatness and smartness in the context of fashion.
5.2.4 FURTHER NARRATIVES

One of the clearest descriptions of how the area first developed is offered by FM radio disc jockey, veteran local personality and former Loop cafe patron Mr ‘Mark-E’ Inoguchi (briefly introduced in 3.4.1 above) [Plate 5.3]. When asked whether Loop or Van was responsible for creating what was to become Amerika-mura, he replied:

Both theories are true. There was a cafe called Loop and staff from Van came to drink tea there. It was difficult to say [at that time] what the area would become. Everyone has their own story.

He also appears to at least partially refute the myth that the area had originally been a place where people put passion before profit, arguing that “from the start, there were two levels”, and noting the example of the Sun Village complex (which opened in the late 1970s) as a commercial venture. He further explains that in the beginning, there were only people with hobbies. Later, the media and capital flowed in, and the individually-owned shops around Triangle Park couldn’t defend themselves, they didn’t have the right nor the resolve to stop it. (interview 1 October 1997)

Yet another theory is proposed by Mr Umemoto (41) [Plate 5.4], who managed a nightclub in the district during the late 1970s. He argues that “The person who created Amerika-mura was Kanazawa Teruo of Our House” (noted briefly in 5.2.2 above), adding that the store had opened in 1976. During three years spent studying in Los Angeles (1975-78), Mr Umemoto provided information about the local surf fashion scene to Mr Kanazawa and arranged shipments of clothing for his store from California. He returned to Osaka in 1978 to help establish and manage a nightclub, Point After, which became the principal rival to the Palms disco opened by Ms Mariko Higiri (introduced in 5.2.1 above) after the closure of her cafe Loop. His playing-down of her role in the creation of the district may be partly explained by this historic rivalry.

Nevertheless, two 1978 newspaper articles introducing Amerika-mura also emphasise the role of Mr Kanazawa in the early development of the district, both describing him as a “kaitakusha (‘pioneer’)” (Dentsūhō
1978; *Yomiuri Shimbun* 1978), the latter arguing that "the face of the area began to change" following the opening of his Our House store in 1976 (*Yomiuri Shimbun* 1978). The *Dentsūhō* article even claims similarities between the "fūdo ('natural features')" of Mr Kanazawa’s native Senshu district (located approximately eighty kilometres south of Osaka) and California, describing both as "open, free, simple, unrefined" (*Dentsūhō* 1978).

A further theory is presented in Kobe publisher *KG Jōhō*’s 1999 guide to Amerika-mura, further discussed in Chapter 7 below. The guide introduces flea-market operator and veteran of the district Mr Yoshihisa Sasaki, and argues that he was directly responsible for the creation of the district. It notes his journey to California in 1966, where he experienced an enormous "‘karuchā shokku ('culture shock')’" upon discovering "hippies" selling "hand-made accessories" and "furugi ('used clothing')" (1999:67). He was also struck by their "‘self-expression, risaikuru ('recycling'), komyunikēshon ('communication')’" (1999:67). Returning to Japan and entering the travel business, he decided to organise a tour to California in 1971 aimed at "Osaka artists and musicians", prompted by a desire to "‘let other young people have direct contact with the American culture that I had experienced’" (1999:67). 160 young people participated in the tour, and the article notes how it prompted an unanticipated outcome. As Mr Sasaki recalls,

‘there were young people buying up thousands of second-hand records and clothes and bringing them back [to Japan]. They came back from the tour and started setting up shops, one after the other [here]’ (1999:67).

It appears from this account that Mr Sasaki’s tour, named ‘*Amerika: natsu no jin*’ ('America: the summer camp’), acted as a major catalyst for the early growth of the district. Organised in the year after the hugely popular Expo 70 during a period when overseas travel was still relatively rare for most Japanese, it provided a convenient and direct means of connecting a creative and enterprising group of Osaka youth with material goods which embodied their shared fascination with America. Interior designer Yoshikawa Masakatsu also emphasises the role of Mr Sasaki’s tour in his overview of Osaka shopping areas,
although dates the tour to 1970 (http://home.inet-osaka.or.jp/~kajagogo/SHOPPINGMALL1.html).

The KG Jōhō (1999) article also points to the “vitality” (1999:67) of the “baby-boomer generation”, and notes Mr Sasaki’s argument that members of this generation “thought and acted instinctively” (1999:67). It ends with the claim that “you can’t talk about the birth of Amerika-mura without mentioning Mr Sasaki’s culture shock” (1999:67).

A feature on the early (1979) Amerika-mura in the fashion magazine Nonno describes how three shops (Our House, Goods and Gallup) “suddenly appeared” approximately five years earlier (around 1974), and notes that they dealt in “American goods” (Nonno 1979:74). It explains that there were fifty stores in the district (in 1979), and that it was famous throughout the nation as a “safā rukku no mekka (‘mecca of the surfer look’)”(1979:74), even describing the district as the “eye of the storm” (1979:71). The feature also includes a reference to the “shops overflowing with the aesthetic taste and passion of the young owners in their twenties and thirties” (1979:74).

5.2.5 AMERIKA-MURA AND AMERICA

A passion for America and American goods is also alluded to by Mr Inoguchi (introduced in 5.2.4 above) in his account of the development of Amerika-mura. He recalls that during his school days (in the 1960s), he had had an “Amerika e no akogare (‘yearning for America’)” (interview 7 October 1997), adding that “by wearing American things, you were wrapping your body in the Amerika no seishin (‘American spirit’)”. He also argued that “there is loads of culture packed into one item [of clothing].” Mr Inoguchi proposes that the West Coast culture was the most readily accessible part of ‘America’ for young people in Japan at that time, adding that “New York is not America.” He also argues that as interest had shifted over the decades from the US West Coast and its free-spirited, casual clothing and attitudes back to the more fashion-conscious East Coast approach (exemplified by the Van ‘look’
of the 1960s described in 5.2.3 above), “the mura (‘village’) became a machi (‘town’).”

Interestingly, Mr Inoguchi also notes that the district has never been a place in which only American goods are sold, citing the example of the earlier popularity of French label Dartisan. (interview 1 October 1997) Although he notes the dominance of American items, he claims that “it was not only American goods...it was actually sekai-mura (‘world village’).”

In relation to the naming of the district, I had been informed that Mr Sakurai, then-owner of the store Our House, had been approached by media representatives around 1977, intrigued by the spectacular growth in the district. This account describes that when asked to give a name to the area, he had replied “How about Amerika-mura?”. However, landscape artist Ozasa Mitsuhiko (2000) suggests that the name was first used much earlier, appearing in the information magazine Pure Jānaru (Play Journal) in the context of a promotion at Sogo department store on nearby Midō-suji. This 1972 promotion, according to Ozasa (2000), was called “‘Amerika-mura: natsu no jin’ (‘Amerika-mura summer camp’), sharing an uncanny similarity with the name of Mr Sasaki’s tour (described in 5.2.4 above) (2000:30).

5.2.6 SUMMARY

Based on the evidence available, it may be possible to suggest that a combination of factors led to the development of what was to Amerikamura. Firstly, a central location and low rents allowed young entrepreneurs to open small retail operations at relatively minimal expense. Secondly, the oil crisis of the early 1970s led to a demand for cheap clothing, particularly among young people with low disposable incomes. Thirdly, as noted by several people in the area, there was a ‘yearning for America’ which young people felt at the time, and surf culture may have provided them with a channel through which to experience America through the clothing and lifestyle with which it was associated. Through her first husband’s surfing connections, Ms Higiri (introduced in 5.2.1 above) was able to develop her café as a meeting-
place for local surfers, regardless of the fact that it was located at least fifty kilometres from the nearest beach. Its funky decor and youthful atmosphere also appealed to the young, stylish employees of Van and students from local universities, and this eclectic mixture created a kind of modern-day Japanese ‘salon’. At the same time, Mr Sasaki’s 1971 tour (introduced in 5.2.4 above) helped to ignite and channel the ‘yearning for America’ of the time, permitting a large number of young people to visit California and source items to bring back and sell in the fledgling Amerika-mura.

It is impossible to say whether or not surf shops and used clothing businesses would have been attracted to the area in the mid-late 1970s if Loop had never existed, or if Mr Sasaki’s tour had not been organised. As Doreen Massey (1993) argues, “each place is the focus of a distinct mixture of wider and more local social relations and ...the juxtaposition of these relations may produce effects that would not have happened otherwise” (1993:68). The cafe and the tour appear to have acted as catalysts for the later development of Amerika-mura, both helping to define and encourage a particular kind of retail operation in which the boundary between ‘customers’ and ‘friends’ was blurred, and establishing a local mood which others would later attempt to consolidate, duplicate or exploit. The *Meets Regional* article (1998) discussed in 5.2.3 above summarises a common theme which differentiates ‘naturally developing’ districts to those which are planned, arguing that Amerika-mura:

> is not a place which developed as a result of people like urban planning consultants or local governments drawing up a plan, it is [based on] activities [which prompted] a natural manifestation (*Meets Regional* 1998:33).

What this argument overlooks, however, is the way in which Amerika-mura has always functioned as a site in which notions of creativity and difference are mediated through multiple discourses, each seeking to define its own authority and authenticity. In this context, the district functions as a site in which the parameters of themes such as ‘natural’ and ‘planned’ are constantly and continuously redefined.
5.3  NARRATIVES OF NOSTALGIA II: VETERANS' ACCOUNTS

Although many young people whom I spoke to noted no significant change in the district since their first visits during the mid-1990s, all of the older interviewees claimed that the area had been more exciting or interesting in the past. This section includes three accounts of the history of the district given by local shopowners during extended interviews. The following section includes a selection of comments made by individuals of various ages in relation to historical changes in the district.

5.3.1 MR KAZUO MAEDA: OWNER OF CORN

Mr Kazuo Maeda (65) is the owner of the longest-surviving sutoriito fasshon (‘street fashion’) store in Amerika-mura, Corn [Plate 5.5], and was the first person to provide me with a general overview of the history of the district. He explained that the area used to be “a very depressing area” occupied by small offices, adding that “in the old days, there was nobody here.” He had heard of the Loop cafe discussed above, but didn’t remember any details about it. He went on to mention that the sons of rich families used to park their cars illegally in the area as it was known that the police did not book people for parking infringements there, and then cross over to the entertainment district on the eastern side of Midō-suji on foot. He recalled that these young people were among the customers of the first shops to develop in the area, the first being Goods in 1975. Goods was a Japanese jeans manufacturer, and its shop was more like a showroom for its products. He recalled that it had been located around the location of the present Milestone store, and that it had been highly successful.

After twenty years working as a sarariiman (‘office worker’), Mr Maeda left his job and established his first shop in Kyōbashi in 1972. Three
years later, he closed that store and opened a new one in Shinsaibashi-suji, this latter store operating until the early 1980s.

He opened his Amerika-mura store in late 1977, and he remembered that there were only six such fashion-related stores in the area at that time, including Goods and Gallup. One of the advantages of operating in the district was the low rent, around 50,000 yen per month at the time when Mr. Maeda opened his shop. He further recalled that another store was set up in 1977 by a Korean in his early thirties on the corner of Suomachi-dōri and Yotsubashi-suji, and that this man had visited the US, been influenced by surfer fashion there, “copied that style” and began to stock his shop with such items. At this point, Mr. Maeda mentioned that this was the way that Amerika-mura had begun, with the “surfer look”.

We also discussed the origin of the name ‘Amerika-mura.’ Mr. Maeda said that it had developed “naturally” as the area became known for its shops selling imported American clothing. He explained that the use of the term mura (‘village’) in the name was important, as it contrasts with the idea of the city or town and evokes inaka (‘the countryside’) for Japanese; places like nearby Nara for Osaka residents. Comparing the district to SoHo in New York, he said “shops sprung up one by one in what was a desolate neighbourhood.” He remembered that the area became known gradually by “kuchikomi (‘word-of-mouth’), and that it began to develop rapidly as a youth fashion district in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Surf clothing formed the core of the fashion boom, and from 1978-79, he recalls that “there were even people coming here from Tokyo.” The expanded distribution of shops, particularly the multistorey complexes Tom’s House (1978) and Sun Village (1979), led to the diffusion of customer flow throughout the district. Mr. Maeda remembers that until that time, visitors to the area had entered from one of two points (at Yotsubashi-suji near Triangle Park and near the intersection of Midō-suji and Dōtombori) and moved along one route using the roads which connected these points, whereas subsequently Suomachi-dōri became an additional route for shoppers. Sun Village was established by the Osaka-based Van company (whose employees
had earlier frequented the Loop cafe), however Mr Maeda recalls that “they couldn’t get into the ‘American look’” and the complex was taken over by a textile wholesaler company owned by Mr Okimoto, the only other fashion retailer who has operated continuously in Amerika-mura since the late 1970s.

Mr Maeda characterised 1977-82 as the first period in the history of Amerika-mura, drawing an upside-down U-shaped diagram to illustrate the rise and subsequent fall in the district’s popularity during that period. He explained that by the early 1980s, “the surfer look had ended” and that young people began instead flocking to designer clothing boutiques such as Bal on the other side of Midō-suji as “items by young Japanese designers came into fashion.” He recalled that 1982-83 was the darkest period for Amerika-mura, and that many of the original shops closed down during this time, remembering that people had then said “manzai [two-man comedy routine associated with Osaka] and Amerika-mura are finished.” Realising that running two shops was too much of a financial burden, he closed his older shop and retained his Amerika-mura store, considering that it was better located. At this time, Mr Maeda never considered closing his shop, as he thought that he couldn’t give up or change businesses at his age. He explained how the area had grown again since the slump, noting that change now occurred so rapidly that if he was busy in his shop for a few months and then took a walk around the district, he was always surprised at the changes. He suggested that I talk to some of the owners of newer shops to find out more details about developments in the district since the slump, saying that he knew best about “the olden day stuff.”

5.3.2 MR ŌNAKA: MANAGER OF LAPIN BIG STEP STORE

Mr Ōnaka’s first encounter with the district that was to become Amerika-mura was as a ten-year-old in the 1960s. He explained that “there was nothing in Amerika-mura” at that time, and that shopping was concentrated on the Shinsaibashi-suji area on the other (eastern) side of Midō-suji. He recalled that there had been photography and graphic design studios, in addition to bars and haberdashery outlets, and used the
term “gocha-gocha (‘mixed-up, messy’)” to describe the mood of the area. He said that the district had its origins when certain surfers began buying surf clothing in the US and selling it there, reflecting the comments of Mr Inoguchi and Mr Sasaki (introduced in 5.2 above) in his claim that “everyone...both shopowners and customers...was taken by the West Coast image”. He remembered that one of the first shops, Our House, had been established in the early seventies around the same time as his parent store in Umeda. Mr Onaka himself began working at an ‘American casual’ store, Goods (noted by Mr Maeda in 5.3.1 above), at the age of nineteen, later moving to the Lapin store in Umeda where he remained until its new Amerika-mura store opened in the Big Step complex in 1993. During the early days, he recalled that “four or five stores sprung up here and there”, while in 1977, “the number of stores increased dramatically, and he dated the name ‘Amerika-mura’ to this period.

He claimed that the atmosphere of the district had been quite different from that of today, saying that “At that time, there was still a ‘hand-made’ feel [to the district]...it wasn’t commercial.” He also noted that the way people used the district also differed, claiming that “most people had a reason for coming here”, and recalling that customers would often spend a considerable amount of time talking with shop staff. Like Mr Maeda of Com (introduced in 5.3.1 above), he remembered that the district had experienced a period of relative stagnation in the early 1980s, attributing it to the success of designer brand ‘DC’ (‘designer character’) clothing. He also noted that the ‘Shibuya casual’ boom which originated in Tokyo in 1987-88 led to a resurgence of interest in second-hand clothing, recalling that “in less than a year, the area was booming again...it was a ‘quiet boom.’” Asked whether this development showed that the Osaka fashion scene simply followed Tokyo’s lead, he said that “there was some overlap, but there was also a particular Osaka dokuji no nori (‘Osaka element’) in the boom.”

Mr Onaka divided the history of Amerika-mura into four periods, the early stage (1970-77), first boom (1977-82), slump (1982-87), and the
second boom (1987 onwards), adding that “the commercial element has become stronger” and “prices have increased” from 1992 onwards.

5.3.3 Mr Hirokazu Hasegawa: Manager of El Paso Bar

El Paso dates from the earliest period in the history of Amerika-mura, opening its doors in 1972. Manager Mr Hirokazu Hasegawa [Plate 5.6] recalled that “in the beginning, West Shinsaibashi [the area now commonly known as Amerika-mura] attracted no special attention”, adding that “it wasn’t a good location...just an area where ordinary people lived.” He compared the atmosphere in the district in the early days to that of present-day Horie, the area to the west of Amerika-mura on the opposite side of Yotsubashi-suji, adding that “there were shops in among ordinary houses...Amerika-mura had a relaxed atmosphere.” He explained that the area had developed “naturally”, remembering the early shopowners who would travel to the US to buy stock for their shops, especially used surfboards and jeans. “They would quickly catch the latest trends and bring goods back here”, he added. He also recalled that each shop had its own unique sales point, giving the example of one which sold ripped jeans at 200 yen a pair, and that the newer clothing shops were interspersed with older ones that had been established in earlier times, such as barber-shops.

He claimed that the area around El Paso had witnessed the most dramatic change during the history of Amerika-mura, lamenting that “the unique character has gone”. He now felt that El Paso had become “a bar in the middle of an amusement park.” [El Paso closed down in 2000].

5.4 Narratives of Nostalgia III: Further Commentary on Historical Change

As can be understood from comments made in the accounts above, there is a strong sense of nostalgia among those whose lives have been associated with Amerika-mura since the earliest period of its history.
This theme could also be found in comments by long-term visitors and shopowners in the district included in an article published in the January 1995 edition of Cazi-Cazi, the only Osaka-based sutoriito fashhon (‘street fashion’) magazine. An unnamed disc jockey is quoted as claiming that in the early days,

The people who came together here were cool Osaka people who had their own lifestyles and individuality. The young guys among them learned about having fun with fashion, music and alcohol here...not just because it was fun...they learned about style. More than anything else, everyone put all their energies into what they loved (Cazi-Cazi 1995a).

5.4.1 AMERIKA-MURA AS SCHOOL OF STYLE

Hat-shop owner Mr Junichi Imanaka recalls that young people were attracted to the area by the trendy older “pleasure-seekers” who hung out there, who portrayed “a sense of being difficult to approach”. “We plucked up our courage, dressed up stylishly and made our way here with a mixture of fear and reverence” (Cazi-Cazi 1995b). He claimed that these older role models have disappeared during the seven-year period (to 1995) in which he had been operating his shop, adding that the “the standard of kids coming to Amerika-mura has dropped too” (Cazi-Cazi 1995b). Asked by magazine staff to further clarify this statement, he noted the occurrence of shoplifting and “not handling goods properly” (Cazi-Cazi 1995b), adding that he had begun his shop because he loved hats, not just to make profits from the business. He added that he saw his role as guiding young people in how to wear hats stylishly and how to become more stylish generally, in a similar way to that which he had been shown by shopowners in the district during his youth. He said that he still believed that there was a “unique atmosphere” in the district, adding that “fashion has a mysterious power to become associated with a person’s lifestyle or way of thinking” (Cazi-Cazi 1995b).

The role of shop managers as ‘style instructors’ in the early days was also mentioned by an unnamed shopowner quoted in Nihon Keizai Shimbun’s 1996 publication Ōsaka, who recalled that “In the early days, customers used to shop after being given advice by shop managers”
Another unnamed shopowner who has operated a clothing and bric-a-brac store in the area since the early days claimed that “At first, people whose hobby was surfing used to sell the things they liked, but there has been a gradual increase in the number of shopowners who are into making money” (1996:168).

5.4.2 AMERIKA-MURA AS HOME OF KOSEI (‘UNIQUE CHARACTER’)

One of the most common responses to questions about changes in the district in the interviews which I conducted during 1997 was that the shops, products and people there had become less diverse and therefore less interesting. There was a sense that the increase in the number of visitors had paradoxically resulted in a process of standardisation which was manifested in various ways. Many informants used the Japanese term kosei, translatable as ‘individuality’ or ‘unique character’, in its negative form in their references to this process. Mr Nishizaki, a skateboard-store owner who first visited the area in 1975 two years before the beginning of explosive growth in the district, recalled that “each shop had its own unique character” and “people didn’t copy each other”, claiming that “it was a much better area than it is today...to the extent that I’d like to go back [to those times].” Shigeru (35), a shop owner who was motivated to establish his own business in the area after narrowly escaping death in the 1995 Hanshin (Kobe) Earthquake, claimed that “Amerika-mura used to be deep.” Arguing that the successful stores today were those which put profits first, he added that “the goods they stock are all the same. There is no individuality.”

Similar comments were made by older shopowners and shop managers interviewed for a series of forty short articles on Amerika-mura published between April 1998 and February 1999 in the evening edition of the mainstream newspaper, Mainichi Shim bun. After quoting one of the more negative comments made by interviewees in relation to historical change in Amerika-mura (included below), journalist Hamada Motoko added that “I often heard this kind of lament from people who had known Amerika-mura for a long time” (Mainichi Shim bun 1998b).
The comment in question was made by Mr Kiyoshi Yasuda, owner of the store Satan Arbeit. During his interview with the above newspaper, Mr Yasuda claimed that “‘Ame-mura [Amerika-mura] has become boring, full of the same kinds of shops’” (Mainichi Shimbun 1998b).

Another interviewee in the same series of articles, Mr Tarutani (38) of used clothing store Glamour, had operated his business in the district for the past thirteen years. He pointed to an increased density of people and businesses as a reason for his loss of interest over the years, mentioning that

‘I used to be attracted to Amerika-mura, when it was a place for trendy adults. Now, there are lots of kids [here], and too many shops have been packed into the area’ (Mainichi Shimbun 1998a).

However, he held an optimistic view regarding the future of the area, claiming that “In a few years time (...), I think it will be the shops that are a bit different which will remain” (Mainichi Shimbun 1998a). Mr Miyata (30), who now (1997) manages the Uncle Sam store which his uncle had established in 1978, appeared to share Mr Tarutani’s views regarding the present and future of the district, arguing that

‘[This area is] full of shops that just stock fad items...those shops have no iro (lit.‘colour’; in the sense of distinguishing feature or character). I want to keep [stocking] items that excite today’s young people’ (Mainichi Shimbun 1998c).

Criticisms regarding a lack of variety in the items for sale in the district were not restricted to staff of smaller, Osaka-based stores. Mr Takeshi Matsumura (51), manager of Tokyo-based clothing store L Factory’s Osaka outlet, also argued that:

‘There are lots of shops with no policy. Rents are high, and in order to survive, they have to carry items which will sell. If they do that, they’re just going to end up going bust’ (Mainichi Shimbun 1998f).

Another of the older stores, El Rodeo, was featured in the same series of newspaper articles on Amerika-mura in July 1998. Manager Mr Masushi Takao (34) had been working at the store for approximately
fifteen years since its establishment in the early 1980s. In the interview, he recalled that at that time,

‘there were only coffee shops and parking lots in that street. There were hardly any people on the street, and when it rained, no one came past at all. Nowadays, even when it rains, there are both cars and people on the street’ (Mainichi Shimbun 1998d).

5.4.3 AMERIKA-MURA AS SITE OF CREATIVITY

Later in the above interview, Mr Takao’s comments echoed those of Ms Higiri in her recollection of the excitement of setting up her cafe (noted in 5.2.1 above). He remembers that

‘There was a real sense of fun, creating the shop, creating the place (machi wo tsukuru). (...) You really felt alive. And I hated being under some kind of surveillance’ (Mainichi Shimbun 1998d).

Here, he implies that during the early days, the shopowners and their staff had felt a strong sense of agency, a sense that they had been largely in control of the process according to which the district was developing. However, he notes that the completion of the Big Step shopping complex in 1993 had changed the atmosphere of the area, adding that

‘all kinds of people have started coming here, the dorokusasa (‘gritty atmosphere’) has become watered down, and the area has ippanka-shite kita (‘become normalised’) (Mainichi Shimbun 1998d).

However, he demonstrates a willingness to adapt to the changed environment, claiming that

‘we expected that the type of customers would change. What is important is how you deal with them. If the fact that the number of people has increased means that it has become more lively, then that is a good thing. We’re all involved in creating fashion, so I think that we can all get along together [here]’ (Mainichi Shimbun 1998d).

Mr Takao’s comments here imply that, rather than simply buying and selling similar ‘fad’ items, all parties in Amerika-mura are involved in a creative project, that is, fashion. Importantly, his comments imply that this project has always been a central element in the identity of the
district. His arguments also suggest that the negative opinions of many veterans of the district may be partly derived from a perceived loss of control over the fashion process to large chain stores and the fashion media. However, his comments also imply that individuals today retain the ability to use fashion as a creative platform through the construction of an individual style.

Edagawa Koichi (1994) devotes an entire chapter of his *Osaka daitanken (Osaka grand exploration)* to Amerika-mura. His first visit to the area was not until 1980, and he recalls that most of the thirty or so fashion shops in the area at that time were run by people in their early thirties. He goes on to explain that

> They were all just people who purely and simply loved America, and even included some who had hung out there during the hippy period. Although devoted to fashion, what they were actually selling was a lifestyle. In other words, they weren’t swayed by fashion trends, turning a blind eye to all of that, and their ‘philosophy’ was to firstly stay true to their way of life (1994:105).

5.4.4 AMERIKA-MURA AS SITE OF DANGER

Several informants also claimed that the area had become safer and more accessible over the years. Mr Yamamoto, former owner of one of the first shops to open in the area, recalled that the district had been “hard to go into”, claiming that now it was “easy”, while Mr Otsuki (44), fashion designer and owner of a shop in nearby Minami-semba, remembered that it had been “a dangerous place to go at night” during the late 1960s and early 1970s, noting incidences of extortion and gang friction. Mr Umemoto (41) (noted above in the discussion concerning the origin of Amerika-mura) mentioned that it was “a place to park your car, a place to have a fight, a place to extort money, an unsafe area”, adding that “there was nobody at all around”. Shopowner Yasutomi (26) (further introduced in 6.4.2 below), who first visited the area around 1986, mentioned that “it was scary...there used to be some ‘outsiders’ here...yankii (‘yankee’; ‘rough’ kids)”, claiming that now “it’s become safe...and clean.”
5.5 THEORISING CHANGE: NARRATIVES OF TRANSITION

While the previous section presented four characteristics of early Amerika-mura offered by individuals in their nostalgic representations of the district, this section examines a series of arguments which attempt to explain reasons for the perceived historical changes in the district.

5.5.1 ECONOMICS AND THE EROSION OF KOSEI

In his discussion of Amerika-mura, introduced in 5.4.3 above, Edagawa (1994) later argues that the subsequent transformation of the district was the product of the rapid increase in material goods in Japan during the ‘bubble’ period of the 1980s, a period when “anything you wished for was available” (1994:109). He claims that “goods stopped being an expression of one’s lifestyle or philosophy” and that shops became involved in a battle for survival in a market characterised by increasingly fierce competition (1994:109). In order to differentiate themselves from other retailers, shops were forced to stock rare items or to handle a large variety of products in small quantities.

As early as 1987, mainstream newspapers were featuring articles which pointed to the effects of escalating rents on the district. In an article titled ‘Wakamono, shibomu shutten no yume (‘Young dreams of shop ownership fade’), the Nikkei Ryūtsū Shim bun claimed that escalating property prices had changed the “personality” of Amerika-mura, which it described as a “wakamono no machi (‘young people’s district’)”, and implied that an influx of “big Tokyo investors” had been at least partially responsible for this development (Nikkei Ryūtsū Shim bun 1987). It featured comments by Mr Mamoru Shibuya, described as having been involved in the early development of the district, and explained how he had discouraged younger friends from setting up their own shops due to the exorbitant rents. Comparing the state of affairs in 1987 to that of the earlier period when he had been active in the district, he was quoted as saying that:
originally, Amerika-mura was a place where shops with a home-made atmosphere were grouped together, various ideas were tried out, and from there fashions were born. Furthermore, it didn’t cost much money. But now, these escalating land prices have weakened that energy” (Nikkei Ryūtsū Shimbun 1987).

The article also included a prediction by then vice-president (later president) of the Amerika-mura Association, Mr Keiichi Morimoto (introduced in 5.2.2 above), that “the influx of Tokyo capital will end up changing the customer makeup, and the atmosphere of the district will also change even further” (Nikkei Ryūtsū Shimbun 1987).

The final section of the article implied a subtle conflict between the ‘guardians’ of the original atmosphere of Amerika-mura (such as small shopowners) and large-scale, ‘faceless’ companies setting up retail complexes and chain store outlets in the district. Under the banner “‘Locals mobilise their defense strategies’”, the article explained how “moves are now underway to preserve the atmosphere of the district” (Nikkei Ryūtsū Shimbun 1987), and pointed to the example of Mr Asano, whose company, Fleamarket, leased out spaces in carparks to stallholders at low rates on weekends. Mr Asano made the interesting observation that the influx of capital into the district during the late 1980s had not only changed its ‘feel’, but had also radically reconfigured the physical environment in which human activity took place:

‘It used to be a feature of Amerika-mura that business was carried out on the ground and first floors of buildings... it was a ‘flat’ district. Now it’s in the process of being transformed into a ‘three-dimensional’ place. Land prices around here are rising and there is no more leeway to expand, but we have to do something to help maintain the Amerika-mura-rashisa (‘Amerika-mura-like atmosphere’) (Nikkei Ryūtsū Shimbun 1987).

5.5.2 ‘NORMALISATION’ OF THE DISTRICT

According to features in mainstream newspaper articles, the collapse of the economic bubble in Japan in 1990 appears to have momentarily slowed, but by no means reversed the pace and direction of change in
Amerika-mura. In 1992, the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper featured a series of articles on Amerika-mura, the fifth of which was titled ‘Hade-na yakei, usureru kosei’ (‘Bright lights, fading character’), and featured the comments of Mr Hirosuke Tomita (36), introduced as “a former surfer who visited the area often during his youth and now runs a travel agency” (*Asahi Shimbun* 1992b). The article noted that Mr Tomita had established Spat, an all-night karaoke booth, near Triangle Park in June of the previous year (1991), and argued that its arrival was a sign of a major transformation in the identity of the district. More importantly, the article reiterated the claim made by many of the older people featured in this chapter that “The price paid for the explosive growth of the *mura* has been the loss of its unique character”, adding that “This is the feeling shared by those who were young during the period when the district was first becoming established” (*Asahi Shimbun* 1992b).

Beginning with Mr Tomita’s claim that “Amerika-mura is nearing the end of its role as a young people’s area” (*Asahi Shimbun* 1992b), the article explained that:

> The old *mura* (‘village’) used to be a totally ‘daytime place’. The shops which had been bustling with activity during the day closed their doors as evening approached, and the flow of pedestrians trickled to a halt. However, about one year ago, it started to liven up at night. Small bars and *pachinko* [Japanese slot-machine game] parlours were established in addition to Mr Tomita’s karaoke-bar, which is open until morning. Customers include middle-aged company employees and hostesses on their way back from work (*Asahi Shimbun* 1992b).

The article continued by arguing that a combination of factors had led to an inevitable change in the character of the district. However, what differentiated this argument from those of others introduced in this chapter was its emphasis on the transformation of Amerika-mura as the outcome of an ongoing process rather than a ‘rupture’ with a purer, more authentic past. As the author noted:
The conditions were in place for the *mura* to change. The massive escalation in rents made it difficult to establish businesses dealing in low-priced goods aimed at the youth market. Young people’s craving for luxury items forced retailers to stock the same items as those in Shinsaibashi-suji [arcade, on the eastern side of Midō-suji street]. And having reached saturation point, the popular shopping and entertainment district of Minami had nowhere else to expand but here (*Asahi Shimbun* 1992b).

While the author pointed out that “this place lined with boutiques and bars is not the same Amerika-mura as the one born from the dreams and yearnings of surfers” (*Asahi Shimbun* 1992b), the article was imbued with a sense of natural inevitability regarding the future of the district, summed up in the claim that “It is only a matter of time before the *mura* becomes a ‘place that never sleeps’, an ordinary entertainment zone” (*Asahi Shimbun* 1992b). However, rather than drawing upon a nostalgic sense of historical place here as a source of consolation, Mr Tomita argued that another place would inherit the district’s role as a site of youthful creative expression: “‘When it gets to that stage, young people will look for a new Amerika-mura somewhere else’” (*Asahi Shimbun* 1992b). The author of the article appeared to agree with his comments, claiming that “It is the trendsetting minority who will create such a place” (*Asahi Shimbun* 1992b).

**5.5.3 THE END OF A CYCLE?**

In a joint interview which I conducted with local disc jockey, Mr ‘Mark-E’ Inoguchi, and former owner of Loop, Ms Mariko Higiri, both mentioned the Japanese word *shun* (‘season’) when talking about historical change in Amerika-mura. Ms Higiri suggested that the district had had its season, and that what was taking place now was a pale and somewhat artificial reflection of an earlier ‘Golden Age’. She claimed that “Once the *shun* is finished, there is no vitality, no matter how many ‘spiritless’ people come together”, adding that “It takes more energy to reheat things the second time.” She considered that changes in the district could be at least partly attributed to the removal from view of those individuals directly involved in the creative process, noting that
“In the old days, the faces of the creators were visible...now they are totally invisible.” In her opinion, open and visible interaction between creative people had established Amerika-mura and there was now a dearth of ‘pioneers’ to maintain this tradition. As she put it, “There are no people to sow the seeds nowadays in Amerika-mura.” In this context, she argued that it was necessary for young people to know about the history of the district, saying that “We should teach them why Amerika-mura was born...I want to teach them about the origins, the roots.”

Ms Higiri’s argument that the ‘creators’ have vanished from Amerika-mura contrasts with that of L Factory shopowner Mr Matsumura, introduced in 5.4.2 above, whose store seeks out and assists up-and-coming fashion designers and arranges exhibitions four times a year at which their work may be showcased. In his interview with Mainichi Shimbun, he argued that

‘The number of ‘creators’ (kurētā) in Amerika-mura is increasing, but they have no space [of their own]. It would be good if we could create the sort of place (machi) where there is a good ‘match’ between local residents, companies and shopowners, as is the case with La Foret Harajuku’[the large shopping complex in Tokyo where the original L Factory store is located] (Mainichi Shimbun 1998f).

Intriguingly, journalist Ms Motoko Hamada notes immediately after the above quote that “It is common knowledge that not everyone in Amerika-mura shares this opinion” (Mainichi Shimbun 1998f).

5.6 YOUNGER PERSPECTIVES OF CHANGE

Younger shopowners and shop assistants also offered generally negative judgments on the transformation of the district during the past decade. Yūji (26), a shop assistant in Mr Onaka’s store in the Big Step complex (introduced in 5.3.2 above), had been coming to Amerika-mura since 1987. He recalled that “there was more individuality before...the shops, clothing, people who came here.” Takaharu (25) (further introduced in 6.5.2 below) had been coming to Amerika-mura since his first visit as a first-year high-school student in 1987, and opened a café in what may be
the geographic centre of the district in November 1994. The cafe (further discussed 6.5.2 below) is hidden away in a warren of alleys known as Gallage Mart, and does not become visible until one is almost outside the front entrance. He recalled that "there were a lot of people running their own businesses, lots of interesting people. [Now] it's become a place where people in business are just out to make money. Big business is here. It's become like a tourist attraction." In his discussion of Amerika-mura (noted in 5.4.3 above), Edagawa (1994) introduces a 28-year-old employee of a record store who first came to Amerika-mura when he was in senior high school in the early 1980s. He is quoted as saying that:

'There was an exciting atmosphere here, a feeling that something was different. There were clubs all over the place too. People who liked each other would get together and have fun. There was an energy here. There were lots of 'delinquent' adults here. You hardly see any nowadays...it's just young people' (1994:108).

Very few of those who first visited the district in the early 1990s noted a sense of trepidation on their first forays into the area. An exception was rapper and shop assistant Shigechiyo (19) (introduced more fully in 9.3.3 below, who first visited the area in 1991 and recalled that "it was a place you needed courage to come to." He added that "it had a scary image" and claimed that today "it's become easier to walk around in." Similarly, Munechika (16) remembered that it had been "a bit scary" on his first visit in 1996.

Most of the youngest visitors who had only begun to visit the district in the mid-1990s concentrated on aspects of the shops, clothing or people in their comments. When asked of their first impressions of the district, second-year high school student Shū (16) mentioned "there were lots of shops", while second-year senior high school student Shō (17) said that "there were loads of clothes...I thought it was amazing." In relation to clothing styles, there was a wide contrast in opinions among the young people whom I interviewed While Etsuko (23) argued that "there are lots of people wearing similar clothing [now]" and "everyone's into the same styles", several others claimed that "the number of fashionable
people has increased.” These included fourth-year university student Takahiro (22), second-year senior high school student Yoshimi (17), and ‘lunchbox bar’ worker Aeka (17). Bartender Tatsuhiro (20), who had been visiting the area for the past five years (until 1997), noted that “the number of people has increased, but the number of fashionable kids has dropped.”

The sense that the area was dangerous was missing from the remarks of these recent arrivals, although Masashi (17) recalled feeling trepidation on his first visit as a third-year junior high-school student around 1994. His friend Momohito (17) noted that “when I got here and saw the place, it was difficult to come in.” Asked why, he explained that it was “because I wasn’t wearing cool clothes.” A similar comment was made by working holiday student Mr Taku Okada (26), who had first visited the area as a fifteen-year-old around 1987, and whom I interviewed in Sydney, Australia. He recalled “going [there] with a pounding heart”, noting that he had “dressed up in my own way”, yet adding that “I was left with the feeling that I couldn’t go on like this” [i.e. dressing ‘unfashionably’]. He explained that he often felt “embarrassed” and “couldn't go into all of the shops”, recalling that “I was scared of being called out to by the shop staff.” Contrasting his feelings then and now, he argued that “I used to think I was unfashionable, but now I don't have any such feeling.”

It can be seen that a ‘scary’ image related to the place itself and the people found there which led young visitors to experience a thrilling and attractive sense of potential danger during the early period of its history has come to be replaced by a fear of being considered unfashionable by other young people and staff. The above accounts would appear to suggest that Amerika-mura has shifted from being a site of playful experimentation to a site of serious aesthetic judgment, a place where one is identified less by what one does than by what one wears.
During the early period of my fieldwork, I found myself sharing the disillusionment of the veterans, secretly wishing that I could wind the clock back to 1976 and witness those supposedly heady days of raw creative innovation. While investigating the sutoriito (‘street’) space of youth fashion which seemed to have so comprehensively colonised the district, I began to search furtively and obsessively for cracks in the seemingly peerless veneer of aesthetic consumption. At first, I began to explore the processes by which young people constructed a sense of kosei (‘unique character’) within the project of fashion through the notion of sutairu (‘style’). This entailed another kind of quest for ‘authenticity’, contrasting ‘authentic’ individual style against ‘homogenised’ fashion, and is further explored in Chapters 7 and 8 below. However, seven months after my arrival in Osaka, I began to find trails in unlikely places leading to other discourses, practices and scenes which constructed alternative notions of ‘authenticity’ in contrast to a homogenised ‘mainstream’. These examples appeared to share those very elements which many of the veterans argued had largely disappeared from the district: close social bonds, shared passions, a desire to be creative and expressive through practices which included but were not limited to the dimension of fashion.

Furthermore, among shop owners and employees, there was a sense that their choice to work in clothing stores in Amerika-mura in itself reflected a conscious rejection of the mainstream lifepath in Japanese society. Despite their involvement in commercial enterprises, their life stories suggested that Amerika-mura was a place where one could still venture off the ‘main track’ on an experimental tangent, a place where it was still possible to create a unique sense of personal identity. Examples of their narratives are explored in Chapter 6 below.

While Mr Morimoto (introduced in 5.2.2 above) had contrasted the ‘back-stage’ of Amerika-mura with the ‘front-stage’ of Shinsaibashi during the 1970s, I began to form the impression that Amerika-mura itself had always comprised both elements. This realisation led me to
conclude that while narratives of change typically viewed the district as increasingly homogeneous, they may have been instead reflecting shifts in the nature of its inherent heterogeneity. If, as was proposed in 4.6.1 above, all places are heterotopic, acting as sites in which smooth and striated spaces are continuously redefining meanings and identities, then Amerika-mura could never be entirely free of commercial motives, and neither could it be entirely controlled by such forces. With no revenue, its businesses would not survive, and with total commercialisation, it would become indistinguishable from other shopping districts. Over time, I came to realise that all discourses of authenticity within the district incorporated a commercial aspect, and that each was based on a dichotomy which did not accurately represent the symbiotic relationship between ‘commercial’ and ‘authentic’ practices. In short, Amerika-mura constituted a complex site through which multiple personal and spatial identities were constructed through various discourses of ‘authenticity’ which continuously redefined their boundaries in relationship to each other and the urban environment itself.

The naming and framing of ‘Amerika-mura’ from the mid-1970s undoubtedly encouraged the consumption of the district not only as a destination in the context of mainstream tourist discourse, but also as a block in the global space of the sutoriito (‘street’) in the context of the specialised fashion media. Both discourses, explored further in Chapter 7 and 8 below, share certain elements with the perspectives of local government and business groupings, aiming to style places such as Amerika-mura as environments in which individuals can seek out and consume fashion items with little or no sense of danger or discomfort. Nevertheless, in the late 1990s, Amerika-mura continued to function as a site in which to construct and perform distinctive personal identities. This was a place which had not been transformed from a 1960s Shinjuku into a 1990s Shibuya (to borrow Yoshimi’s examples, discussed in 2.6 above). Instead, it had developed multiple layers of identity which shared aspects of both sites.
5.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored narratives of historical change in Amerika-mura. As discussed above, many individuals suggested that the district was in the process of losing its 'unique atmosphere', and drew upon numerous themes in their portrayal of an earlier Amerika-mura as a site of experimentation, creativity, close social interaction, authenticity and risk. However, as noted in 5.7 above, I came to believe that the district continued to function as a heterotopic space, mediating numerous layers and discourses beyond and alongside its apparently 'commercialised' exterior. The following chapter presents a series of case studies which provide glimpses of this spatial complexity, and introduce narratives which illustrate the multitude of personal trajectories which intersect with Amerika-mura in the construction of alternative discourses of authenticity.
Plate 5.1: Ms Mariko Higiri, standing in front of the corner where her Loop cafe was formerly located. (The site is now (1997) occupied by Anthony’s clothing store).
Plate 5.2: Mr Keiichi Morimoto, president of the Amerika-mura Association.
Plate 5.3: Mr 'Mark E' Inoguchi, disc jockey at FM Osaka.
Plate 5.4: Mr Umemoto, owner of Nest saloon in nearby Namba.
Plate 5.5: Mr Kazuo Maeda’s store Corn.

Plate 5.6: Mr Hirokazu Hasegawa, owner of El Paso bar.
CHAPTER 6

HIDDEN PLACES, DEEPER SPACES

*Sous les pavés la plage. Entre les pavés le pâturage.* (‘Under the paving-stones, the beach. Between the paving-stones, the fields’) (Picaud, Le Louarn and Ambrois 1997:101)

So we look for the way out - to get out is the most important thing - and we must do that by looking in-between (Howard 1998:115).

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 above explored narratives of historical change in Amerikamura. As discussed in 5.4, several themes emerged from common arguments that the district had been a more interesting, exciting and dynamic place during the 1970s and 1980s. These included notions of Amerika-mura as a ‘school of style’, a ‘home of kosei (‘unique character’)’, a ‘site of creativity’, and as a ‘site of danger’. Many individuals suggested that these constituted aspects which combined to create a unique atmosphere, and that all were in danger of extinction due to the effects of intense commercial pressures and media exposure. At the same time, ‘veterans’ such as Ms Mariko Higiri implied that whereas early Amerika-mura had functioned as a *mura* (‘village’), a place of shared passions and close-knit social interaction, the district had become a place where people came to shop and look, their contact with shop assistants limited to questions about price and size.

The nostalgic narratives of many of the individuals introduced in Chapter 5 above construct a sense of Amerika-mura both as a place and as a community, in the sense that the two were relatively contiguous. Yet to be named, the area nevertheless operated as a
locus for social interaction by an eclectic assortment of individuals, ranging from surfers to graphic artists. In this sense, the place was the community. This is not to argue that the early entrepreneurs were not partly driven by the profit motive, but rather to propose that this motive was shared with a genuine interest in the origin of the goods sold, and a desire to share knowledge and opinions with other shopowners and customers. The fact that Mr Sakurai, the manager of one of the earliest shops, Our House, chose the name ‘Amerika-mura’ for the district in 1977 should be seen as a reflection of the way the district had been until that time, not as a portent of how it would develop in the future. In particular, his selection of the term mura (‘village’) may be viewed as highly significant, as it suggests a sense of community in the area at that time which linked it spatially with rural regions and temporally with a simpler, pre-modern and pre-urbanised past. The relatively small number of shops at this time facilitated the creation and consolidation of such a mood.

Here, it is possible to propose that Amerika-mura in the early 1970s constituted an example of a ‘bohemian’ space in the tradition of low modernity, and that media celebration of the place pushed its bohemian elements from physical places through a process akin to the gentrification found in New York’s SoHo or Sydney’s Paddington. In his discussion of the concept of ‘bohemia’, Duncombe (1997) proposes that the link between the idea of bohemia and particular places may have been broken or at least eroded in recent decades. He argues that:

if the characteristic of place no longer holds, the other characteristics - those of bohemian ideas, practices and creativity - live on through nonspatial networks (1997:55).

Powers (2000) suggests that the notion of ‘bohemia’ should not be understood primarily in relation to a particular territory or site, but rather as it defines a series of personal choices constructed around a certain peripheral stance towards ‘mainstream society.’ She argues that bohemia is a “floating underground” which should be considered “more a life path than a place.” (2000:27).

In the case of Amerika-mura, as the place became named and widely publicised, and as the number of shops and visitors increased, the
contiguity between place, people, objects and community became ruptured. The name ‘Amerika-mura’ created a construct which was linked to the district, but nevertheless also existed as a separate entity in narrative and media discourses. Unlike the case of Tokyo (discussed in 2.6 above), where a peripheral and intensely social Shinjuku was succeeded by a commercial and potentially alienating Shibuya as the ‘centre of youth culture’, Amerika-mura encompassed both processes and identities within the same location. Although there was no longer a unitary sense of ‘village-wide’ community in the late 1990s, the district nevertheless continued to function as a place where individuals could, temporarily or permanently, step off the ‘mainstream’ path and engage with a series of private and specialised passions. During the latter stages of my main fieldwork period in 1997, I discovered a series of sites within Amerika-mura which embodied many of the aspects which veterans argued had largely disappeared, and their narratives and practices are explored in this chapter.

6.2 TOWARDS A ‘DEEPER’ INTERPRETATION

As I moved through the district, at times returning to shops which I had visited previously, or venturing off on ‘random tangents’ down alleyways [Plate 6.1] and up stairways, I began to form the impression that the same physical spaces were experienced by different people at different times at varying levels of ‘depth’, and that these experiences and the movements of individuals through these spaces collectively shaped their own personal ‘topographies of taste’, of which Amerika-mura constituted only one element. Each person carried their own unique mental map of the district, a map which would be refined and redefined with each engagement with the physical place and media or discursive representations of that place. I found it useful to make a distinction between ‘shallow’ and ‘deep’ experiences of place, which in some ways parallel Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) ‘striated’ and ‘smooth’ spaces (discussed in 4.6.3 above). In common with these notions, ‘deep’ and ‘shallow’ are not intended as absolute categories, but rather as theoretical endpoints on a continuum. This concept is further developed below.
‘Shallow’ experiences of place are organised around a physical geography of **information** - streets, prices, brands and shop-names, while ‘deep’ experiences of place are based on a virtual geography of **knowledge** - discursive, aesthetic and social practices which link this information in constructing a personal sense of place. In the former case, the quantitative, visible and absolute qualities of particular places are emphasised, while in the latter case, the qualitative, invisible and relational qualities of such places are highlighted. The junior high-school student who visits the Parco Due shopping complex after seeing an advertisement for a used clothing shop in a magazine is experiencing that place in quite a different way to the group of rap dancers who practice outside the complex at night. The teenage girls buying a pair of Converse sneakers at the Uncle Sam store are unaware that the shop assistant works as a part-time disc jockey at a nearby club and is a fan of 1960s Motown and American jazz. All around Amerika-mura, people, places and objects display surfaces and hide depths. At the shallow end of the spectrum, they are only surfaces, at the deep end only nodes in a complex network of meanings.

The sensory journey included in Chapter 4 above is also an attempt to convey the manner in which people move through places, their movements through, reactions to, and engagements with, those places sometimes guided by maps, at other times directed by random whims, and often directed by prior knowledge crucially based on **memory**. It is primarily the parallel interpretation of the city as information and knowledge which I am alluding to in my conception of ‘shallow’ and ‘deep’ experiences of place. Like Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) ‘striated space’, information imposes order, labelling and classifying elements within the urban milieu. In common with their notion of ‘smooth’ space, knowledge moves between, around and through such strategies. Sites such as those introduced in this chapter operate as key contexts in which deep and shallow, smooth and striated, knowledge and information, intersect.

In her discussion of modernity in the context of the contemporary urban environment, Palumbo (2000) argues that “while the Modern Movement was obsessed by the problem of rationalising the urban form, today it is precisely its labyrinthine, dynamic and chaotic nature
that is most fascinating" (2000:47). She suggests that this environment can be understood using the concepts of ‘nodes’ and ‘networks’ (2000:47). The former are “the waiting spaces, the areas for rest, meeting, entering and leaving the network, starting and ending a journey” (2000:47). As suggested above, many of the sites examined in the case studies below may be characterised in this way, each functioning as a meeting-point of numerous personal trajectories through the city, a reference-point to return to, a familiar oasis of calm and comfort in a fast-paced and impersonal modern world.

The labyrinthine nature of these networks can also be understood in the context of Damisch’s (2001) historical exploration of the city. In relation to the ancient Egyptian labyrinths, he claims that if indeed there is a question of a “labyrinth” here, it corresponds less to the building itself than to the seemingly infinite, inscrutable network of itineraries inscribable within it (2001:28).

Damisch’s (2001) argument highlights the complexity of the relationship between the city as physical structure and the innumerable trajectories which it mediates. It shares aspects of French theorist Michel de Certeau’s (1984) notion of “pedestrian speech acts” (1984:97). As Donald (1995) argues, Certeau emphasises the distinction between the city as an imagined site of order and efficiency and “the fact of the city, the city that people experience, a labyrinthine reality” (1995:78). As Certeau (1984) argues, the practices and movements of individuals can help to legitimise the possibilities encouraged by what I term (in Chapter 7 below) ‘framing discourses’ of order, such as urban planning and tourism (1984:98). However, at the same time, he argues, the pedestrian “moves them about and (…) invents others, since the crossing, drifting away, or improvisation of walking privilege, transform or abandon spatial elements” (1984:98). This is the point at which attempts to frame and organise places (such as the redesign and ‘cleaning up’ of Triangle Park explored in 4.5.1 above) meet a multitude of individual responses, ranging from partial compliance to utter indifference. On a broader scale, it is the point where the city is read and interpreted, the context in which the city shifts from physical site to meaningful process.
The complex relationship between the individual and the urban environment is also analysed in the writings of German theorist Georg Simmel (1971b). In his highly influential 1903 essay, ‘The metropolis and mental life’, he is careful to emphasise the way in which the ‘boundaries’ of the individual extend well beyond their corporeal frames. As he argues:

A person does not end with limits of his (sic) physical body or with the area to which his physical activity is immediately confined but embraces, rather, the totality of meaningful effects which emanates from him temporally and spatially (1971b:335).

The notion of individual responses to the changing urban environment and the broader phenomenon of modernity is further explored in the case studies presented in this chapter. These examples trace the paths taken by a series of individuals in their engagements with Amerika-mura as a physical site. A common theme which emerges is a notion of authentic personal identity constructed around an approach to life which remains unchanged in spite of changes in the surrounding physical environment.

This type of concept was also alluded to by FM Osaka disc jockey and Amerika-mura ‘veteran’, Mr ‘Mark E’ Inoguchi, introduced briefly in 3.4.1 and more fully in 5.2.3 and 5.2.4 above. He spoke of his respect for people with “unchanging koa (‘cores’), adding that “the people around me have a fixed chushinsen (‘middle line’)”, and arguing that this remained constant even when “everything around them is constantly changing”. He added that “I think people like that are kakkō-ii (‘cool’)...[where] the external appearance and the fun‘iki (‘atmosphere’) are the same”, explaining that “Being cool is always being the same.” Asked if he believed that people came to Amerika-mura to find their chūshinse (‘middle line’), he replied that “even if you come here looking for something with that chūshinse, there’s so much surface stuff”, adding cryptically that “you have to keep yourself in good condition or it’s hard to attain.”

As noted above, the following series of case studies explores a variety of ways in which people construct a sense of personal authenticity in Amerika-mura through the medium of unique nodes and networks, in
pursuit of their own *chīshinsen*. Some of these examples are based around specialised and obscure interests, others around private passions, and still others around roles as *koa* individuals, collecting, filtering and disseminating information and knowledge.

### 6.3 HIDDEN WORLDS: SITES OF DIFFERENCE AND DISCOVERY

The first three case studies examine contexts where obscure locations and highly specialised merchandise help to construct certain shops as portals into 'other worlds'. In a similar spirit to Yoshimi’s (1987) Asakusa of the early twentieth century, these are places which function as islands of ‘difference’, consciously obfuscating discovery and creating moods which problematise engagement as mere sites of consumption. The first two sites were introduced to me by Mr Kōhei Matsunaga, a performer of ‘noise’ music whom I had met through a shop owner in September 1997. Promising to show me “another Amerika-mura”, he led me to several shops which I would never have discovered on my own, specialised sites in his own ‘virtual geography of knowledge’ which encompassed associations with experimental music, and the occult.

#### 6.3.1 APOCALYPSE: THE FRONTIERS OF COMMERCE

Our tour began in an unlikely place, on the sixth floor of a hotel in the southern part of Amerika-mura. A building that I had passed by on numerous occasions, a building that appeared to have very little to do with my research, turned out to contain several tiny shops in converted rooms leased out by the hotel. Feeling slightly uncomfortable as I walked into the building, glanced at the staff behind the reception desk and headed for the elevator with Kōhei, I wondered if they could tell we were not guests. Stepping out on the sixth floor, I followed Kōhei to one of many identical closed doors in what appeared to be an ordinary hotel corridor. Walking in behind him, expecting to find a single room, I felt slightly bewildered as I found myself in a tiny shop, its walls lined with T-shirts and unusual items in clear plastic wrappers, a slightly disconcerting man greeting us from behind the counter at the back. This was Mr Masahiko Nakabayashi, and we were in his new store, Apocalypse [Plate 6.2].
After graduating from university, Mr Nakabayashi had worked at the record store King Kong for three years, commencing in 1987. Later, he worked for a further three years as manager of Giga, another record store specialising in Japanese rock music. [Both of the above record stores were located in Amerika-mura, although the latter no longer exists]. He spent the following three years as a booking manager at the live venue Wohol in nearby Namba before quitting and working independently as an events booking agent. Around this time, he was also manager of a band called SOB, but he recalled that “I wasn’t able to make any money [out of it].” He opened his store Apocalypse on 29 June 1997.

Asked why he had decided to locate his shop in Amerika-mura, he firstly noted that “properties are expensive in Amerika-mura...people have already taken all of the cheap ones”, but explained that as his shop was a “place for maniakku (‘maniacs’)”, he had settled for a cheaper place that was in a “hard-to-find” location. He said that he would stay in his present location until his business was properly established, when he may consider moving to a streetside location. He considered that such a move would lead to an “explosion” due to the “weird range of products” which he stocked, and that “the number of customers who just look [without buying] would increase” because they were “hard to buy.”.

Mr Nakabayashi first thought of the idea for his store ten years ago, and was strongly influenced by Mr Dan Takasugi and the store he used to operate in Shibuya, Tokyo, called Triangle. He explained that Mr Takasugi was an “introducer of subculture”, importing “body pierce, freak merchandise...”, including “stuff from America” and selling it in his shop. He added that Mr Takasugi had a network of friends and that “everyone is linked”. Triangle “attracted the attention of an element of the population”, however it closed within a year of its establishment. Mr Nakabayashi mentioned that there were now about three stores in the Tokyo area with the same “feel” as Apocalypse, and explained that their product range included “about half-and-half, divided between adult videos and [other goods such as] records, psychedelic gallery, clothing...”
Mr Nakabayashi explained that through a shop such as Apocalypse, one could "subvert society...turn common sense on its head", but added that "if I did it seriously, I wouldn’t be able to run a shop." For that reason, he had to "put some distance between [that objective and my business]." He further commented that one of his objectives was to "show [people] that disgusting things are normal", citing the case of the photographic collections of corpses which he stocked, but said that this was commonly perceived as an "evil hobby." Asked about government restrictions on the goods he stocked, he explained that there were no official inspections and that he was free to choose items to sell in his shop, but added that "I won’t handle illegal goods." For example, the plastic penis on display was classified as a 'joke item', while foreign and SM (sadomasochistic) items came under the category of 'miscellaneous goods'. Mr Nakabayashi explained that certain other items fell into the classification of 'medical devices'. He later added that following a caution from a wholesaler, he had stopped selling handcuffs to young customers.

Mr Nakabayashi explained that many of the goods he sold were imported from the United States, defining them as "stuff from American 'strange culture'", and noted the examples of Russ Meyers' magazines containing colour photographs of women with extremely large breasts ("Girls buy them...from the cover images") to T-shirts and videos featuring images from serial murders. Smaller items are sourced through Osaka wholesalers, but he imports magazines, videos and larger items directly from the United States. (He noted Gore Store in Hawaii as a major supplier). Despite his desire to make the disgusting familiar, he admitted that even he was shocked or surprised by certain items he came across when sourcing stock. These included collections of photographs of people with serious illnesses, which he said were sold in Japan. He added that "it’s all right to stock such items, but I don’t want to look at them.”

He recalled that he had been interested in strange and unusual things since his childhood, explaining his understanding that "there is [always] an alternative path...to reach the destination”, giving the examples of "the gap in between houses" or "alleyways", and adding that "it’s not the shortest route”. He explained that he liked to
“deliberately go to places where other people don’t go”, describing himself as an “amanojaku (‘perverse person’).”

When asked if he was disappointed with young people’s apparent interest in fads and commercialised fashion in Amerika-mura, he replied that he wasn’t, adding that he might be able to stop the tide of commercialisation. He said that Amerika-mura “used to be a place for producing culture”, and that if his shop began to become ‘ordinary’, he would be able to “bring even more unusual things out of the drawer.”

He was also interested in emphasising the social role of his store, claiming that he would like to make it into a “salon-like” space. Noting that his regular customers commonly sourced information before coming to the store, he mentioned that they “come to exchange information”. He added that he also benefited from such exchanges, noting that “I also am shocked/stimulated.” (Here he used the Japanese term “shigeki”). He noted that the information exchanged may relate to a “new illustrator” or magazine, and there was a two-way flow, as he could “also provide them with information about stuff they don’t know as well.”

Asked about his clientele, he explained that they were mainly young people in their teens and early twenties, including musicians, and that they tended to come in same-sex or opposite-sex pairs as “it’s really quite hard to come in alone”. There were both regular and casual visitors, and Mr Nakabayashi noted that the former “always buy something.” As his shop was in a difficult-to-find location, he reasoned that it would be hard for customers to leave without buying something, and had therefore decided to “put out some items for 100 yen” on the counter, which they could buy and therefore “be freed.”

He agreed with the rough diagram which I drew showing three layers representing the ‘mainstream’, ‘underground’ and ‘deep underground’, and my argument that items occasionally rose up from the third to the second layer, from where they may be ‘picked up’ by the media and shift into the ‘mainstream.’ However, he said that he liked to take items “from behind the planet” [i.e. from beyond even the ‘deep underground’ level].
6.3.2 TERRITORY: A SATANIC SPACE

The next stop on our tour lay up a narrow staircase [Plate 6.3] and along a dim corridor on the third floor of the EN Building one minute’s walk from the hotel. I had previously only ventured into the ground floor level of the building to chat to two foreign shop owners early in my fieldwork, Irishman Gerry Sweeney and South African Teddy, and had been unaware that there were more shops on the upper levels. As we walked along the corridor, a slightly dank, musty smell assailed my nostrils. Ahead lay a black door with red Gothic lettering: ‘Territory’ [Plate 6.4]. The door was closed, and when Kōhei explained that owner Taiki must have gone out, I felt a curious mixture of dismay and relief. However, as we left the building and started heading for the next destination, a pale-faced man with long black hair approached from the opposite direction. Kōhei greeted him, and introduced him to me. This was Taiki [Plate 6.5], owner of Territory. I would later find out that he was also singer with the ‘Jap core’ band, Devil, and that he also knew Mr Shigeru Yamada of Red Rock (the shopowner who had introduced me to Kōhei) and Mr Yūsuke Nakajima of Wild World (introduced in 6.5.1 below). Kōhei later told me that Mr Nakajima had introduced him to Taiki in 1996.

Climbing back up the stairs and moving along the corridor to his shop, the same smell hit me as we approached the black door and he began turning the key in the lock. My curiosity overcoming my trepidation, I followed Taiki and Kōhei into the shop. My first impression was the blackness of the space, then its smallness. On counters and inside jars, a variety of occult and bizarre objects could be seen. There were satanic statues and necklaces, and in the corner a ‘plasma ball’ in a glass container. Taiki sat down behind a small table as I explained about my research, and enquired about the possibility of conducting an extended interview at a later date. Taiki agreed, and I decided to visit his shop again for this purpose on 6 October 1997.

I began by asking him about his first association with Amerika-mura. He said that at first he “only knew about it”, as he was from Kobe and had been living there until four or five years ago. He explained that he had moved to this part of Osaka “by chance” after getting married,
and that “until then, I had never been here.” Taiki opened his shop Territory in April 1996, only about six months after first thinking of the idea, and mentioned that at the time he had been unaware of the existence of this type of shop in other countries. Explaining that “this was the only type of shop I could have started up”, he added that “I’m not the kind of guy who likes work very much, but I had to work because I had got married and had kids.” He continued by explaining that he had previously held a variety of odd jobs, but that he had sunken into “a slightly wild lifestyle”, quitting work after only six months.

In relation to his shop’s image, he explained that he had “deliberately set it up to scare customers”, adding that this continued to be one of his aims, and noted that “the image of the shop has become established.” He claimed that his store was probably the first of its kind in Japan, and expressed a desire for customers to “become interested” in the goods he stocked, which included various satanic ornaments and a large ‘plasma ball’, the rays inside of which streamed out to meet one’s hands when placed on the surface. Although he admitted that “it’s difficult for first-time customers to come in”, he defended his product range, arguing that “I’m not thinking about stocking ordinary items, because they wouldn’t sell”, and adding that “it wouldn’t be interesting.” Paralleling a comment made by Mr Nakabayashi of Apocalypse, he explained that one of his goals was “to have customers get accustomed to these kinds of objects”. In common with claims made by veterans of the district regarding the motivations of the shopowners of the early and mid-1970s, Taiki mentioned that “I’m running [this store] because I like [the goods I’m selling].” When asked about the fashion sold in the majority of shops in Amerika-mura, he replied that “I couldn’t run [a clothing store] because I don’t know anything about used clothing, fads and stuff...”

Asked to further explain his product range, he replied that when he first opened his store in April 1996, he stocked a large number of “ritual [i.e. satanic] items”, but that although there had been some interest among customers, they had not sold well, prompting him to stock more clothing. However, he said that he had noticed growing interest in ritual items among foreign customers, and had therefore
started building up his stock again. He mentioned that he didn’t stock many books because “Japanese people don’t read many foreign books”, and claimed that there was greater interest in “magic goods.” The type of clothing he stocked largely comprised “Gothic-like items”, but also included T-shirts. He explained that he currently sourced stock exclusively from the United States, but planned to investigate possibilities in “Britain, Europe, various places” during the following year. He added that he also hoped to stock “SM [sadomasochistic]...bondage goods”, explaining that “I also personally like that kind of fashion.”

We then discussed the location of his store, tucked away in a dark corner up several flights of stairs on the third floor of the EN Building in the southern part of Amerika-mura. Asked if he would consider changing locations, he replied that he wasn’t considering such a move “until the shop becomes properly established”, but adding that “I’d like an underground space [using the English word ‘space’]...a place where customers can sit down...I’d like to make it more of a place where people can relax.” Among the ideas which he would like to incorporate into such a larger shop were employing two fortune-tellers and setting up a “specialist make-up trial corner.”

 Asked if there were any complaints from the landlord of the building in relation to the nature of his business, he replied that “people in this building never get bothered”, explaining that “the landlord likes unusual shops.” He gave the example of the tattoo studio on the same floor, and later introduced me to one of the artists who dropped by for a chat. Taiki also mentioned that he occasionally burnt incense in the store, and added that he would like to expand his stock of this item.

He agreed with my suggestion that his customers could be broadly divided into two types, those who came through curiosity and those who had a deeper interest. He noted that “there are people who come after hearing about it from their friends, there are others who come out of curiosity and walk straight out [and] there are some who genuinely like it.” He said that there were not many customers (“only as many as I could count”) who were deeply interested in magic or who actually performed magic rituals, reasoning that the field was “still unknown.”
In future, he said that he would like to “boldly expand the product range...even if some things don’t sell.” Returning to his plans for a larger shop, he explained that he wanted to have “a shop ten times as large, a shop that it takes time to look around.” Asked whether there were any other similar stores in Osaka, he replied that his was the only one. In a similar way to Mr Nakabayashi, he described Territory as a “maniakku (lit. ‘maniac’, ‘fanatic’) store”, adding that “in any case, I get lots of customers” Explaining the importance of “shimpisei (‘mystery’)”, he said that he didn’t want his shop to be too open or exposed, claiming that “even somewhere more out-of-the-way [than the present store] would be fine.”

Asked if there was a network of people with similar interests to his own, he implied that there wasn’t. However, he explained that he wanted to “act as a link between people” and “make a kind of ‘circle’ [a term used in Japan to refer to a social group of people with a shared hobby or interest]”, but added that he had not yet been able to achieve this goal. One option that he was considering was direct mailing, “once the shop is properly established”. He added that he was planning to hold an all-night Territory event in April 1998 at the live venue Bay Side Jenny near Osaka Port. He envisaged that it would include a Territory fashion show, SM show and “adult events...things not normally included in such events”, mentioning that it would have an “occult theme.”

As the interview drew to a close, I asked about the origin of the shop’s name, ‘Territory.’ Taiki explained that it meant “koko dake no ryōiki (‘only this territory’)” or “kukan (‘space’)”, cryptically adding that “it connects to all kinds of meanings...[including] ‘Asia.’”

6.3.3 HARVEST MARKET JUNIOR: A PLACE FOR ‘HEADS’

I stumbled upon the Harvest Market Junior store by accident one weekend in late January 1999. Deciding to venture down a narrow corridor in a building not far from Tower Records, one small shop halfway along the corridor attracted my attention with the mass of clothes and accessories jammed into one tiny room. Wandering inside, I was greeted by 40-year-old manager Mr Yūji Nampō [Plate 6.6]. He showed a keen interest in my research, and explained that
Harvest Market Junior was basically a “Grateful Dead store.” Mentioning that he would be in Tokyo for a gathering of people interested in the band during the coming week, we arranged to conduct an interview the following Saturday 2 February at his store. The following material is based on that interview.

During the interview, I asked Mr Nampo about his historical contact with Amerika-mura. He explained that he had first visited the area in the early eighties, just after graduating from senior high school. He remembered that there had only been “four or five shops”, and that events used to be held at a disco called Speak Easy. He also remembered a tatami (Japanese bedding) shop. He further explained that this was the period of the “first techno boom”, and that he had often gone to the nearby Cross disco, and Palms disco on the western edge of Amerika-mura, which was run by Ms Mariko Higiri (introduced in Chapter 5 above). At this point, he added that Ms Higiri was “the real roots of Amerika-mura.” Another of his earliest memories of the district was of some customers arriving at the Wild West-style El Paso bar (introduced in 5.3.3 above) on horseback.

He recalled that “it wasn’t scary at that time. There were no kids hanging around. [It was a place where] people in their late twenties went to have fun.” He later added that “in the beginning, you only used to see people around Triangle Park. There were none around here [in the southern part of the district].” Explaining that “young people have an amazing energy”, he claimed that during the years since his first visit, Amerika-mura had been transformed from a mura (‘village’) to a machi (‘town’), and added that “the number of people coming here has increased enormously.”

After graduating from senior high school, Mr Nampo began working as a waiter at the Cross disco, later becoming manager. He quit this job, and went to the United States for the first time in 1985. Upon his return, he at first had difficulty finding work, but later “worked really hard in order to establish the shop [Harvest Market].” He explained that he had always liked the hippy culture, noting that “I really admired hippies, and wanted to sell hippy clothing.” He continued by explaining that “gradually, as I looked around, [I realised that] The [Grateful] Dead were hippies who were still around.” Although he
had previously bought their records, it was not until he saw the group perform live in San Francisco in 1990 that he became “hooked.” His comments recalling the ‘yearning for America’ noted by Mr Inoguchi in 5.2.4 above, he recalled that “I wanted to be surrounded by it, I wanted to become like them”, and adding that “I had always liked America.” During that period, he spent six months living in the United States with a friend in Mendocino. Although he had also visited Bali, The Netherlands and Spain, the US appeared to hold a particular attraction for him, and he mentioned that he had just returned from a trip to New York. As he noted, “America’s great, you know. California is so laid-back...and the weather’s great too.”

The original Harvest Market store was established in 1987 in Tanimachi 9-chōme (approximately three subway stops from Amerika-mura), and Mr Nampō worked there before moving to the new Harvest Market Junior store when it opened in 1992. Both stores are operated by the company Marissa Trading, which was formally established in 1989. The company has seven partners (including Mr Nampō), all of whom are fans of The Grateful Dead. Mr Nampō is one of the original three partners, all male, who attended the concert mentioned above in 1990, and who have been friends since first meeting each other during their twenties. The partners decided to change their store’s product line to Grateful Dead goods after seeing the concert. The remaining four partners, including one woman, joined the company later that year.

He recalled that “in 1992, there were no stores around this area [the southern part of Amerika-mura]”, adding that he could only remember there having been “snack bars”. He explained that “we had wanted to set up [the store] in a slightly out-of-the-way place”, and further mentioned that “we wanted to use a residential building.” To give the shop a homely feel, Mr Nampō and his colleagues had even brought driftwood from beaches in Wakayama Prefecture, approximately 100 kilometres south of Osaka.

I then asked Mr Nampō to talk about the kind of customers who came to his shop. He explained that they were mainly “young people”, but added that people in their forties or fifties also occasionally dropped into his store. He also mentioned that “sometimes, people who saw
Dead in the eighties come by.” Asked how people found out about the shop, he replied that some discovered it by chance, while others saw it featured in magazines. He added that magazine staff occasionally came by to gather information, and explained that “we’ve appeared quite a few times in Cazi-Cazi [fashion magazine introduced in Chapters 7 and 8 below].” Asked why he and his partners had chosen an out-of-the-way location for their shop, Mr Nampō replied that they had “wanted people to be amazed” when they came upon the store. Explaining that more “ordinary people” came to the stores now than in the early days, he claimed that there were both positive and negative aspects to this development.

Mr Nampō explained that the store now carries “only Dead gear and hemp goods.” Asked if there were any other such stores in the Kansai area, he mentioned Bear’s Choice, a “Grateful Dead store” near Nagahori-dōri, the main road running along the northern edge of Amerika-mura. He added that he didn’t know much about other shops. He noted that there was no formal association for Grateful Dead fans, but added that there had been one in the past. He also explained that Grateful Dead events were held throughout the country about two or three times per year, adding that the most recent one had been held the previous month (January 1999) in Nagano Prefecture, approximately 200 kilometres north-east of Osaka. The event had featured “Grateful Dead cover bands.” He further mentioned that the annual Life Festival, first held in 1988, also had a Grateful Dead element. However, while he argued that “it used to be good...there was lots to protect”, he lamented that “now, it’s taking a different direction [and] there are rumblings that it might collapse this year.” At this point, he expanded his negative perspective on the future of the event to society at large, claiming that “we’ve never seen a situation like this before where the distribution system has been so developed”, before suddenly and cryptically adding that “many people will die this year [i.e. 1999].”

Asked about the future of the area, he claimed that “the number of good stores has decreased”, explaining that he was referring to “stores with kosei (‘unique character’).” He reasoned that increased rents had meant that shopowners “can’t do what they want to [anymore]”, further explaining that “everyone is only interested in items that
sell...[both] shopowners and customers.” He claimed that “everything is the same”, giving the example of “wherever you go, you see the same shoes [on sale].” These comments reflected aspects of the nostalgic discourse explored in Chapter 5 above. At the end of the interview, Mr Nampo mentioned that he would like to teach young people “healthier ways to enjoy themselves”; and said that he would like the city to become “like the mountains”, perhaps implying a simpler, healthier environment, but adding that “the city exists and it can’t be helped, so the question is, ‘How do you deal with it?’” Finally, he mentioned his hope that people would “not destroy things, but ‘wake up’, in the positive sense of the term.”

In an interview for the series of articles on Amerika-mura published by the Mainichi Shimbun newspaper in 1998 and early 1999, Mr Nampo explained that he sometimes lent Grateful Dead compact discs to customers who showed an interest in the band’s music. He had told me during our interview that the band and its philosophy were “difficult to explain” to people who were not familiar with them, and he commented to journalist Yoshida Naoya that “you can’t explain the [Grateful] Dead in just a few minutes” (Mainichi Shimbun 1998f), and played down his own knowledge of the band, saying that “there are loads of amazing people who followed the band around on its tours [who know more] than me” (1998f). In addition, he explained that there was an “amazing connection between so-called ‘Dead Heads’, with members even exchanging tapes containing recordings of live performances by the band. (However, he did not mention whether these were primarily local, national or international networks).

6.4 SELLING A PASSION: WHERE BUSINESS MEETS PLEASURE

While the case studies in 6.3 illustrate examples of specialised businesses which embody a sense of danger, transgression and discovery, the two case studies in this section explore themes of creativity and shared passions. These are commercial operations constructed around intense interests, and further illustrate aspects of the earlier Amerika-mura as a ‘school of style’ (discussed in 5.4.1 above). While the case studies above introduced individuals who
stake out new ground on the peripheries of commercial practice, the operators of businesses examined in this section share a desire to ‘go narrow and deep’, specialising in particular goods and using them as tools in the construction and diffusion of knowledge. Importantly, both incorporate aspects of nostalgia, in which goods from a bygone age are deployed in a discourse of historical authenticity which shares certain aspects of broader themes expressed by the ‘veterans’ in Chapter 4 above.

6.4.1 FREAK STORE: WHERE ‘NOISE’ MEETS THE SIXTIES

I met Masonna (32) for the first time on Wednesday 27 January 1999 at Freak Scene, the store which he operates with wife Fusao on the first floor of a building near Tower Records [Plate 6.7]. I had first heard his name during an informal chat with Taiki (of Territory, introduced in 6.3.2 above) about his business and local music scenes on the previous weekend. Promising to introduce me to “an interesting person”, Taiki had taken me to Masonna’s store, where I had met his (Masonna’s) wife and arranged an interview with her husband.

Masonna had first visited Amerika-mura during junior high school, when he was about thirteen years old. At that time, he had been living on the Japan Sea side of Kyoto Prefecture, approximately 100 kilometres from Osaka. Asked where he had first heard about Amerika-mura, he replied that “It was famous...there was this place in Osaka with lots of young people, and there were record stores...” He became interested in music (punk rock) around the same period, and started visiting the area with junior high school friends once or twice a month after finding that local shops only stocked Japanese records. He started to come more often when he was in senior high school, and began performing live during his late teens at venues such as Bears in Namba. Finding the three-hour journey from his home town to Osaka inconvenient and tiring, he moved to Osaka five years ago, and has been performing at various venues in Osaka and Tokyo since then. He has been using the name Masonna since 1987.

Masonna explained that the music he created was “pure noise”, and mentioned that all of the noise artists in Osaka knew each other, citing
those who produced a similar style of noise to his own as including Solmania, Mondo Bruits, Diesel Guitar and Zard Organ. He explained that they organised their own events, usually at Fandango in Jūsō (near Umeda) or Bears in Namba, and mentioned that “people who like noise come from all over the world [to these events].” Singling out the Gathering of Noise held at the latter venue four or five times per year, he explained that this event included performances by local, Tokyo and overseas noise artists. He further noted that noise music and “ways of thinking” were different in other countries, adding that, in the case of Australia, “there was no real noise.” However, he later mentioned that an Australian noise group, Field Hearts Pasta, would be appearing at the next Gathering of Noise in May 1999.

Masonna also explained that it was common for local artists to release material through the independent label, Alchemy, which also released psychedelic and punk material, including music by the four-woman group Angel in Heavy Syrup of which his wife Fusao was a member. In his own case, Masonna had released a total of fifteen albums and five singles, including five through Alchemy and several others through British and American labels. Asked how difficult it was to source noise recordings, he replied that “now, you can get them in record shops everywhere”, adding that “Alchemy has a solid distribution network.” At this point, he added that Mr. Higashiseto of Forever Records in Umeda was “knowledgeable about noise (noizu ni kuwashii)”, and mentioned that noise releases (“Japanese electronic noise”) could also be found at Mr. Nakabayashi’s Apocalypse store in Amerika-mura (introduced in 6.3.1 above). Asked about the connection between noise music and fashion, Masonna replied that “people who like noise aren’t into any particular fashion”, adding that “each has their own style.”

Masonna and his wife Fusao established their store, Freak Scene, in November 1994, and he noted that it was “by chance” that he and his wife had settled on Amerika-mura for its location. However, he had thought that if they were to set up a store in Osaka, this district would be most suitable, as “people into fashion hang out here.” He further explained that there were no difficulties in obtaining a space and setting up their shop as “we had really great timing, as this place was
available...everything went smoothly.” Masonna and wife Fusao decided on the retro theme of their shop after noticing that “there were no other shops which dealt exclusively in items from the 60s and 70s.” He added that “first of all, we thought, ‘wouldn’t it be great if this kind of shop existed?’...there wasn’t one, so we decided to create one ourselves.” (Here, their comments reflected aspects of Ms Higiri’s narrative relating to the creation of her cafe Loop, explored in 5.2.1 above). Together, Masonna and Fusao began planning a shop which would handle both records and clothing from the 1960s and 1970s.

Freak Scene stocks “used clothing from the 60s and 70s...psychedelic stuff...various bits and pieces and accessories from the period, records, a few re-issued CDs.” Most of the store’s stock is sourced from the United States. Masonna explained that they had experimented with mail order purchasing, but found that they wanted to see the goods themselves before buying. He further mentioned that while, in the beginning, they travelled to the US three times per year to source merchandise, now they only went there once a year, generally scheduling such activities to coincide with overseas trips for live performances in order to minimise travel costs. (Masonna explained that his travel costs were ‘free’ in such cases).

Asked about the customers who visited the shop, Masonna’s wife Fusao replied that the kind of fashion stocked by Freak Scene had been popular two or three years earlier, and added that there had recently been a decline in the number of customers. She further mentioned that customers included “people who like used clothing...not just 60s stuff”, and even drag queens. Masonna added that “there are lots of women in their twenties”, and noted that “we have many regular customers.” Fusao further commented that people tended to hear about the shop “by word-of-mouth from people who are into 60s stuff”, and “from magazines”, explaining that Freak Scene had been featured in the first issue of Osaka sutoriito fasshon (‘street fashion’) magazine Cazi-Cazi (further introduced in Chapters 7 and 8 below) when the store had just opened, and also Cutie, Zipper and Olive. She also noted coverage on television and in newspapers (see below). In all of these cases, reporters had approached her to request permission to feature the store. While Masonna recalled that
they had once advertised in a magazine, he explained that the store no longer advertised.

Asked to comment on changes in Amerika-mura over the years, Fusao replied that “the number of stores has grown enormously...fashion styles too, since the 1980s.” She also argued that whereas there used to be an idea that “if you wanted used clothing, you went to Amerika-mura”, now the purpose of most visitors was purely and simply “shopping.” She agreed that the unique character of the area had gone, and blames the media for creating a situation where “everything has been reduced to the same styles.”

6.4.2 THEORY AND EXPERIMENT: AUTHENTICATING THE PAST THROUGH FURUGI (‘USED CLOTHING’)

I first met Mr Yasutomi Shima (26) [Plate 6.8] through a windsurfing friend of mine who was living in Tokyo. They had gone to school together in Wakayama Prefecture (located approximately fifty kilometres south of Osaka), and when my friend heard about my research, he told me about Yasutomi and his new shop in Amerika-mura. I visited the shop, Theory and Experiment, on 22 October 1997, entering a building near Triangle Park and venturing up a narrow staircase which was like a tunnel of used clothing. Emerging at the top in Yasutomi’s store, I introduced myself and conducted an interview, upon which the following material is based.

Yasutomi had first visited Amerika-mura when he was fifteen and in his third year of junior high school., although he remembered having heard about the district from his elder sister when he was at elementary school. It had been his sister who first brought him to the area, their purpose being “shopping.” He recalled visiting “furugi-ya (‘used clothing stores’)” such as Montana, where he had bought jeans. He remembered his first impression of Amerika-mura (noted previously in 5.4.4 above) as a “scary” area, explaining that “there used to be autosaidā (‘outsiders’)...people like yankii (‘yankies’; rough and delinquent-looking young people who sometimes later become yakuza - gangsters).”

179
Later, Yasutomi began to frequent the district approximately once a month for “shopping.” He began to study a mechanical course in Nagoya, approximately 150 kilometres east of Osaka, and continued to visit Amerika-mura once a month with university friends. He would normally come on a weekday and return to Nagoya in the evening, spending approximately six hours in the district on each visit. He recalled frequently visiting shops such as Montana and Nylon, in addition to other furugi (‘used clothing’) stores. During his last year at university in 1993, he responded to an employment advertisement at the long-established Sun Village shopping complex. His application was successful, and he moved to Osaka and began working at the complex two or three days per week. However, the first year entailed a difficult combination of work and study, as he was still completing his graduation thesis. However, he recalled his eagerness to finish his studies, explaining that “I wanted to work here as soon as possible.”

Yasutomi graduated from university in April 1994, becoming part of the full-time staff at Sun Village. He recalled taking a month off work in September of that year in order to visit New York, noting that “I went there to see New York clothing stores and fashion.” Returning to Japan, he continued working at Sun Village until August 1995, when he quit and began working at a used clothing store called Lotex located near Triangle Park. He worked there six days per week until the end of that year before setting up his own business, operating a stall at flea markets at various locations, including the Osaka port area, Kobe and Nagoya. His stock was bought from dealers in used items which had been sourced from within Japan. Yasutomi explained that these dealers were “not listed in any book” and that “you called them, and if it was OK, they would trade with you”, adding that many stores in Amerika-mura sourced merchandise from these operators.

Yasutomi explained that his flea market business had allowed him to save sufficient funds to open his own store in Amerika-mura in September 1997. The store was located in the Kiiroi Ribon (Yellow Ribbon) building, and contained seven businesses, four of which sold furugi. He explained that he had chosen the building as it was in a good location, and because “rent is relatively cheap.” He also noted
the clever design of the building, where an elevator took visitors directly to the seventh floor, from where they were required to walk back down the stairway, passing all of the other shops on the way.

He explained that his stock included sweaters, shirts and jeans, adding that he had “no brand-name items.” Yasutomi had already visited the United States twice in 1997 (June and October), and planned to make trips there once every two months, with his next planned for December of that year. He purchased items from “thrift stores” which he found in local telephone directories, travelling between them by rental car. Most of his efforts had been concentrated on Washington and Philadelphia, but he had also visited the regular Rosebowl used clothing market in Los Angeles. He explained that he selected “items which I and my staff would like our customers to wear”, hinting at his role in filtering and choosing goods as a ‘style instructor.’ Noting that he was “not aware” of a specific image for the store, he added that he stocked “items which we think are good”. However, he later noted his desire to establish a new brand “in four or five years’ time” with his assistant, Yuka, adding that this operation would parallel his existing furugi business.

Yasutomi also noted that he had always liked Ame-kaji (‘American casual’) style clothing, mentioning that it was at least partially derived from “Amerika e no akogare (a yearning for America)” (a notion explored in 2.5 and 5.2.4 above). Asked about the appeal of furugi in particular, he remarked that “I like the recycled element”, and the fact that “things which would otherwise have been thrown away are reborn with a new value.” He hinted at the way in which furugi could act as a medium to escape from a world of frenetic change and complexity, and noted the influence of his study of mechanics on his philosophy. Noting that “with new things, it’s frightening the way they keep coming out one after the other”, he later added that, in a modern, mechanised world, “there are lots of things which I don’t understand...which you can’t repair by yourself.” Arguing that “the speed of technological progress is too fast...it’s scary”, he expressed his desire not to create new things, but rather to “give mukashi no mono (‘things from the past’) a new life...reaffirm [their value].” He further reasoned that “there were lots of good things in the
past...things with *nukumori* (‘warmth’), suggesting a belief that such items could act as a bridge to a simpler and more ‘authentic’ lifestyle.

Yasutomi’s argument echoed elements of the ‘veterans’ stories discussed in Chapter 4 above. All shared an interpretation of modernity as “the end of myth” (Benjamin as interpreted by Gilloch 1996:10). For Yasutomi and the ‘veterans’, *furugi* and early Amerika-mura respectively invoked associations with a simpler time when objects and places were imbued with their own sense of magic and mystery. To veterans of the district, Amerika-mura acted as a counterpoint to a society involved in a headlong rush towards ‘progress’, a process through which the pursuit of economic comfort and mechanical efficiency ruthlessly sacrificed premodern notions of sentiment, passion and substance. To aficionados of *furugi* such as Yasutomi, these items were viewed as products of a time when clothes were carefully crafted, made to last, and constructed with functionality in mind rather than fashion. They also embodied time in a way in which brand-new items could not. Furthermore, each garment, having aged in its own unique way, could not be copied or substituted; it was truly one-of-a-kind.

On numerous levels, therefore, such garments functioned as symbols of authenticity. ‘Veterans’ like Mr Inoguchi engaged with the clothing that had been brought back from America as an embodiment of the ‘foreign’ as ‘authentic’ (as discussed in 5.2.4 above). By contrast, younger *furugi* fans such as Yasutomi appeared to engage with the same type of clothing rather as an embodiment of the ‘past’ as ‘authentic.’

### 6.5 HUBS OF KNOWLEDGE

The last two case studies in this chapter explore two sites which act as important nodes for the exchange of specialised information and knowledge. Both are located within Gallage Mart, a labyrinthine warren of shops at the geographical centre of Amerika-mura introduced briefly in the ‘sensory journey’ in 4.4 above. The first, Wild World, stocks a range of promotional T-shirts sourced directly from record companies. However, its owner, Mr Yūsuke Nakajima (35), also sells tickets to concerts of varying genres, and stocks a wide
range of promotional flyers, selecting only those which he judges worthy of his support. His wide range of musical contacts, including disc jockeys, club owners and musicians, allows him to introduce customers with common interests, occasionally helping budding disc jockeys and musicians to get ‘breaks’ at local club events. He was the only person interviewed during my fieldwork research who refused to be photographed.

The second site, Tank Gallery, is a cafe and art gallery operated by Mr Takaharu Furutani. This was the nearest contemporary equivalent I could find to Ms Mariko Higiri’s Loop cafe of the early 1970s (introduced in 5.2.1 above), a salon space where an eclectic range of customers dropped in to chat and exchange information and ideas. Like Mr Nakajima, Mr Furutani viewed himself as a kind of ‘host’, often introducing customers with shared interests, and also stocked a wide range of flyers, promoting both club events and art exhibitions. In addition, he accepted sample tapes from budding disc jockeys which he played in his cafe, telling interested customers which clubs they could attend to hear the same music ‘live’. Adjoining his cafe was an exhibition space, in which Mr Furutani invited local artists and designers to display their works.

The existence of sites such as Wild World and Tank Gallery demonstrated that behind the apparently commercial modern facade of Amerika-mura, networks of loosely-connected individuals continued to meet and exchange information and specialised knowledge in fields as diverse as furniture design and techno music. Central to these sites were key individuals, modern equivalents of Ms Higiri, who facilitated and channelled these flows, creating contexts in which apparently disparate groups of people and practices could engage in social interaction and create new connections. This was the ‘back stage’ of Amerika-mura, an invisible network which operated alongside and around its more obvious commercial exterior.

6.5.1 WILD WORLD: THE PLACE FOR KOA (‘CORE’) PEOPLE

Later in his tour of “another Amerika-mura”, Kōhei introduced me to a key individual who had exerted a powerful influence on the
development of his personal geography of Amerika-mura, Mr Yusuke Nakajima. Mr Nakajima had introduced Köhei to three of the shopowners on the tour of ‘another Amerika-mura’ which he gave me, including Taiki from Territory (introduced in 6.3.2 above). Köhei later explained that he had first met Mr Nakajima through a chance encounter in 1995 when the latter’s store had been located in Tennōji, a major transport hub three subway stops south of Amerika-mura. He recalled that

I heard minimalist techno music playing inside, and as I like techno, I thought to myself, ‘What kind of store is this?’, went in and started talking to him.

He also explained that Mr Nakajima’s store, Wild World, was a place where “the koa (‘core’) people from throughout the Kansai region [including Osaka, Kyoto, Kobe and surrounding districts] get together”, and implied that this role had continued, despite the relocation of the shop in 1993. Köhei appeared to have been heavily influenced by its owner, whom he described as a “sound and music freak” who “gets into all kinds of music”.

Entering the labyrinthine warren of shops known as Gallage Mart, we turned left off the main corridor and entered the second shop on the left, Wild World, following the pumping sound of drum ‘n’ bass music emanating from within. On the right wall of the tiny space, shelves were stacked with T-shirts bearing the names of American record labels and Japanese bands. At the back of the store, a counter was covered in flyers for upcoming events. Behind the counter sat Mr Nakajima, his eyes peering out from behind small, almost Lennonesque spectacles, his pale face framed by long, slightly frizzy brown hair. He appeared somewhat tense and edgy, and my first impression was that he had suffered a hard life.

As Köhei and I explained about my research, he appeared to relax somewhat, and later agreed to an extended interview at a later date. I returned to his shop for that purpose near the end of my first fieldwork trip in October 1997, and the following information is drawn from that interview. I was to find that his narrative intersected with the historical accounts given by veterans of the district, the commercial world of fashion and fads, the activities and
commentaries of disc jockeys involved in the contemporary Osaka club scene and those of more ‘peripheral’ individuals, such as those introduced to me on Kōhei’s tour of the district. In this sense, Mr Nakajima and his store together represented a point of intersection between numerous discourses, a hub through which multiple individual trajectories passed. The variety of discourses mediated through this site will become apparent in the account below, based on the extended interview with Mr Nakajima noted above.

Mr Nakajima, who was born and bred in Osaka, first visited Amerikamura around 1981 when he was seventeen years old. He explained that at that time, surfing was popular and several surf shops had “potsu-potsu dekita (‘sprung up here and there’)” in the district, but that Amerikamura had not developed yet. He also added that “there was nothing [here]” and “no one imagined that it would develop [like this].” In those days, he worked part-time at a live venue, and remembers that “soon young people started coming to the area.” There was talk among some colleagues of starting up a club, and some of them visited the United States to pick up some “know-how.” Mr Nakajima joined the staff of the new club around 1979. He remembers helping to look for a disc jockey for the new club, and recalls that “it was totally different from now”, with disc jockeys also acting as masters of ceremonies.

Mr Nakajima recalled the existence of Point After disco run by Mr Umemoto (introduced in 5.2.3 above). He recalled that the disco featured local Kansai musicians, such as Kuwana Masahiro, and that this was the boom period for discos in Osaka, with Ms Higiri’s Palms (also noted in 5.2.3 above), operating during the same period, enjoying huge popularity. The popular music of the time, according to Mr Nakajima, was European ‘New Wave’, while the fashion was “two tone.”

During the early 1980s, Mr Nakajima played guitar for approximately four years with the band View, who had a contract with Kiki Records, a subsidiary of Polydor. He later moved to Tokyo where he played in the backing band of singer Nagase Masa, later member of the popular groups Anzen Chitai and Barbie Boys. However, during this period, he fell into a period of personal ‘decay’, becoming a regular drug
user. He explained that his father had been a music promoter, but that his real occupation was as a sōkaiya (‘hoodlum hired by a company to keep order in a stockholders’ general meeting’), and that his father had moved to the United States in 1986 when his promotion business went bankrupt. Meanwhile, Mr Nakajima became a drug addict, and spent a period in a psychiatric hospital.

Mr Nakajima returned to Osaka from Tokyo with his wife for a visit around 1991 or 1992, and he remembered experiencing “culture shock” upon his return, and being “really surprised” at the changes in his hometown that had taken place during his absence, commenting that “it had totally changed (ippen shita).” His wife moved to Osaka in 1993, and Mr Nakajima followed after a period of travelling back and forward between Osaka and Tokyo. He remembered that “there was also a feeling I had of not wanting to come back here.” He explained that “the place had really opened up” during the period between the days when Palms was popular in the mid-1970s and the time of his move back to Osaka in 1993.

Mr Nakajima explained that Wild World had originally been his wife’s shop, but that she had found it difficult to keep up with the rapid pace of change in the music industry, leading to Mr Nakajima taking over the running of the shop. He noted that the idea for the shop had originated in his wife’s love of London, and from her frequent trips to London and New York. Wild World was originally established in Tennōji five years ago, the name taken from an anthology of poems by Nick Cave, of whom Mrs Nakajima was a fan. However, it had remained there for only a year, as Mr Nakajima explained, because “it became too much of a maniakku (‘maniac’) store” and “it was in a difficult location.” Receiving an offer to move to the present (1997) location in the centre of Amerika-mura, Mr and Mrs Nakajima moved there in 1993, at around the same time as the Big Step complex (discussed in 4.5.2 above) opened nearby.

Mr Nakajima explained that the atmosphere in the new location was quite different from the relaxed (nombiri) mood of the previous shop in Tennōji, and added that his wife lost interest in running the shop, because “some rough people come here”, “it’s fiercely competitive”, and “there’s lots of shoplifting.” Mr Nakajima took over from his
wife in mid-1993, less than one month after the shop had moved to Amerika-mura.

Mr Nakajima noted that while many shops such as his own specialising in music T-shirts had gone bust, “the reason that we survived was the techno boom...that was really massive”, dating this phenomenon to late 1993. The shop’s began to enjoy significant popularity after Mr Nakajima began stocking T-shirts from bands such as British artists The Orb and Orbital and record labels such as Warp Records. He noted that while record labels were principally involved in making music, there were also many cases where they were producing small quantities of T-shirts as a side business, and explained that he dealt with overseas-based suppliers who directly sourced stock for him, such as a man called Andy in London who had his own T-shirt business. He also explained that in the case of American imports, “I contact popular labels personally and negotiate prices with them”, adding that he had negotiated by fax in some cases. He added that “the pace of change in music is fast, and the artists are always changing”. Mr Nakajima further explained that he sourced information about new artists from his overseas contacts, following up with faxed product orders. He noted that, for example, “we were probably the first shop in Japan to get in [British artist] Aphex Twin T-shirts.” He further explained that “I negotiate [with suppliers] in order to be able to retail [items] at the cheapest possible prices”, adding that his large orders led to increased trust.

Mr Nakajima then explained a common process by which particular items became popular, describing an example of the karisuma (‘charisma’) concept whereby particular individuals become stylistic role models for their fans and followers. (This notion is further explored in 7.3.4 below). As Mr Nakajima noted, “musicians such as Tamago and disc jockeys such as DJ Kihira (from Osaka) buy T-shirts here, wear them, and then kids want them and come here to buy them”, and adding that “there are not many shops stocking techno T-shirts around here”. He also noted the example of young people using Wild World’s mail order system to order a T-shirt which they had seen famous disc jockey Ishikuro wearing at a club, adding that they had been “thrilled” to get them, and noting that Wild World’s mail order service attracted orders from as far afield as Niigata and
Hokkaido. At this point, he also noted that he sold a large volume of T-shirts when there was a techno boom in Sendai.

Mr Nakajima explained that “over half of our customers are club DJs”, adding that “all of the DJs who come here [as customers] are famous”, and also mentioning that “more DJs have started coming here since we moved [from Tennoji].” He singled out the example of a disc jockey called Rō who lived in Sakai (a city located approximately ten kilometres south of Amerika-mura) and had released two albums and four singles through the Belgian record label KK Records. However, he seemed to downplay the difficulty in becoming a good disc jockey, arguing that “anyone can do programming [as a disc jockey, so it comes down to] a matter of each DJ’s natural ‘sense.” Mr Nakajima also noted his own love of music, adding that he had a good musical knowledge.

Mr Nakajima also noted that the local Osaka music scene was relatively small, but that the “essence” of the underground scene “emanates from Amerika-mura.” He also noted that one of the characteristics of Amerika-mura was that “there are not many yakusa [gangsters] here”, adding that “they don’t get involved much in the music scene [so] money from events doesn’t get lost to them.” One possible reason he gave for the relative lack of yakusa involvement was that “there’s not that much money going around in the club scene.” He later noted that, in the case of the Amerika-mura music scene, “as technology has progressed, various different styles have come to be mixed.” He pointed to the continuing role of Amerika-mura as site of creative juxtaposition, arguing that the district had a “mixture’ culture” in which “good elements are drawn from different sources.” He later noted the examples of local Osaka bands Psych Out and Boredoms, adding that “they had an amazing energy”, and claiming that that they had “developed from within a ‘composite culture.” In reference to his own musical taste, Mr Nakajima claimed that he liked “all genres.”

Mr Nakajima also explained that in the early days, there was a clear distinction between yang (exemplified by Ms Higiri’s Palms disco) and yin (“bands operating in the ‘dark side’”), adding that “there was no fusion...they didn’t mix”). He contrasted that with the present
(1997) environment, arguing that “now they do mix,” and reasoning that “technological advances have meant that it’s easy to produce high-quality music.” He credits the “dark core” with pioneering music created using electronic technology, explaining that now it is “shared” with the mainstream. He also questioned whether “kids today who are looking for information really know what type of music is good”, adding that “they are easy to brainwash.” He further claimed that they don’t have the confidence to decide what is good or bad, alluding to the miihā/maniakku (‘imitator/maniac’) dichotomy explored in the context of fashion in 8.3.3 below.

Asked whether he had contact with the operators of similar shops, Mr Nakajima replied that “I don’t have many business friends”, adding that “a huge proportion of the people who come here are artists.” He also hinted at his role in filtering and channelling information, and in linking up budding disc jockeys with club owners and event organisers. He explained that “I get mountains of demo tapes” (from disc jockeys), adding that “I ‘pick up’ those I think are good...kids who have potential to develop further...and help them to get to perform at events.” He further noted that “If they get a positive response, they get asked to appear at other events.” He added, however, that this kind of activity was not attractive from a commercial perspective, noting that most of these disc jockeys could be ranked ‘C’ in a hierarchy from ‘A’ to ‘E’.

Wild World also handled tickets for events, however Mr Nakajima was careful only to sell tickets to events featuring disc jockeys in whom he has personal confidence. He noted that “it’s no good lying...I don’t lie [about the quality of disc jockeys].”

6.5.2 TANK GALLERY: THE (POST)MODERN SALON?
I first discovered Tank Gallery through an introduction by Mr Kōhei Matsunaga, the ‘noise’ musician introduced in 6.3 above. Kōhei mentioned that he had first met its owner, Mr Takaharu Furutani, when he had dropped into the cafe while passing through the area one day in 1995. Kōhei described Tank Gallery as a place where “students and creative people come together.” Mr Furutani was not in the cafe when Kōhei and I visited, however I had nevertheless been intrigued by the unusual atmosphere. The cafe was hidden down an
alleyway [Plate 6.9] in the single-storey warren of shops known as Gallage Mart, very close to Wild World (introduced in 6.5.1 above), yet tucked away around a corner, so that a passerby would walk past without even noticing its existence. As we walked in, I felt as though I was entering a private club, and noticed that the interaction between staff and customers was very relaxed and familiar, unlike that which I had experienced in a cafe anywhere before. I imagined that this might have been the kind of ‘salon’-like atmosphere of which Ms Mariko Higiri had nostalgically alluded to in her description of the Loop cafe she had co-managed thirty years ago (discussed in 5.2.1 above). The following material is based on an interview conducted with Mr Furutani [Plate 6.10] on a later visit on 21 October 1997.

Although he had first heard of Amerika-mura from Popeye magazine while in junior high school, Mr Furutani did not visit the district for the first time until 1987 when he was in his first year of senior high school. His purpose for that first visit had been to buy a pair of used Levi 501 jeans. Normally shopping in Umeda, he had heard from a friend in the same grade at high school that jeans were cheap in Amerika-mura. He began to visit Amerika-mura approximately once a week during his period at senior high school, sometimes alone and sometimes with friends, and remembered that one of his favourite stores had been Hysteric Glamour (still operating in the district). His first impression of the district was that “it was scary (...) because it was an adults’ area at that time...now it’s only kids.” He remembered that “it was exciting to breathe in that ‘dangerous air’ [and] fun to experience a sense of growing up”, and added that “we didn’t always buy something, but often just came to look.” He included shop staff in his reference to Amerika-mura as an “adults’ area”, invoking the theme of a ‘school of style’ (discussed in 5.4.1 above) in his comment that “they used to tell us about things we didn’t know.” In a magazine article relating to the history of Amerika-mura published in 1998, Mr Furutani also noted a family association with Amerika-mura, describing how his mother had attended the Minami Junior High School (which had later closed and been redeveloped as Big Step shopping complex, as discussed in 3.5.2 above) (Meets Regional 1998:32).
After graduating from high school, Mr Furutani studied for three years at a fashion college in Umeda (in the Kita district, introduced in 3.4 above). His visits to Amerika-mura became more frequent during this period, averaging three or four times per week, explaining that he “spent time looking at fashion in Amerika-mura and Umeda.” However, he became a little bored of fashion during his three years at the fashion college, and began working as a wholesaler in imported merchandise after his graduation, handling goods from the US, UK and other countries, and selling them to shops in Amerika-mura and other districts. He continued this job for one year in 1993-94 when he was aged 21-22, and quit in order to establish Tank Gallery in November 1994. He decided on Amerika-mura as the location for the cafe/gallery because he “thought that it was an area where interesting people hung out… I felt the pawa (‘power’) of this area.” His choice of the Gallage Mart derived from his friendship with the owner of the complex (Mr Nishikawa, introduced later in this section), who offered him a cheap leasing arrangement. Tank Gallery had been redecorated twice, once before its opening in November 1994, and again in April 1997, on both occasions by Mr Furutani and his friends.

Mr Furutani explained that the basic concept behind Tank Gallery was “cafe + bar + art”, and noted that exhibitions had been held there since its establishment [Plate 6.11]. A major inspiration was the cafe-bar Pink Pony in New York, which he had visited when he was 21 during the period when he was attending fashion college. He explained that “I modelled it on [that place] (…) they had artwork on the walls”, and later added that when he had been thinking of the concept of “art and cafe”, he had read in a book that artists such as Picasso and Lautrec had debated various ideas in cafes. He further explained that he had wanted to “create a supēsu (‘space’) where artists could talk with each other about all kinds of things.”

Considering himself as an artist too, he saw Tank Gallery as a “kōryū dekiru kafe (‘cafe where people can meet and exchange ideas’).” In this context, he viewed his role as that of a “master” or “host” who “links up this person with that person”, reasoning that in this way “interesting ideas are born… that’s Tank Gallery.” As a ‘host’, he considered that it was important for him to keep up with the latest trends in art, music and film, and to take note of the interests of his
customers. He explained that he would often introduce two customers to each other if he knew that they shared a similar interest, adding that there were even cases of people meeting their girlfriends through the cafe. (He confirmed that a ‘customers’ photo album’, further discussed below, had also been used in this way).

Mr Furutani explained that “lots of people come here to source information”, and added that “I study up in order to be able to provide the latest information...about the latest things.” His sources of information included fashion magazines such as Popeye and Smart (both of which he claimed that he never failed to read), the young men’s magazine Brutus, the art/culture/design magazine Studio Voice, music magazines such as Tower Records’ Bounce, interior design magazines such as El Deco, the architecture/planning magazine Axis and “other interesting [publications] which I come across.” Although he did not view Tank Gallery itself as a jōhō no hasshinchi (‘information base’), he argued that “the [actual] transmission [of information] takes place outside, but [some of] the information being transmitted comes from Tank Gallery.”

A large collection of flyers was laid out on the dresser on the left in the section between the cafe and gallery when I visited [Plate 6.12], and I asked Mr Furutani about their origin and use. He explained that people involved in various events brought them in, and added that his cafe occasionally acted as a ticket sales point in the case of events in which he had a strong personal interest. This type of role reflected aspects of Mr Nakajima’s (discussed in 6.5.1 above) role as an arbitor of taste. Mr Furutani also appeared to function as a connection-point between disc jockeys and potential fans. This role was highlighted when a young man entered the cafe during our interview, passing a cassette tape to Mr Furutani before leaving. He explained that the man was a house music disc jockey, adding that “we help to promote him by playing his [mix] tape here.” Commenting that he received at least three such demo tapes each week, he explained how if cafe customers heard the tape playing and enquired about it, he would give them a flyer for the next event at which the disc jockey in question was scheduled to appear. Conversely, he explained, a customer might approach him and ask him “Are there any interesting events this
weekend?”

Mr Furutani agreed with my suggestion that Amerika-mura was the “centre of the Osaka ‘underground’”, and explained that there were “various separate scenes (dokuritsu-shita shiin)”, of which techno represented a particularly prominent example. He noted that techno included drum ‘n’ bass and goa, which he claimed were connected, and made the interesting comment that “the fans [of each scene] are separate, but the DJs are all linked”, adding that “DJs are probably linked in the case of all genres.” This comment reflected Mr Nakajima’s assertion (noted in 6.5.1 above) that a range of previously separate musical genres had begun to develop a shared network of social interaction, if only at the level of production.

As noted above, the rear section of Tank Gallery operated as an ‘art space’, and Mr Furutani noted that approximately three or four exhibitions were held there each month, including “photography, paintings, fashion, sculpture and images.” He explained that there were two ways in which exhibitions were arranged, noting cases where he directly approached artists and invited them to exhibit in his gallery free-of-charge, and (more common) cases where artists rented gallery space for 40 000 yen (approximately A$700 per week at July 2002 exchange rate) per week. Asked how he selected work to be exhibited in Tank Gallery, Mr Furutani replied that he only featured work which “fits the atmosphere of the shop.”

Around this point in the interview, two interesting things happened. Two female customers asked Mr Furutani if they could take his large black dog Pepe for a walk. (The dog has a free run inside the cafe). Mr Furutani immediately agreed, and pointed to some leashes hanging on the wall near the door. The customers took a leash down, attached it to the dog’s collar, and left the cafe to take it for a walk. Also, Mr Furutani pulled out an album containing Polaroid photographs of customers, explaining how visitors to the cafe could write captions next to their photographs, noting their personal interests. He added that he had used the album to link up people with similar interests or those with romantic motives. He added that he had stopped taking photographs for the album earlier that year (1997),
explaining that there were now too many customers to continue the practice, and that it was also an expensive custom. I suggested to him that his cafe was a kind of ‘salon’ space, a notion with which he immediately agreed.

Mr Furutani was also a member of Cafe de Yowaki (hereafter referred to as CDY), a creative project team which produced animated computer graphic images for club events. Although I had been unaware at the time, this team had been responsible for the backing visuals at the regular Zettai-mu club event which I had attended in September 1997 at the venue located near the Port of Osaka, Bay Side Jenny. Mr Furutani explained that CDY had been launched in summer 1996 as part of a “Tank Gallery club event” featuring jazz, soul and funk music which was held at the Blue Nile club near Dotombori (the canal which forms the southern boundary of Amerika-mura; also introduced in 3.4 above). The team included six members, all of whom first became acquainted at Tank Gallery: Mr Furutani (25), a graphic designer (25), a graduate of the Film Department of Osaka Fine Arts University (27), an architect (29), an illustrator (25) and a computer specialist (29). Mr Furutani noted that CDY visuals had been used at Zettai-mu events once every three to four months, at another regular event called Effective, and at Lubnology, an event to be held the following month.

Asking to compare Amerika-mura at the time of his first visit and in the present (October 1997), he replied that “[at first,] there were lots of people running businesses at the kojin reberu (‘person-to-person level’)...there were lots of interesting people [here].” He claimed that “[now] it’s become a place where the people running businesses are only interested in making money”, pointing to the increasing dominance of large-scale operators in the district, and adding that “it’s become a kankōchi (‘tourist destination’).” However, he believed that this development was “unavoidable.” He claimed that in the future, “the interesting people will start moving away from Amerika-mura”, adding that “[while] there will still be lots of people coming here (...) the koa (‘core’) individuals will probably leave.” Asked where these individuals would move to, he mentioned the peripheral districts of Minami-semba and Horie. Here, Mr Furutani’s use of the koa concept recalled aspects of Mr Inoguchi’s discussion,
presented in 6.2 above, and Mr Kohei Matsunaga’s use of the term in 6.5.1 above.

In the *KG Jōhō* (1999) guide to Amerika-mura (further discussed in 7.2.3 below), Mr Furutani’s Tank Gallery was introduced as a “unique cafe and gallery” and “a mysterious space at the very rear of Gallage Mart” (1999:103). After explaining the layout of the venue, the author claimed that

it seems like all the people who come here are [mutual] acquaintances, and there’s always a really friendly atmosphere, so it might be difficult for you to go in at first, but once you get used to this atmosphere, you should feel that this is a really relaxing space (1999:103)

Accompanied by photographs of Mr Furutani, the entrance and the interior of the cafe, the article encouraged interested readers to “by all means, go along for a visit”, claiming that its owner was a “very sociable guy” who “knows a lot about Amerika-mura”, and adding that he was a “very dependable person” (1999:103) Noting his trademark black hat, the author also mentioned that Mr Furutani was the owner of “beloved dog Pepe”, who I had noticed being taken for a walk by two female customers during my first interview with Mr Furutani in 1997 (and noted earlier in this section).

The feature discussed above was presented as part of a two-page spread introducing one of the planners of Gallage Mart, Mr Norimasa Nishikawa (whom Mr Furutani had described to me as his “mentor”) and three of the shops within the complex. In the article, Mr Nishikawa explained how the Gallage Mart concept had been born from a desire to “make [this place] interesting...the Amerika-mura that used to excite us through our very skin.” (1999:102) The feature also noted how Gallage Mart differed from other commercial complexes in that it was not based on an underlying theme concept, explaining that it was “sufficient for each of the shops in the complex just to sell what they liked in their own spaces” (1999:102) It also explained how Mr Nishikawa was “very satisfied” with the “diversity” of the tenant stores which had occupied the complex, reflecting Territory owner Taiki’s (introduced in 6.3.2 above) claim that his landlord encouraged unusual tenants. The *KG Jōhō* (1999)
article on Gallage Mart added that “its hasshinryoku (‘influence’) may still be weak, but there is [definitely] a special, Amerika-mura-like nioi (‘scent’, ‘feel’) to this place” (1999:102) The feature also noted that the name ‘Gallage’ was a composite term created from the words ‘garage’ and ‘village.’

6.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined numerous contexts which encapsulate the continued existence and importance of ostensibly ‘lost’ elements in the contemporary fabric of Amerika-mura. This was the ‘deep’ aspect of many sites which was discussed in 6.2 above, a series of trajectories and connections which were unable to be mapped, framed or categorised. Over time, I came to realise that media and tourist discourses were engaged in a continuous, necessarily incomplete and subjective process to transform the visible aspects of these networks of knowledge into marketable and consumable information. These practices took many forms, organising Amerika-mura into a series of sites on a tourist itinerary, or classifying the clothing worn by people there according to various sutairu (‘styles’).

Engaged in their own project of ‘authenticity’, these discourses were combined in the context of the specialised sutoriito fasshon (‘street fashion’) media. As Chapter 7 explains, the creation of the symbolic construct of the sutoriito (‘street’) encourages engagement with Amerika-mura as a site for the production and consumption of ‘youthful fashionability.’ Nevertheless, this construct is not independent of the networks explored in this chapter, the commercial sutoriito seeking authentication from access to the koa (‘core’) elements of the district as sources of specialised knowledge.
Plate 6.1: Peeling posters and graffiti in alleyway behind Gallage Mart shops.
Plate 6.2: Mr Masahiko Nakabayashi, owner of Apocalypse store.
Plate 6.3: Stairway inside EN Building leading up to Territory store.

Plate 6.4: Darkened entrance to Territory store.
Plate 6.5: Taiki, owner of Territory store.
Mr Yūji Nampō in Harvest Market Junior store.

Masonna and wife Fusao in their store Freak Scene.
Plate 6.8: Theory and Experiment owner Mr Yasutomi Shiga and his assistant Yuka.
Plate 6.9: Entrance to Tank Gallery.
Plate 6.10: Mr Takaharu Furutani, owner of Tank Gallery.
Plate 6.11: Inside Tank Gallery cafe area. The art display area is found at the rear of the cafe, to the right, and is not visible in this photograph.
Plate 6.12: Closer view of cabinet in centre of Tank Gallery, showing demonstration cassettes left by disc jockeys (on top shelf) and promotional flyers.
USE OF THESES

This copy is supplied for purposes of private study and research only. Passages from the thesis may not be copied or closely paraphrased without the written consent of the author.
CHAPTER 7

FRAMING DISCOURSES: FROM TOURISM TO

SUTORIITO FASSHON

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 above proposed that Amerika-mura was a site in which numerous responses to modernity coexisted. At the level of the physical environment, it operated as a site in which attempts were made by local authorities and commercial organisations to impose 'order' on a 'chaotic' flow of young people, exemplified in the case of the renovation of Triangle Park. At the level of the imagined environment, it operated as a site in which attempts were made by numerous parties to frame, exoticise and incorporate elements within this environment, and style aspects of its very 'chaos' as contributing factors to its appeal as a place to visit. This second set of practices was played out in the context of several parallel discourses. The first was that of tourism, through which Amerika-mura was located among a series of 'destinations' which visitors were encouraged to visit. This process grouped sites as disparate as Osaka Castle, Amerika-mura, the newly-opened (2001) Universal Studios Japan and the Hep Five shopping complex in Umeda (Kita district), framing and linking them as potential 'stops' on an imagined tourist itinerary of Osaka. This discourse was examined in 3.5 above.

The second set of practices combined the discourses of fashion and tourism through the construct of sutoriito fasshon ('street fashion'), further explored in this chapter and Chapter 8 below. In the pages of the specialised sutoriito fasshon media, Amerika-mura was located among a quite different set of linked sites. According to this discourse, 'young' and 'fashionable' districts within major Japanese
and foreign cities were presented alongside each other. Not simply a place to visit, Amerika-mura became a site in which to actively seek out, consume and display fashion objects, and more broadly to use them in the construction of a personal sutairu ('style'). However, while the tourist discourse promised to help the visitor make sense of a huge and complex city by reducing it to a set of ‘must see’ places, the sutoriito fasshon media both reduced the global environment to a set of fashionable places, and also reduced the seemingly endless variety of fashion objects to a set of sutairu ('styles').

The first part of this chapter introduces a genre of publication which bridges the gap between tourist guide and product catalogue, the ‘mook’. The second part of the chapter introduces the notion of sutoriito fasshon and its specialised media genre, exploring how it borrows elements of mainstream tourism in framing and classifying not only Amerika-mura, but the fashion objects sold there and the young people who consume and display them. This discussion is followed by an examination of the opinions of sutoriito fasshon magazine editors, and the final part of the chapter explores possible theoretical approaches to the construct of the sutoriito.

7.2 FROM ITINERARY TO CATALOGUE: THE FASHION ‘MOOK’

Alongside the mainstream tourist literature in Japan (examples of which were explored in 3.5 above), a further group of publications introduces specific districts as places to visit, walk around and purchase fashion items. Straddling the domains of entertainment, education and tourism, these are the mukku ('mooks'; from ‘magazine + book’). Usually published by the sutoriito fasshon ('street fashion') media (further introduced below), these guides present fashion items and the places where they may be consumed and displayed, using a catalogue format with stylised maps showing the location of particular stores.

An early example of this process is the monthly komyunitii pēpā ('community paper') Wow-Wow, published in Osaka during the late 1970s. The February 1977 edition includes photographs of young people on the streets of Osaka, under the English title “Cityboy and citygirl” (sic) (1977:1) [Plate 7.1]. This type of feature prefigures the
sunappu (‘photographic shoots’) later deployed by sutoriito fasshon magazines (and discussed in 8.2 below). Also prefiguring aspects of the specialised magazines which would appear in the mid-to-late 1980s, this issue of Wow-Wow presents a diagrammatic description of a fashionable couple, under the title “aitsu ni sa wo tsukeru furu sōbi (lit. ‘full gear to differentiate yourself from that [other] guy’)” (Wow-Wow 1977:6) [Plate 7.2]. It also includes simplified maps of the district (1977:30) and others of surrounding areas, noting the locations of shops introduced in a separate catalogue-type listing contained later in the issue. The Amerika-mura map (1977:30-31) [Plate 7.3] notes shops such as Gallup (noted in 5.2.2, 5.2.4 and 5.3.1 above) and Goods (noted in 5.2.4, 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 above), and the El Paso bar (introduced in 5.3.3 above).

Another local ‘community paper’ to heavily feature Amerika-mura during the same period was the monthly Boop, noted by the national men’s magazine Heibon Punch in a 1979 feature on the district. The article describes how Boop “shares its fate with that of Amerika-mura”, and notes its expansion to a large format presentation from June of that year (Heibon Punch 1979). Another mainstream magazine to feature Amerika-mura during the same period was the national women’s fashion magazine Nonno. An article included in its issue of 20 July 1979 presents a stylised map of the district and encourages readers to “go shopping with this map in one hand” (Nonno 1979:74).

Representations of Amerika-mura in the above examples constitute a new form of engagement between the media and urban space which later led to the development of the sutoriito fasshon (‘street fashion’) magazine during the 1980s and related ‘mooks’ during the 1990s. The mook functions as a medium halfway between tourist guide and product catalogue, styling entire districts as ‘giant department stores’. Here, the user is encouraged not to look and leave, but to linger, browse and buy. Here, places such as Amerika-mura are viewed as a jumble of confusing ‘information’ which the mook purports to organise, classify and decode for smooth consumption.
7.2.1 THE MOOK AND THE SUTORIITO

A supplementary edition of the monthly magazine Get On published in August 1997 is typical of the recent format of sutoriito fasshon mooks, and includes fold-out maps of the principal sutoriito fasshon districts in Tokyo and Osaka and coverage of 501 (a number too reminiscent of the Levi jeans model to be coincidental!) sutoriito fasshon stores in both cities. The front cover reads: “Includes detailed fold-out shop maps according to area - it’s convenient, you can use it, you will understand at a glance!” (Get On 1997:1) The use of the expression “understand at a glance” suggests firstly, that places can be ‘understood’, secondly, that mooks and fashion magazines constitute an authoritative manual for ‘understanding’ them, and thirdly, that a cursory glance through a mediated and highly selective representation of certain (pre-selected) places is sufficient in order for the reader to ‘understand’ them.

Another example of this genre of publication is the mook published by Boon in February 1997, Tokyo Osaka shoppu navi ‘97 (Tokyo Osaka shop navigator ‘97), which includes “357 shops which are good for [literally ‘strong at’] sneakers and jeans” (Boon 1997a:1) [Plate 7.4]. The use of the term ‘navigator’ in the title again implying both the need for guidance in negotiating the urban landscape and the unquestionable authority of the mook in providing such guidance. Featuring seven locations in Tokyo in addition to Amerika-mura, Kobe and a scattering of “waza ari (‘tricky’)” (1997a:117) shops in the Kanto and Kansai regions (centred on Tokyo and Osaka respectively), this mook also includes stylised maps of each district, with icons marking out each of the featured shops [Plate 7.5].

While the use of different colour codes or the description of the ‘unique’ attributes of each district attempts to create a distinct identity (and therefore appeal) for each location, identical formatting and visual presentation paradoxically constructs each site as an interchangeable component in a ‘set’ of fashionable places in a process whereby any unique attributes are subsumed under the classifying framework of the sutoriito (‘street’). In a similar way to the mainstream tour guides discussed in 3.5 above, each district becomes framed as one of a series of ‘destinations’ to visit, with each
‘destination’ itself comprising a series of ‘sights/sites’ of consumption. In this way, physical environments are ordered and classified, encouraging a process by which places, people and objects within them become framed, exoticised and incorporated into the abstract consumer space of the sutoriito.

Perhaps borrowing from the title of the hugely popular Japanese travel guide series Chikyū no arukikata (literally ‘How to walk around the world’; noted in 3.5.1 above), each map in the Boon guide noted above (Boon 1997a) is accompanied by a textual information box titled [X] no arukikata (‘How to walk around [X]’, where ‘X’ is the place name). The ‘How to walk around Ame-mura’ (‘Ame-mura’ being an abbreviated form of ‘Amerika-mura) box firstly describes the district as “Osaka’s mecca of sutoriito sutairu (‘street style’)” (1997a:94), and preempts the first visit to the physical destination by informing readers what they will (i.e. should) find when they arrive there:

What you notice when walking around [in Amerika-mura] are the brash signboards, pop music and the shops crammed into even the basements of buildings and the back alleyways. Wherever you go, you hear the sound of shop assistants’ familiar voices calling ‘Hey, what are you looking for?’. This is probably another thing Amerika-mura is famous for (1997a:94).

The text also suggests that readers should visit the “traditional Kogaryū takoyaki [fried octopus] stand” (1997a:94), and claims that the “famous stores in Shōzan Building and Mukokuseki Department Store [actually a maze-like building containing dozens of small stalls] ...are a must” (1997a:94). When dealing with local shop assistants, readers are instructed to bargain “while trading gags” and advised that “immediately asking for discounts is bad manners” (1997a:94).

7.2.2 MOOKING THE MURA: CITY AS CATALOGUE

This section explores three examples of mooks largely devoted to Amerika-mura. Rather than presenting the district as one of a series of fashionable places in the abstract space of the sutoriito, they instead concentrate on presenting an encyclopedic classification of Amerika-mura and its retail outlets. In addition, they commonly
provide advice on 'appropriate' techniques for choosing and wearing fashion items.

The *Amerika-mura senmon gaido bukku (Amerika-mura specialised guide book)* was published in 1996 by Osaka-based *Bow Relations*. The first part of the book, "Go! Go! Shop!" (original title in English) (*Bow Relations* 1996:18) contains colour features on a wide range of shops and restaurants, some classified according to the type of clothing of food they specialise in, others according to the building in which they are located. The second part of the book contains a black-and-white *ierō pēji* ('yellow pages') section, divided into categories (such as "shopingu ('shopping')" (1996:83) and "amyūzumento ('amusement')" (1996:127), and including two thousand businesses. Large categories are divided into subcategories, under which basic shop details are listed.

All three parts of the book are preceded by a kind of 'legend' explaining how to read the information contained within each shop entry. In the first and third sections, this legend is entitled "*hombun dēta no mikata* (lit. 'how to look at the data in this section of text')" (1996:18, 153). This section includes a sample shop introduction from the main text, and includes arrows pointing out each element of the presentation, with a description of each element included. In the 'yellow pages' section, the legend is entitled "*ierō pēji no mikata* (lit, 'how to look at the yellow pages')" (1996:82), and includes a similar sample format, including the meaning of various symbols used in the text. In the case of the second and third sections of the book, a special symbol is also used to denote businesses which are hiring new employees, meaning that the guide can be used for both shopping and job-hunting.

*Amerika-mura e ikō (Let's go to Amerika-mura): the style guide 1999* (English used in original title) was published by Kobe-based *KG Jōhō (KG Information)* in 1999 using a similar format to that of the earlier Bow Relations guidebook discussed above. Its cover features a waist-down photograph of one of my interviewees, rap dancer and shop assistant Pakko. The cover text promises to provide information on "*kodawari no fasshon* ('fashion chosen according to a refined sense of taste')" (*KG Jōhō* 1999:1) gleaned from shop assistants. This type
of appeal shares aspects with the notion of *karisuma* (‘charisma’, here meaning ‘fashionable and influential person’) deployed by *sutoriito fasshon* magazines, in which particular ‘fashionable people’ such as veteran or radical shop owners, media personalities and disc jockeys are asked to recommend particular shops, fashion items and music. This notion also reflects elements of the ‘school of style’ implied by ‘veterans’ in their accounts of early Amerika-mura (discussed in 5.4.1 above). One such *karisuma* personality introduced in the *KG Jōhō* (1999) guide is South Bronx shop assistant Okamoto Nao, who argues that it is “difficult to [create] your own style”, enigmatically adding that “you have to polish both the inside and the outside” (1999:22).

The cover copy also uses an abrupt imperative verb form, appealing to users to “search for the *guzzu* (‘goods’) you like in Ame-mura [shortened version of Amerika-mura]” (1999:1). The use of this verbal form makes it clear that the book is not intended for adults, as it is normally only found in casual conversation between close friends or colleagues, or in commands to subordinates.

This guide differs from the 1996 guidebook introduced above in that it introduces people as well as shops. A series of articles introduce individuals such as Ms Mariko Higiri (introduced in 4.2.1 above), and numerous small ‘boxes’ present *karisuma* (‘charisma’) shop assistants and their fashion and style-related advice. Coining a new adjective, the opening feature of the book is titled “*Amerika-mura-na piipuru* (‘Amerika-mura-ish people’, using a Japanicised version of English ‘people’ instead of Japanese equivalent, *hito*)” (1999:8). The feature, introduced as “*gaitō shuzai* (lit. ‘information-gathering on the street’)” (1999:8), presents a series of young people photographed on the streets of Amerika-mura, including their answers to five questions: “Where did you come from?”, “To do what?”, “How often do you come here?”, “What do you like about *kyō no fasshon* (‘today’s fashion’, meaning ‘your fashion today’)?” and “Please make a brief comment!” (1999:8). This type of standardised questioning, prompting responses such as “I come almost every day” (1999:8, 9, 10) and “I’m on my way home from school” (1999:10) reflects a tendency in the Japanese media to collect information according to set frameworks. Although I used similar questioning techniques in my fieldwork, this was in order to gain background information, rather
than to collect standardised responses in a form apparently open to easy ‘comparison.’


Perhaps the most elaborate coverage of the district is that found in the *Ōsaka kanzen shopingu baiburū (Osaka complete shopping bible)* (Fine Boys 1999, 2001) series, published by *sutoriito fasshon (‘street fashion’) magazine* *Fine Boys*. The 2001 edition begins with a presentation of four karisuma (‘charisma’) shop staff and the clothes they wear. This is followed by an ‘itinerary’ section which duplicates aspects of the format found in mainstream tourist guides, such as the Blue Guide series (discussed in 3.5.2 above).

Five “rūto (‘routes’)” (Fine Boys 2001:3) are proposed to readers, including three centred on Amerika-mura, and two others taking in retail districts of nearby cities Kobe and Kyoto respectively. The guide suggests that each route “can be walked around in half a day” (2001:3), and provides colourful cartoon-style maps with stylised shopping ‘characters’ and a red dotted line to show the proposed itinerary [Plate 7.6]. The introduction to Route A, which takes in five furugi (‘used clothing’) stores in Amerika-mura and nearby Horie, begins with the assertion that:

> It’s a waste of time and energy to go shopping without fixing the items you are looking for and the area you will be looking in. That’s why we have proposed a route for shopping efficiently with your sights firmly set on your target. (...) Let’s go around shopping intelligently! (2001:8)

Here, the city is styled as a complex bundle of ‘information’, which the guide promises to filter and simplify. The urban environment is not a place to wander around aimlessly, enjoying unexpected discoveries, but rather one in which to minimise ‘wasted’ time and energy in the pursuit of specific goals. While the tourist discourses
explored in 3.5 above proposed to render the city legible for the purpose of ‘efficient’ movement between specific ‘sites’ as spectacles, the mook offers a similar role in facilitating movement between shops as sites of consumption. While it is unlikely that either type of itinerary would be followed ‘to the letter’, the existence of these types of discourses hints at sophisticated attempts to shape the identity of places such as Amerika-mura and influence the ways in which they are interpreted and engaged with. By standing ‘between’ the physical site and the visitor, they encourage the consumption of the city as ‘information’, playing down or ignoring the more subtle (and unmappable) dynamics of memory, sentiment and curiosity which construct personal experiences of the city as ‘knowledge.’

Route B in the above guide (Furuya 2001) frames Amerika-mura as a dating spot, including an itinerary and a “map for couple! [English used here]” (2001: 10). The accompanying text notes that the five shops on the itinerary include a “complete [range] of redizu (‘ladies’) [items]” (2001:10). Route C, by comparison, promises to introduce five komono (‘accessories’) shops (2000:12), noting that “even if your wea (‘clothing’) is perfectly chosen, you tend to feel down unless your accessories [also] match nicely” (2000:12). It further hints at the notion of fashion as a progressive learning experience (as discussed in 8.3.3 below), claiming that “the more of an o-share jōkyūsei (lit. ‘senior student of fashion) you are, the more attention you pay to [your] accessories” (2000:12).

The bulk of the guide (Furuya 1001) is devoted to an encyclopedic colour catalogue which introduces fashion outlets in Osaka, Kobe and Kyoto and includes highly detailed maps with colour-coded naming of stores. The double-page Amerika-mura map contains approximately one hundred stores, divided into the categories “onrii shoppu (lit. ‘only shops’: generally brand-name stores)”, “serekuto shoppu (lit. ‘select shops’: stores featuring a range of items selected by their owners)”, “furugi-kei shoppu (‘used clothing-style shops’)”, “shūzu shoppu (‘shoe shops’)” and “komono sono ta (‘accessories and other items’)” (2001:25). Each shop is introduced with map references, addresses and phone numbers, which together almost guarantee that the guide user will have no difficulty in finding it.
The final section of the guide takes the ‘instructive’ role of the mook to a new level, presenting a “shopingu kanzen manyuuru (‘complete shopping manual’)” (2001:123). Readers are advised, in the same rough and casual imperative verb form used in the Amerika-mura e ikō (Let’s go to Amerika-mura) guide (KG Jōhō 1999) discussed above, to “get under your belts” (2001:123) six “keys to intelligent shopping” (2000:123). Readers are advised to first walk around several shops to check current styles, to try on clothes before buying them, and to find out about “afutā kea (lit. ‘after care’; meaning care of the product after purchase, such as washing instructions) (2000:123). Finally, they are advised to “become friendly” (2000:123) with staff at the shops which they like, and to “become a regular customer” (2000:123).

The six key points noted above are followed by a section in which five karisuma (‘charisma’) shop staff offer detailed advice on how to choose jackets, shoes and other items, including pictorial presentations on ‘correct’ trouser length and the characteristics and care of three different types of shoe sole (2000:123).

It can be seen from the above discussion that mooks extend the themes of general tourist discourses, providing a comprehensive mapping and classification of urban space as a site of consumption, while masking the process by which specific elements are chosen and categorised. At the same time, they view urban space as both a text to be unravelled and as a context to move through in the most ‘efficient’ manner in the pursuit of pre-defined goals. As noted above, the city is no longer a site of exploration and discovery, but one which necessitates minimising ‘waste’ and maximising ‘efficiency’. In addition, through the medium of designated experts, the karisuma (‘charisma’) shop staff, the mooks attempt to style themselves as instructors, teaching guide users not only where to shop, but how to choose and wear the products they buy. Paradoxically, by featuring shop staff, the guides obviate the necessity of shoppers to communicate with such staff directly when they visit the shops.

However, the mooks are not to be viewed merely as the extension of general tourist discourses to sites and practices of consumption. They must also be examined in the context of the narrative of the sutoriito
(‘street’), a concept widely promoted in the specialised *sutoriito fasshon* (‘street fashion’) media. This notion, later explored in relation to French theorist Henri Lefebvre’s concept of ‘abstract space’, constructs a theme of ‘youthful fashionability’, which it attempts to associate with ‘centres of youth culture’ such as Shibuya in Tokyo and my fieldsite of Amerika-mura in Osaka.

### 7.3 SUTORIITO FASSHON: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Akurosu Henshūshitsu (Across Editorial Office) (1995) traces the use of the concept of *sutoriito fasshon* (‘street fashion’) in Japan to the immediate postwar era, and claims that it is associated with a desire to “create a new (or imitated form of) aesthetics modelled on the West (America)” and use this form to “reject established value systems” (1995:10). The first part of this argument was closely reflected in the comments of interviewees in the district, many emphasising the role of *sutoriito fasshon* as a form of creative or stylistic aesthetics. However, it was difficult to maintain a sense that the latter argument retained its validity while wandering the streets of Amerika-mura or flicking through *sutoriito fasshon* magazines during my primary fieldwork in 1997. Several interviewees strongly denied the existence of such a connection, one even going so far as to claim that “there is no link between fashion and ideology in Japan.”

During the past fifteen years, Japanese *sutoriito fasshon* magazines have played a major role in constructing the notion of the *sutoriito* (‘street’) as an aesthetic space of youthful fashionability. At the vanguard of this project was the first *sutoriito fasshon* magazine, *Boon*, launched in 1986. Featuring articles which provided advice on fashion and style, and dozens of photographs of young men taken on the streets of Japanese cities, complete with captions including product information, *Boon* pioneered a new form of engagement with fashion constructed around the notion of the *sutoriito*.

Precipitating and later encouraging a shift in youth fashion trends from the smart, designer brands of the early 1980s back towards the jeans, T-shirts and sneakers popular in the 1970s, but later encompassing both under the rubric of *sutoriito fasshon*, *Boon* also played a critical role in the construction a new form of engagement between young people and urban space through the medium of
Photography which juxtaposed fashion commodities with particular ‘cool’ districts of Japanese cities established the *sutoriito* as a symbolic aesthetic space of youthful fashionability. At the same time, a catalogue-style format which divided photographs of young people according to location, then by style, and finally by distinguishing features within that style, simultaneously masked the constructed nature of such categorisations, encouraged the development of a particular kind of gaze, and promoted the simultaneous pursuit of conformity and differentiation among readers. This latter theme is further explored in Chapter 8 below.

During the late 1980s and 1990s, approximately one dozen rival publications appeared in *Boon’s* wake, riding the crest of what can now be seen as the second *sutoriito fasshon* boom, the first having taken place in the late 1970s before the popularisation of the term. Places such as Amerika-mura in Osaka and Shibuya in Tokyo became prioritised as ‘hot spots’ in a virtual topography of style, places which were simultaneously differentiated from surrounding districts and linked to each other through the symbolic construct of the *sutoriito*.

It may be argued that Amerika-mura has been both saved and destroyed by this process, as the fortunes of the district have closely paralleled the popularity of the fashions through which the *sutoriito* is largely consumed. Although the symbolism of the *sutoriito* as a space of youthful, aesthetic self-expression has ensured the continued profitability of many businesses in the district, it has also limited the parameters within which such businesses may operate. While some shopowners claimed that increased rents and fierce competition now (1997) forced most shops to carry only those products guaranteed to sell in order to survive, even *sutoriito fasshon* magazine editors (such as those introduced in 7.4 below) admitted that the balance of power in deciding what was ‘fashionable’ had been shifting from shopowners to the *sutoriito fasshon* media for the last decade.

Dissolving the boundaries between shopping and tourism, the *sutoriito fasshon* magazines noted above helped redefine fashionable areas of large cities in Japan (and later the US and Europe) as stages upon which an abstract space of youthful aesthetic experimentation
could and should be practiced, the space of the *sutoriito*. At the same time, its catalogue-style format helped accelerate the collapse of the temporal cycle which had characterised postwar youth fashion into a non-time-specific ‘menu’ of styles which could be mixed and sampled at will, in a phenomenon which Ted Polhemus has described as “the supermarket of style” (1994:130). (Interestingly, he proposes that Japan was the first place in which this phenomenon could be observed) (1994:133). This notion is further explored later in 7.3.2 below.

However, *Boon* and the *sutoriito fasshon* magazines which appeared in its wake were not an entirely new phenomenon, representing only the latest example of what sociologist Nakano Osamu (1991) has termed ‘manual culture’, which he traces back to the launch of the urban information magazine *Pia* in the early 1970s. In *Wakamono bunka jinruigaku (Anthropology of youth culture)*, Nakano (1991) argues that 1970 marked a critical point of transformation in the way in which young Japanese engaged with ‘information’. He claims that while young people had previously exerted considerable effort in seeking out and internalising information from their own ‘communication networks’, the arrival of publications such as *Pia* reflected and responded to a general shift towards the externalisation of information. Using the terms ‘manual culture’ (noted above), ‘catalogue culture’ and ‘human cocoon’, he argues that an explosion of guidebooks, manuals and magazines during the past thirty years has both reflected and accelerated an existing social trend. His argument shares aspects of the distinction between ‘information’ and ‘knowledge’ discussed in 6.2 above.

Although not mentioned by Nakano (1991), *Pia* was not the first such information magazine to be produced in Japan. According to editor of Osaka-based information magazine *L-Magazine* (or *L-Maga*), Mr Jun Nakashima, *Pia* was predated by the Osaka magazine, *Play Guide Journal*, launched in 1970 and published regularly until 1988. He recalled that it had had “a strong emphasis on the ‘underground’” and that one of its notable features had been the strength of its support among readers, who regularly sent in letters and information. His own publication, *L-Maga*, had been launched in 1977, and he described its theme as “‘Let’s enjoy the city’”, adding that the ‘L’ in
its title referred both to ‘leisure’ and ‘life’. He recalled that *L-Maga* had been launched at around the same time as *Popeye* and *JJ*, Tokyo-based lifestyle magazines aimed at the young male and female markets respectively.

The arrival of these publications can now be seen as a midpoint between the general information magazine *Pia* and the specialised *sutoriito fashhon* magazines which were to follow in the mid-late 1980s and 1990s. Narrowing their targets to specific age groups, they included not only product and event information, but also advice on subjects which may have been previously considered outside the agenda of a mass-circulation magazine, subjects such as personal grooming and dating skills. Here again, information which Nakano (1991) might argue had been internalised during the growing-up process was now externalised in a format not unlike that of a colour encyclopedia or tourist guidebook.

### 7.3.1 SUTORIITO FASHHON AS INCORPORATING CONSTRUCT

According to the *Akurosu Henshūshitsu (Across Editorial Office)* (1995), the term *sutoriito fashhon* did not become part of popular usage until the advent of *sutoriito fashhon* magazines in the mid-1980s. It is now generally used to collectively refer to two broad styles, *mōdo* (‘mode’) and *Ame-kaji* (‘American casual’). *Panku* (‘punk’) is sometimes presented as a third style, although it typically draws upon elements of both *mōdo* and *Ame-kaji*. *Mōdo* clothing is a direct descendant of the DC (‘designer character’) clothing popular in Japan in the early 1980s, and is strongly influenced (both in design and material) by European fashion houses. It includes Japanese brands such as Comme Des Garcons in addition to Italian and French originals. Conversely, *Ame-kaji* incorporates clothing styles originally created or popularised in the United States, and has come to include items as diverse as used Levis, work overalls, AirMax sneakers, Ivy League sweaters and chino shorts.

By incorporating both styles of clothing and linking them to the notion of the *sutoriito*, the concept of *sutoriito fashhon* has proven remarkably resilient to the vicissitudes of the fashion cycle. Any
clothing worn on the real streets of ‘fashionable places’ such as Amerika-mura in Osaka and Shibuya in Tokyo can be incorporated into the construct of sutoriito fashhon, deriving its authenticity simply from being worn there. At the same time, the purchase and display of such fashion, both inside and outside such real places, allows the wearer to display his or her own authenticity through the link to the sutoriito which this genre of fashion embodies. In a sense, the fashion objects themselves have appropriated a space, a space in which the people who wear such objects have been backgrounded. Perhaps the most vivid description of this phenomenon is given by Edagawa (1994), who writes that the young people crossing the road at the main intersection in Amerika-mura “looked as though the clothes hanging up around them had sprouted legs and started walking” (1994:102).

A similar perspective is offered by Katori Atsuko (1990) in Wakamono to media (Youth and the media) (further discussed below). Describing the areas where young people congregate as “fashion showrooms”, she further argues that “fashion information has borrowed the living bodies of individuals in order to demonstrate itself” (1990:79). Reflecting certain aspects of Nakano’s (1991) concept of externalisation, she claims that external fashionability functions as a forms of communication between individuals, noting a strong tendency among young Japanese towards judging others (and particularly those of a similar age-group) according to their outward appearance, or gaikan. Her discussion includes a comment by an unnamed twenty-year-old male student, who claimed that “‘there’s no point (lit. ‘value’) in looking at someone who’s not fashionable’” (1990:80). Katori (1990) draws upon this remark in her analysis to imply that external forms of self-representation, such as fashion and hairstyle, have come to be viewed by many young people as just another form of information to be consumed or rejected.

Katori (1990) argues that it is largely the media which has been responsible for the development of this tendency, and further claims that it is also the media which provides the standards according to which young people measure both their own level of fashionability and that of others. However, she does not consider how the media achieves its goal of presenting itself as a source of information in the
In the photographic collection *1945-1995 Wakamono no kao* (*1945-1995 Faces of youth*), Washida Seiichi (1995) points to a major shift in the relationship between young people, fashion and the media in Japan during the late 1970s and early 1980s, which can be compared with Nakano's (1991) 'catalogue culture' and 'externalisation' concepts noted above. This phenomenon appears to historically parallel the 'punk' era in Britain, and recalls claims by Hebdige (1979) and others (Polhemus 1996) that 'punk', or rather its appropriation into the 'fashion system', represented the 'end of fashion' as a medium of youthful rebellion. In the following excerpt from a dialogue with co-author Kaneko Ryuichi, Washida (1995) identifies the central role of a new genre of fashion media (the forerunner of *Boon* and the other *sutoriito fasshon* magazines) in the development of a similar process in Japan:

The change from the 1970s to the 1980s was really fascinating, with respect to fashion too. You had *An An* [a magazine aimed at young women, featuring information on new products and trends] coming out at the start of the seventies, and the amount of choice increased enormously. The fact that such a magazine had come out was a sign of the birth of a 'catalogue culture' where you asked yourself 'Which one should I choose?' and this really took off during the 1980s, with everyone trying to express themselves through various different kinds of clothing. Also, it wasn't a case of 'This year, this is going to be in', but rather that all kinds of different things existed alongside each other, and when every 'pattern' had appeared, the whole thing became closed up. In other words, radical punk was featured straight away in the magazines, and ended up being just one part of fashion, 'one of them.' A good example of this was that [television] commercial featuring a punk shopping at a convenience store. Furthermore, kids would see that and feel a sense of curious wonder rather than fear. In that way, saying 'I'm leaving society' became just one option on the menu, like one item in the catalogue, and as this expanded, people started to feel a sense of being closed in, where there was 'no way out.' In that sense, I feel it was a really 'closed' period (Washida 1995:110).

Washida's argument can also be explored in relation to comments by Mr Kōji Yamamoto, former co-manager of Gallup, one of the earliest stores to open in Amerika-mura (and noted in 5.2.2 above).
about the connection between fashion and lifestyle, he replied that “fashion has become separated from lifestyle”, adding that “the media has had a major influence” in bringing about this outcome. Whereas the clothing worn by many local surfers in Amerika-mura in the early and mid-1970s reflected a particular world view and lifestyle that was closely linked to the practice of surfing and a romanticised image of California and Hawaii, by the late 1970s this type of clothing had been coopted by the fashion media and by many retailers with purely commercial motives as a mainstream fashion style. The link between fashion and lifestyle had been severed, and surfers had to rely upon other practices (e.g. driving to surfing locations, exchange of surfing stories, actual practice of surfing) in order to create and maintain their identities as genuine ‘surfers’. In other words, surfing as fashion ‘look’ had become distinct from surfing as lifestyle. This process was to be repeated two decades later in the case of hip hop, explored in Chapter 9 below.

An example of this type of phenomenon was presented in an article in the Asahi Shimbun newspaper in 1994. The article explores the use of ‘punk’ accessories by young people in Amerika-mura, and seeks to determine their symbolism [Plate 7.7]. It concentrates on the popularity of ‘Sid chains’, necklaces of a type often worn by Sid Vicious, leader of 1970s British punk band Sex Pistols. A twenty-year-old university student wearing a Sid chain is quoted as saying that “the punk lifestyle is kakkō-e (‘cool’ in Osaka dialect) as a symbol, but I’ve never thought of adopting it” (Asahi Shimbun 1994a). A 22-year-old Kobe office worker notes that “avant-garde for the sake of avant-garde is over. Being a real punk is hard work” (Asahi Shimbun 1994a). The article suggests that the chains are a stylistic response to a depressed economy, and introduces editor Takemoto Nao as an expert in “wakamono bunka (‘youth culture’)” (Asahi Shimbun 1994a), noting his argument that

The 1990s are the age of imitation violence. [Young] people have an akogare (‘yearning’) for violence and destruction, but they don’t like to do it themselves. I think that feeling has come out in punk as fashion” (Asahi Shimbun 1994a).

This theme is further explored in the context of on-the-street photographic shoots by sutoriito fasshon magazines in 8.2.1 below.
Despite the apparent lack of association between fashion and personal outlook evidenced in the above example, comments by certain individuals in my fieldsite of Amerika-mura suggest that a strong link still exists between fashion and musical taste. This is the case for Mr Jōji Ōmura, an employee of the Bear clothing store, who describes himself as a fan of “hardcore and psycho-billy” (*KG Jōhō* 1999:22). He notes that his musical tastes “naturally influence my clothing” (*KG Jōhō* 1999:22), explaining that he is very particular in his choice of “hard clothing” such as leather (*KG Jōhō* 1999:22). It is interesting to note that he chooses to use the Japanese word *fukusō* (‘clothing’) instead of the Japanicised loanword *fasshon* (‘fashion’), perhaps reflecting a belief that the latter term implies a superficial surface element rather than a component of everyday life which reflects personal tastes, outlooks and opinions.

### 7.3.2 FROM *FASSHON* (‘FASHION’) TO *SUTAIRU* (‘STYLE’)

In its historical exploration of postwar *sutoriito fasshon* in Japan, the *Across Editorial Office* (1995) agrees with authors such as Washida (1995) that the 1980s saw a transition from a fashion cycle to a notion of fashion as a set of ‘options.’ It argues that while the 1960s and 1970s in Japan were characterised by a relatively consistent fashion cycle according to which young people used fashion as a symbol of generational rebellion against the value systems of their parents, the 1980s saw a quickening of this cycle and a shift in emphasis towards the symbolic use of fashion as a medium of stylistic differentiation within generational cohorts.

Interestingly, the *Across Editorial Office* (1995) plays down the role of the media, arguing that the 1990s were a period where “new trends begin not from the fashion industry or designers, but among the young people on the streets of places like Shibuya or Harajuku (and New York or London)” (1995:13), and where “several minutely differentiated styles are found existing together on the streets” (1995:13). The *Across Editorial Office* (1995) further claims that this development “reflects a tendency for individuals to devote energy towards developing their own unique ‘originality’ rather than engaging in a style war between generations” (1995:13). This argument shares certain similarities with Ted Polhemus’ (1994) discussion of youth culture in Britain and his notion (noted in 7.3
above) of a “supermarket of style” (1994:130). Polhemus (1994) describes how a unified British ‘Raver’ subculture collapsed during the late 1980s, claiming that young people created a sort of laboratory in which to experiment with all those streetstyle looks which had been accumulating over some fifty years - reprocessing them with delightful sense of irony, deconstructing the old into something new (1994:134).

He views young people not as pawns of the media, but rather as informed, discerning and creative agents who cleverly mix and match fashion items through a process of playful pastiche.

Mr Yamamoto of Gallup appears to strongly disagree with this kind of analysis when he claims that fashion manufacturers and the media are responsible for creating and maintaining a fashion cycle, and that “they sell goods by creating all kinds of būmu (‘booms’”).” 44-year-old Mr Nozomu Ōtsuki, who worked at a live venue in Amerika-mura during the late 1970s and now (1997) works as a freelance fashion designer and owner of a small boutique in nearby Minami-semba, is even more critical of the fashion media. Opening with the critical appraisal that “no country has as many magazines [as Japan]”, he argues that the media approach their markets like “news programmes.” He continues by suggesting that Japanese fashion magazines adopt the attitude that “urereba tadashii (‘if it sells, it’s right’)”, and concludes with the judgment that “there are few forms of media which actually have a message...most of them are just like mail order catalogues, manuals...”

The comments made by Nakano (1991), Katori (1990) and Washida (1995), in addition to those of Amerika-mura ‘veterans’, Mr Yamamoto and Mr Otsuki, suggest that the ‘catalogue culture’ which publications such as An An and Popeye brought to youth fashion in the 1970s was instrumental in accelerating, if not causing, a tendency towards the transformation of fashion from the visible element of an internalised identity into an externally-imposed wrapping where ‘value’ was added or subtracted from its wearer according to the power of the gaze in a global economy of information. Their arguments further imply that the sutoriito fasshon media has been so successful because of its ability to disguise advertising as
‘information’, and thereby promote the consumption of objects and places not as a means of expressing political identity, but rather as a means of expressing both shared and individual aesthetic taste.

In addition to reducing fashion styles to a series of options on a ‘menu’, as Washida (1995) argues above, the catalogue-type format of most sutoriito fasshon magazines, which commonly feature collections of photographs of young people divided according to the locations in which they were photographed and/or a fluctuating and somewhat arbitrary taxonomy of styles (discussed in Chapter 8 below), encourages a mode of visual consumption which is transposed from the symbolic mediated space of the sutoriito to the lived streets of places such as Amerika-mura. The blurring of perceptual boundaries between these two contexts (sutoriito and street) was suggested in the comments of several of the young people whom I spoke to in Amerika-mura in 1997. Asked about their sources of fashion ideas, first-year university students Kenta and Yuzuru respectively mentioned “magazines” and “the styles worn by people around here.” Asked the same question, university college student Miho (19) noted magazines, while her friend Masami added that she picked up ideas “while watching people walking around this area.” Two casual workers I interviewed at the same location a couple of days later offered a similar response, with both Miki (20) and Takayuki (18) noting their reference to “magazines” and “people walking around here.”

7.3.3 SURFACE TO SURFACE: FROM STREET TO SUTORIITO

It may be possible to claim here that the streets of ‘fashionable places’ such as Amerika-mura are being read at a surface level as style manuals in a similar manner to the pages of the sutoriito fasshon magazines. Furthermore, this type of engagement with places may be further illuminated by Joanne Finkelstein’s (1996) argument that the nineteenth-century department store in Europe functioned as a “site of instruction” for “new middle classes who were voracious consumers of goods but lacked the aesthetic standards by which to judge their value” (1996:94). For teenagers who have yet to develop confidence in purchasing and using fashion commodities, the sutoriito fasshon
magazines create supposedly natural links between certain objects and the places in which they are to be bought and worn, while appearing to remove the burden of choice which all forms of consumption necessarily entail. Hidden in this process are the conflation of lived places and consumed spaces and a false sense of agency which does not remove the burden of choice but reimposes it by requiring a process of selection from a series of prepackaged options.

However, it is important to note here that the reading of both media and urban texts, while implicitly encouraging a flâneur-like form of detachment, also acts as a context for new forms of social interaction within peer networks. *Sutoriito fashhon* constituted an important topic of conversation among many of the young people I interviewed in Amerika-mura, and it was very common to observe pairs or groups sitting on benches or at the side of roads in the district chatting to each other while watching the passing parade of stylistic experimentation on the streets. Furthermore, I regularly observed young people browsing with their friends through the *sutoriito fashhon* magazines on display in convenience stores and bookshops, occasionally pointing to certain items and discussing them. In this sense, as suggested in the discussion of Certeau in 6.2 above, the practices of young people both consolidate the discourse of the *sutoriito* while continuously transforming its connection to real places through innumerable specific trajectories and engagements. Here, the *sutoriito* turns young people into both spectacle and audience through a form of simultaneous collective detachment and re-engagement.

7.3.4 **BOON AND THE KAKKOMAN: LINKING SPATIAL AND PERSONAL IDENTITIES**

Perhaps the most significant attempt by a *sutoriito fashhon* magazine to establish *sutoriito fashhon* as a ‘shared aesthetic code’ among its readers is *Boon’s* concept of the *kakkoman*, a composite term formed from the Japanese word *kakkō* (‘style’; as in *kakkō-ii* (‘stylish’)) and the English word ‘man’, and its use of the English term ‘tribe’. Published as a ‘mook’ in June 1997, *Za kakkoman* (*The kakkoman*) features “*sutoriito riaru* (‘street real’) [photos] of 417 people from all over the country” (*Boon* 1997b:1), and boasts “the best [literally
'strongest'] line-up of *sunappu* ('snaps', meaning 'photographic shoots') in history” (1997b:1). While the two main features are devoted to Shibuya in Tokyo and Amerika-mura in Osaka [Plate 7.8], smaller sections devoted to Sapporo, Sendai, Nagoya, Hiroshima and Fukuoka are also included.

The text found at the beginning of the volume provides an unparalleled example of the near-religious zeal which *sutoriito fasshon* magazines attempt to invoke among their readers, and constitutes the best example I have found of a *sutoriito fasshon* ‘manifesto.’ I therefore include a translation of the full copy:

*Sutoriito fasshon.* The establishment of this genre was a major revolution brought to this world by our predecessors. Although it comprises various genres such as hip-hop and used clothing, there is one common attribute. That is the fact that they are means of expression for us. We want you to take a good look at the 417 *kakkomen* who appear in this book. Each comes with their own individual taste. This taste is our means of expression in the *sutoriito* age. This is a great thing. This is a wonderful thing. Now, throughout all of Japan, there are supporters of *sutoriito fasshon.* This expansion of the layer of support at a national level is something that our predecessors were not able to achieve. It might be said that for the first time in history, all young people have succeeded in feeling a massive sense of ‘live-ness’ through a common experience of fashion. Until now, various localised groups such as the hippies and *miyuki-zoku* have appeared in the history of *sutoriito fasshon,* however the traces they left have already disappeared. The 1990s have seen the appearance of people with a completely new sense of fashion which does not correspond with the previous *o-share* ('chic') approach, and the broadening of this movement. And *Boon* quickly perceived this situation seven years ago. *Boon* called them the *kakkomen.* Yes, the 90s is the age of the *kakkomen.* It’s fine to chase after a pair of AirMax sneakers, it’s fine to stick to hip hop. It’s fine to change to *furugi* ('used clothing') tomorrow even if you were into *modo* ('mode') style before. Our commentator for this *sutoriito fasshon* of the 90s is Suggy. We have asked him to be our judge based on his experience walking the streets with *kakkomen.* What do you think? You’re interested in getting the latest live information on this fantastic culture brought together by the *Kakkoman* Project Team, right? Plus, for the first time in *kakkoman* history, we present simultaneous coverage of all seven of the country’s largest cities. Have a look...maybe a *kakkoman* from your neighbourhood is included here. When you turn the next page, the
hot, live coverage of kakkomen begins. Are you ready? OK, let’s go!
(1997b:12; underlined sections are highlighted in original text)

Emotional zeal aside, the above text incorporates several significant features which point to the perspective and ideological positioning of the sutoriito fasshon media in relation to the notion of the sutoriito. Firstly, there is a thinly masked claim that Boon was at least partly responsible for the creation of such a concept in the first place, balanced by an implied respect for the subjects appropriated in this process, the kakkomen themselves. Although the criteria for deciding who would ‘fit’ into the category of kakkoman, or the very validity of this blatantly constructed term are not discussed, the kakkoman project itself embodies the core elements of the mutually interdependent relationship between young people and the media in the construction of the sutoriito.

The sutoriito provides guidelines and opportunities for young people; it acts as a template and a text through which they may experiment with aesthetic forms of self-expression within the safe parameters of a common code. At the same time, it allows the specialised media to profit: having first established the parameters of such a code, it need only continue to present itself as the most authoritative guide on how and where the code should be practiced. This is not to claim that the media version of the sutoriito is interpreted and accepted unquestionably by Japanese youth, but rather to emphasise the role of media representations in helping to shape the ways in which places such as Amerika-mura are interpreted, and to highlight attempts by the media to frame the engagements between young people and such places.

Secondly, sutoriito fasshon is presented in the Boon (1997b) text as a revolution inherited from previous generations and further refined by the present generation, which has made the 1990s the “age of the kakkoman” (1997b:12) or, more crucially in the broader context, “the sutoriito age” (1997:b). This claim parallels the Across Editorial Office’s (1995) reference to a general belief in Japan that “the 1990s are the age of sutoriito” (1995:13). It is important to note, however, that the terms ‘revolution’ and ‘age’ also incorporate temporal aspects. It is possible to view the use of such terms, combined with
references to an expanded "layer of support at the national level" (1997b:12), as manifestations of an assured confidence among the sutoriito fasshon media that Japanese cities have been successfully 'colonised' by the sutoriito and the consumer practices around which it is constructed and consolidated. Furthermore, in contrast to the narratives in Chapter 5 which romanticised the 1970s as a period when Amerika-mura was more 'authentic' and less commercialised, the kakkoman 'manifesto' privileges the present era, portraying it as a stylistic renaissance, the glorious product of years of painstaking experimentation.

Thirdly, the Boon (1997b) text above advocates sutoriito fasshon as a medium of self-expression which comprises diverse 'genres' while constituting a common code throughout Japan. This aspect of the text hints at an inherent and crucial dichotomy (discussed in 8.3 below) between differentiation and conformity within the project of sutoriito fasshon (and, indeed, within fashion in general). Furthermore, there is a strong implication that sutoriito fasshon incorporates a certain freedom, demonstrated in a playful engagement with styles in which each day may be enjoyed with a different 'look.' However, this section of the text subtly adopts a tone in which permission is being given by an unspoken authority, while there is an implication that such freedom may only be enjoyed within the context of sutoriito fasshon. The lines:

It's fine to chase after a pair of AirMax sneakers, it's fine to stick to hip hop. It's fine to change to used clothing tomorrow even you were into mode style before (1997b: 12; italics added).

both attempt to establish the sutoriito fasshon magazine as the arbitor of the code of sutoriito fasshon, while simultaneously constructing the sutoriito as a context and frame in which such fashion is top be consumed and displayed as a legitimate (though restricted) medium of self-expression for Japanese youth.

Fourthly, and connected with the third point above, the Boon (1997b) text introduces sutoriito fasshon as a 'culture' which is not constructed around ethnic or territorial affiliations, but rather according to generation. It is this element of the text which is most directly linked to the phenomenon (further discussed in 8.3.1 below)
whereby people over the age of twenty-five commonly note a sense of awkwardness or discomfort when passing through places such as Amerika-mura. The perceptual link between such districts and the notion of the *sutoriito* as a context of exclusively *youth* consumption has imbued such places with a particular psychosocial dynamic. This dynamic is dominated by an appeal to a sense of belongingness (perhaps that "massive sense of 'live-ness'" (1997b:12) in the 'Kakkoman' text above) is promised to a generation through its performance of specific practices, while those young people who refuse to engage in such practices and others who do not belong to the *sutoriito* generation must construct their own niches (such as those introduced in Chapter 6 above and Chapter 9 below) in order to feel comfortable there.

Finally, Boon's (1997b) 'Kakkoman' text introduces a *karisuma* ('charisma') character, Suggy, who is to judge and comment on the styles worn by the young people in the magazine. The *karisuma* (a concept introduced in 7.2.2 above) is presented as a type of role model and arbitor of style, and the inclusion of *karisuma* commentary in itself helps to construct the notion of the *sutoriito* not only as a space of youthful fashionability and *kakko-yosa* ('coolness'), but also as a space of judgment based on a shared aesthetic code. The implication is that peers, anonymous young people and *karisuma*, such as shop assistants and disc jockeys, are out on the streets, monitoring and evaluating each person's 'look' according to a sharp and critical gaze.

7.4 *SUTORIITO FASSHON MAGAZINES: FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK*

The following section comprises three parts. The first includes an analysis of comments made by the editor of pioneering *sutoriito fasshon* magazine Boon (interviewed in July 1997), while the second explores the opinions of the editor of Osaka-based *sutoriito fasshon* magazine Cazi-Cazi (interviewed in September 1997). The third and final part presents and compares the perspectives of three other editorial staff, Mr Jun Nakagaki, editor of (now defunct) *Nickname* magazine (interviewed in July 1997), Mr Azusa Shida, editor of *Get On* magazine (interviewed in July 1997) and Mr Keiichi Abe, deputy
editor of *Street Jack* magazine (interviewed in August 1997). Here, I focus on how these editors view the mission and role of their publications, and include their opinions on ‘actual’ and ‘desirable’ engagement with these magazines by Japanese youth. In addition, I include their remarks relating to Amerika-mura and differences in ‘fashion behaviour’ among Tokyo and Osaka youth.

### 7.4.1 MR YOICHIRO MAEDA: EDITOR OF *BOON* MAGAZINE

As noted above, *Boon* was the pioneer among *sutoriito fasshon* magazines. Firstly, the notion of the *sutoriito* (‘street’) helped this new genre of publication to reconfigure the relationship between the media and urban space. Secondly, these magazines played a significant role in promoting a shift during the late 1980s from a temporal fashion cycle to a fashion environment in which all items could be classified as *sutarur* (‘styles’) within the overarching rubric of *sutoriito fasshon*. The following information was gained from an interview which I conducted with *Boon* editor Mr Yōichirō Maeda, at his office in Tokyo in July 1997.

Mr Maeda explained that the Japanese economy had been very strong at the time of the magazine’s launch in 1986, and added that young people could afford to rent their own apartments and had comfortable disposable incomes. *Boon* had been initially aimed at “university students either side of twenty”, especially those living alone, and the magazine had been largely conceived as a vehicle to introduce “music, clothes, cars, interior [design]” to this market. Mr Maeda stressed the importance of the notion of “*kakkō-ii* (‘cool, trendy’)” which the magazine attempt to associate with the goods which it featured.

Mr Maeda further explained that *sutoriito fasshon* did not exist at the time of the magazine’s launch, and that the notion developed through the vehicle of the *Ame-kaji* (‘American casual’) clothing which magazines such as *Boon* promoted. He argued that this rougher type of fashion became popular through its contrast to the neat and stylish *DC* (‘designer character’) brand clothing which had been popular during the first half of the 1980s. Mr Maeda outlined the shift from
the surfer style of the late 1970s to the sutoriito fasshon of the 1990s according to the following stages:

1. People attempted to create their own koseiteki ('individualistic, unique') styles by wearing unique [fashionable DC brand] items. 
2. Later, large numbers of people started wearing items from this limited range [of DC brands] and these became mainstream. 
3. People then moved on [from DC brands]. 
4. The idea that wearing comfortable clothing is kakkō-ii ('cool') became popularised. 
5. Ame-kaji ('American casual') became popular, based on the idea that dentōteki-na ('traditional') items from American culture are koseiteki ('individualistic, unique').

Mr Maeda argued that while the DC fashion of the 1980s had been characterised by the belief that “the items which you wear are kakkō-ii ('cool, trendy')”, the casual styles of the 1990s were based on “the interpretation that it was cool to wear items that people did not notice.” Here, Mr Maeda was suggesting that the project of sutoriito fasshon had resulted in a partial shift from a staged presentation of personal style to an attempt to blend in to the ‘cool’ urban sutoriito ('street') by choosing ‘natural’ and muted casual clothing. Here, the street as catwalk became the sutoriito as jungle. Bold statements were avoided, as young people chose their own personal camouflage. However, Mr Maeda was careful to note that sutoriito fasshon did not develop in opposition to the neat, stylish DC brand look, but came to incorporate both DC and Ame-kaji looks.

I was interested to ask Mr Maeda his opinion on shifts in the relative influence of different forms of media on youth fashion during the 1980s and 1990s. He argued that television had played an important role until the mid-1980s, with many young people imitating the styles of television personalities. However, he claimed that the late 1980s had marked a turning point, suggesting that “a gap opened up between the clothes people were wearing and those worn by television personalities.” He further noted that this development had been paralleled by the growth in sutoriito fasshon magazines, claiming that magazines had come to adopt television’s former role as source of stylistic authority. Nevertheless, Mr Maeda noted that this phenomenon was more common in the case of men’s fashion, prompting young people to “think that the person walking alongside
Mr Maeda agreed with my suggestion that fashion was largely a hobby for young Japanese. He claimed that “fashion and ideology do not necessarily match”, adding that “there is even the opinion that linking the two is strange.” However, he noted a close connection between music and fashion in the case of hip hop fans (discussed in Chapter 9 below) and “kids who want to become disc jockeys.” In the case of hip hop, he suggested that young fans “want to show [through their fashion] that they listen to hip hop.” He later divided fashion styles into two broad categories, “styles where [the wearer’s] raifustairu (‘lifestyle’) is visible” and “styles where [the wearer’s] raifustairu is invisible.” He proposed that the former category included “sukētā (‘skaters’), “b-kei (‘b-boy or hip hop style, discussed in Chapter 9 below)” and “sāfā (‘surfers’)”, while the latter category included “Harajuku [style]”, “mōdo (‘mode’; European-influenced neat, stylish fashion)” and “ura-Hara (‘behind Harajuku [style]’; further discussed below).” Mr Maeda argued that in the case of the former category, young people typically first became interested in a certain type of music, and later adopted an associated fashion style.

I was also interested to ask Mr Maeda about the karisuma (‘charisma’) phenomenon, whereby certain personalities developed cult followings related to their personal styles and fashion labels. At the time of our interview (July 1997), the most famous karisuma identity in Japan was Fujiwara Hiroshi, who had been a musician, fashion designer and media personality during the 1980s and 1990s. In the summer of 1997, many sutoriito fasshon magazines were featuring the term ura-Harajuku (‘behind Harajuku’, often shortened to ura-Hara; Harajuku being the ‘youth fashion district’ near Shibuya where Fujiwara was based). Mr Maeda explained that ura-Harajuku style developed through a process whereby Fujiwara commissioned “friends” to create clothing according to his personal specifications. He noted that Fujiwara would then wear these clothes in public, and these would then be popularised by the fashion media as ura-Harajuku style. Mr Maeda also admitted that Fujiwara’s clothing had no distinctive characteristics, and that he simply “coordinated
"osodokkusu ('orthodox') clothing [items].” However, he conceded that Fujiwara had “sharp sense”, and even suggested that he had “become a brand” himself.

Mr Maeda further explained the karisuma phenomenon in relation to a shift in the relative influence of ‘players’ in the fashion distribution network during the late 1980s and 1990s. He argued that there had been previously been a ‘trickle down process’, according to which stores had stocked the items produced by manufacturers, which were then featured by magazines, seen and purchased by consumers. Mr Maeda claimed that there had been a “kachikan no tayōka (diversification of values)” during the 1990s, and suggested that now trends often began at the level of the individual. He noted that shops would stock small quantities of specialised items (either those worn by the karisuma identities discussed above or a unique range chosen by the owner of a serekuto shoppu (lit. ‘select shop’). These styles would then be featured in the sutoriito fasshon media, encouraging other stores to stock larger volumes of the same styles, which would rapidly become popularised throughout the country. In Mr Maeda’s model, the sutoriito fasshon media played the role of stylistic gatekeeper, constantly monitoring developments ‘on the ground’ and choosing which types of fashion to promote on a national scale.

7.4.2 MR AKIHIRO UMEDA: EDITOR OF CAZI-CAZI MAGAZINE

Cazi-Cazi was the only Osaka-based sutoriito fasshon magazine at the time of my main period of fieldwork in 1997. [A second Osaka-based publication, CSTM, was launched in 2000]. In 1997, the Cazi-Cazi editorial office was located in the sleek black Comodo Nishi-Shinsaibashi building, just across the road from the apartment where I lived during my fieldwork in the northern part of Amerika-mura. [The office had moved to nearby Horie by the time of my second fieldwork visit in January 1999]. I contacted the magazine in early September 1997, and arranged an interview with the editor, 27-year-old Mr Akihiro Umeda [Plate 7.9]. The following information is largely derived from this interview, which was conducted on Friday 5 September 1997.
Cazi-Cazi is published by Kōtsū Taimuzusha, a Tokyo-based company which specialises in car magazines. This company has an Osaka affiliate, Jikōsha, and it is the present director of this affiliate, Mr Shunsei Fujimura, who was the originator of the idea to produce Cazi-Cazi. Mr Umeda described Mr Fujimura as “a young-minded man in his forties”, and recalls the moment when the latter became inspired to create the new magazine as follows: “He just happened to come to this area and started thinking ‘Couldn’t we produce a magazine for the kind of people who hang out in Amerika-mura?’” Using the resources of the company’s sales department, Mr Fujimura began assessing the potential market for an Osaka-based fashion magazine, and formally proposed his magazine idea to the company in December 1993. Mr Umeda remembered that at that time (in late 1993), there was a boom in the popularity of ‘vintage’ jeans among young men. Although there was a realisation that a fashion magazine would not offer the revenue-generating potential of the company’s traditional car magazines, the project was given the green light.

Although he had only joined the company a month earlier, Mr Umeda was quickly transferred to the new Cazi-Cazi team in December 1993, perhaps due to his previous experience in a textile company. A separate Cazi-Cazi office was established in Amerika-mura in March 1994, due to the inconvenient location of the parent company’s office in Miyakojima-ku (in northeastern Osaka). Following a mere six months of preparations, the first issue of Cazi-Cazi was launched on 10 June 1994. At this time, there were only two staff, Mr Umeda and the inaugural editor, Mr Hamabata (now editor of a car-oriented cartoon magazine published by the same company). The first issue included an advertisement for staff, and Ms Takakura and Mr Kita joined the Cazi-Cazi team around September 1994 in time for the publication of its fourth issue. There had been several subsequent staff changes, with nightclub reporter and Machi-no-me (Eye on the street) (discussed in 8.2.2 below) team member Mr Sofue joining in February 1997 and Mr Umeda replacing Mr Hamabata as editor on 21 April 1997.

Mr Umeda considered Cazi-Cazi unique among Japanese sutoriito fasshon magazines, as none of its staff had any previous experience in this field, and made the modest claim that “it would be embarrassing
to make a magazine like this in Tokyo.” He further noted that there was little awareness at his head office of the activities of the Cazi-Cazi team, and that they enjoyed a high level of editorial autonomy. He further mentioned that his aim was to produce a magazine from the perspective of the consumer, claiming that both Cazi-Cazi staff and consumers had the same “line of sight.”

According to Mr Umeda, Cazi-Cazi’s target market was “three years either side of 18”. When I commented that the magazine included photographs of both men and women, he replied that “it’s basically a men’s magazine”, but added that 35% of readers were female. He then contrasted his magazine with the women’s magazine Cutie, which also drew a sizeable male readership.

Mr Umeda explained that Cazi-Cazi exerted an influence on nationally-distributed sutoriito fashhon magazines, noting its relatively close working relationship with the veteran of the sutoriito fashhon magazine market Boon (introduced in 7.3 and further discussed in 7.3.4 above), and pointing out that by using Cazi-Cazi’s resources, other magazines “don’t have to come here to collect information.” He claimed that his magazine was seen as an important source of fashion trends in the Kansai region due to the location of its offices in Amerika-mura itself, adding that “our strength lies in having our editorial office here.” He also noted the magazine’s policy of emphasising “reality”, claiming that “what we are in contact with is the raw [i.e. unaltered] state.” Claiming that “we don’t tell lies”, he further explained that the office’s location ensured honest reporting, because “we are producing the magazine in a place where readers can see us.” This type of philosophy was also reflected in the magazine’s ‘guerilla-style’ approach to photography, exemplified in its Machi no me (‘Eye on the street’) feature (discussed in 8.2.2 below).

In relation to the magazine’s style, Mr Umeda mentioned that “we haven’t considered it as being particularly Osaka-rashii (‘Osaka-ish’)”, adding that he didn’t go out of his way to give the magazine a distinctly Osaka feel. At this point, he even mentioned that the magazine had suffered criticism from certain elements of the mainstream Osaka media for “not being Osaka-ish.”
Asked to compare sutoriito fasshon in Osaka and Tokyo, Mr Umeda surprised me by firstly claiming that “Osaka is inaka (‘rural’)!” however added that he did not wish to compare the two cities. However, when asked about the general characteristics of Osaka sutoriito fasshon, he replied that “there’s not much shutaisei (‘autonomy’) [here] (...) there’s a mixture of lots of different styles.” Here, his comments reflected Washida’s (1994) comments on Osaka fashion, discussed in 3.2 above. When I mentioned that I had seen many examples in Amerika-mura of people wearing one style of ‘top’ with a different style of ‘bottom’, he replied that “people who don’t know how to use fashion [copy the styles] presented in magazines.” He also expressed his desire for sutoriito fasshon consumers to pay less attention to fashionability and more to a consideration of what truly appealed to them, arguing that “there’s no need for everyone to be fashionable, is there?”, and emphasising his belief that “if you are happy, that is the main thing.” He further added that “it’s no good competing over who is the most fashionable.”

I was also interested in determining how Mr Umeda viewed the role of his magazine. While he had criticised the pursuit of fashionability for its own sake, his magazine paradoxically appeared to be promoting this very tendency. However, he explained that Cazi-Cazi’s policy was to deliberately provide limited information in order to inspire readers to use that information in a creative way. (This was also a feature of the Machi no me (‘Eye on the street’) photographic shoot discussed in 8.2.2 below, in which photographs of ‘naturally cool’ people were presented without captions or additional information of any kind). Mr Umeda also appeared to be advocating a style of presenting information which filtered its audience, claiming that “it’s no good writing in a way that everyone can understand”, and adding that “if you put [something] down in words, even people you don’t want to catch on will catch on.” Describing the Cazi-Cazi approach as “an indirect method of providing information”, he explained his hope that the magazine would act as the “catalyst” for motivating readers to “think about things [i.e. fashion items] for themselves.” However, he qualified the previous statement with the comment that “it’s not wrong to yearn after [things].” He also agreed with my suggestion that his magazine could be read on two levels, the “visible” and “invisible.”
Comparing the contents of his magazine to food, he noted that *Cazi-Cazi* aimed to foster a “sense of taste” (in the broadest sense of the word) among its readers, and added the claim that “[in Japan] there are not many people who can tell for themselves what food is truly tasty”, lamenting that “it’s exactly the same situation when it comes to clothes.” He expanded this comment to a generally negative appraisal of Japanese society, arguing that people were “*sabishii* (‘lonely/sad’)”, and adding that their “sense of humanity is becoming dulled.” He further claimed that “people are provided [with goods] before they have a chance to choose them for themselves.” Implying that many young Japanese are more concerned with the acquisition of material goods than the construction of meaningful social relationships, he pointed to a breakdown in communication within the family environment: “[Parents] might not be playing a supportive role for young people...if [parent-child relations] are weak, then there might be nothing else [but fashion] to give young people a sense of security.”

Returning to the theme of fashion, Mr Umeda implied that young people needed to develop a sense of confidence in their ability to choose, rather than simply following fashion trends, arguing that “they should take a neutral stance [towards fashion] and develop the ability to adopt items that they actually like...that’s really being yourself...people have to be themselves.” This argument shared aspects of Mr Inoguchi’s concept of *chiishinsen* (here meaning ‘unchanging core’), discussed in 6.2 above. Mr Umeda also reiterated his belief in the importance of choosing as opposed to blindly adopting fashions, arguing that “there is an element [of shopping for clothes] where you have to choose (...)[but] the people who come here don’t choose”, and adding that “the same can be said for adults.”

His desire to encourage a more independent engagement with fashion among his magazine’s readers also extended to his views on their interaction with Amerika-mura in general. Claiming that “you should make all kinds of discoveries when you walk through Amerika-mura”, he argued that most young people did not approach the district with a sense of curiosity. Fostering such an attitude was one of the goals which Mr Umeda hoped to achieve through *Cazi-Cazi*. In this sense, while the *sutoriito fasshon* magazine as genre had encouraged
a tendency to consume the city as information before engaging with
the physical site, Mr Umeda’s arguments hinted at a desire that the
city would continue to function as a repository of knowledge to be
discovered through engagement with that site. His magazine would
courage young people to make journeys, but offer no maps or
suggested itineraries.

Asked about the reasons why people came to Amerika-mura, Mr
Umeda replied that “it depends on the person... in my case, I just came
to buy clothes. It was easy to shop for clothes here.” In relation to
historical change in the district, he noted that “there used to be a lot of
rubbish here... and lots of people sitting around on the ground. Now
there are lots of customers who put on airs, and there is a lack of
communication [between customers and staff].” He seemed to place
at least part of the blame for this development on shop staff, claiming
that “they only give you bad service.” He also noted an “unhealthy”
tendency among shoppers to become increasingly fixated on
particular goods, and a general shift away from an interest in sutairu
(‘style’) to an interest in mono (‘things’). Giving the example of punk
(discussed in 7.3.1 above), he claimed that contemporary youth
“don’t get into the spirit of punk, don’t have any contact with it.
Anyone can wear ‘neo-punk’ clothing.” He contrasted these people
with those who “faithfully keep the spirit and wear different kinds of
clothing”, again alluding to the notion of stylistic authenticity
incorporated in Mr Inoguchi’s concept of the chūsinsen (‘middle
line’, ‘unchanging core’; discussed in 6.2 above) and Mr Matsunaga
(6.3) and Mr Furutani’s (6.5.2) notion of the koa (‘core’). (This
theme as it relates to fashion is further discussed in 8.3.3 below).
However, Mr Umeda agreed with my suggestion that music
(especially punk, hip-hop and techno) exerted a strong influence on
fashion, linking this tendency to the fact that “there are lots of record
shops in Amerika-mura.”

At the end of the interview, we joked about the ‘conclusion’ of my
research, agreeing that “there is no conclusion.” Mr Umeda added
that “everyone tries to present a conclusion, but everything can
change again [at any time].”
7.4.3 FURTHER COMMENTS FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

Several themes noted or suggested by Mr Maeda of Boon and Mr Umeda of Cazi-Cazi were also explored by three editorial staff from other sutoriiito fasshon magazines whom I interviewed during the July and August 1997. The following discussion explores aspects of these themes.

One of the most common themes raised by sutoriiito fasshon editors was that of a saturated media market. This sentiment was echoed by Nickname magazine editor, Mr Jun Nakagaki, during the interview which I conducted with him in July 1997. Indeed, the fate of Nickname later provided evidence of this phenomenon. Launched in June 1997, the publication failed to compete with the plethora of similar magazines already in the market, and had ceased operation by the end of the same year. In the interview which I conducted with Mr Nakagaki in July 1997, he suggested that the proliferation of fashion magazines during the previous two decades had resulted in a situation where there was “too much information.” Deputy editor of Street Jack magazine, Mr Keiichi Abe, agreed with this argument in an interview conducted during a sunappu (‘photo shoot’) in Amerikamura (discussed in 8.2.1 below). Mr Abe claimed that “this is the peak...this genre is entering an uncertain phase.”

A further theme raised by several of the editors whom I interviewed related to the uncomfortable realisation that their style of publication had been largely responsible for a homogenisation of fashion behaviour among Japanese youth. Mr Nakagaki argued that the manual-type format of men’s magazine Popeye and similar publications from the late 1970s had led people to dress “as they were told.” In this environment, he added, “you could [no longer] express yourself [through fashion].”

Mr Azusa Shida, editor of Tokyo-based sutoriiito fasshon magazine Get On, which was launched in 1995, appeared to agree with aspects of Mr Nakagaki’s arguments. However, Mr Shida implied that reliance on sutoriiito fasshon magazines was a temporary phase, and that young people graduated to a more independent experimentation with fashion as they grew older and more confident. He pointed out
that reliance on magazines was heaviest among junior high school students, noting that by the time they reached senior high school, young people had typically already developed their own tastes and found shops which they liked. While claiming that it was not his intention to have the magazine used as a mere catalogue, Mr Shida admitted that he had detected a shift in relative influence from shops to magazines from 1996 onwards, with shops adopting a passive role in relation to youth fashion trends. He added that he had even noted cases where shops had asked his magazine to “feature something, and we will stock it”, going so far as to claim that the sutoriito fasshon market had “been destroyed.” He explained this comment by arguing that while “in the beginning, it was a grass-roots movement”, now “a reverse phenomenon” had occurred where the media largely dictated fashion instead of merely diffusing it.

Deputy editor of Street Jack magazine, Mr Keiichi Abe argued that sutoriito fasshon magazines often acted as the “saisho no iriguchi (‘first point of entry’)” to fashion for young people. He appeared not to share Mr Nakagaki’s concerns over the role of the media in dictating and guiding fashion trends, arguing that shops, magazines and young people shared an equal amount of influence. Nevertheless, he called on young people to be more proactive in their ‘fashion behaviour’, arguing that “they should look around more [by themselves].” He noted a tendency for young people to “see something in a magazine and want it...without even having seen the real item”, claiming that “buying things [should be] an individual matter.” Mr Abe also admitted a belief that sutoriito fasshon magazines may be trying too hard to guide their readers.

In relation to what he viewed as an increasing fragmentation and specialisation of the fashion market, Mr Nakagaki made a distinction between “fashions connected with a [particular] lifestyle” and those “not connected with a particular lifestyle.” Despite arguing that “in Japan, lifestyles based on particular philosophies tend not to take root”, he admitted the existence of a tendency for young people to “enter through the surface [aspect]”, suggesting that fashion could act as a first point of contact with a particular type of lifestyle and its related “bunka (‘culture’).” He placed hip hop (discussed in Chapter 9 below), reggae and skateboard fashion in this category, and argued
that the popularity of practices such as rapping and skateboarding was largely derived from the fact that there were distinctive fashion style associated with such practices.

Nevertheless, this type of argument does not explain the karisuma phenomenon (noted by Mr Maeda of Boon in 7.4.1 above), whereby individuals come to be viewed as 'role models of style.' Mr Nakagaki noted a type of 'pyramid' phenomenon, according to which people formed pyramid-like networks, with those 'higher' up in the network exerting a stylistic influence over those 'beneath' them. Mr Nakagaki further expressed a desire to present information in his magazine from both ends (i.e peak and base) of the overall fashion pyramid in order to "achieve a balance."

In relation to the differences in 'fashion behaviour' among Tokyo and Osaka youth, Mr Nakagaki echoed aspects of comments made by Mr Umeda of Cazi-Cazi (in 7.4.2 above), and Washida (1994) (discussed in 3.2 above). Indeed, Mr Nakagaki made a clear distinction between approached towards fashion among young people in Tokyo and Osaka. Using the verb "kuusuzu ('break down')", he argued that Tokyo fashion was characterised by common, coordinated styles where each individual altered or added small details express their unique 'looks. He contrasted this approach with that of Osaka, which he described as "bara-bara ('totally mixed-up', 'all over the place')." Using the term "kuzureru ('broken down')", he argued that Osaka fashion was "koseiteki sugiru ('too individualistic')", adding that "it would be hard to imagine a [style] originating in Osaka and spreading on a national level." By contrast, Mr Abe of Street Jack admitted that there were many cases of trends which originated in Amerika-mura spreading to Tokyo, agreeing with my suggestion that it was "conceivable" for a national fashion 'boom' to originate in the district.

Mr Abe held mixed opinions regarding Osaka fashion. While complementing the young people of Amerika-mura on their "interesting way of dressing", he echoed other editors in his implication that Osaka people lacked sophistication. Noting that Osaka fashion was "more hade ('bright', 'bold', 'gaudy') than that of other cities", he further observed that Osaka youth differed markedly
from Tokyo youth in that they would buy fake items if the price was reasonable. He also comments made by Mr Nakagaki (noted above), claiming that while Tokyo youth consistently followed a particular style, such as "baikā (‘biker’), panku (‘punk’), mōdo (‘mode’), Amerikaji (‘American casual’), Osaka style was “gucha-gucha (‘mixed-up’).” Expanding on these comments, he argued that while in Tokyo “you decide the rules, you’re going to follow a certain sutairu (‘style’)...it’s wakariyasui (‘easy to understand’), Osaka people “aren’t bothered [about such things]...they try and do everything [at once].”

Mr Abe had first visited Amerika-mura in 1994, and recalled that his first impressions had been that it was “gucha-gucha (‘mixed-up’, ‘chaotic’, ‘jumbled’)”, that “there is nowhere in Tokyo like this”, and that “there is more kakki (‘energy’, ‘vitality’) here [than in Tokyo].” He qualified his praise with the remark that Osaka had only one such fashion district, while Tokyo had many. He also claimed that “you couldn’t have [an area like Amerika-mura] in Tokyo”, later adding that “if you did [create such an area], it would be kakko-warui (‘uncool’), dasai (‘unfashionable’)”. By contrast, Mr Nakagaki of Nickname had first visited the district in autumn 1996, and recalled feeling that he had “felt a pawā (‘power’)...a meaningless power.” He added that Amerika-mura had “absolutely no kisokusei (‘regulation’, ‘order’)”, and claimed that “you can do anything without feeling uncomfortable...if you are young.”

7.4.4 SUMMARY

The above comments suggest that sutoriito fasshon editors have an ambivalent relationship with their readership. Eager to present their publications as authoritative sources of ‘information’ about fashion styles and fashionable places, they nevertheless play down their role in homogenising such styles and places. At the same time, many of the editors presented in this section lamented an over-emphasis on the Tokyo scene in sutoriito fasshon magazines, yet commonly exhibited negative stereotypes of Osaka fashion behaviour. Nevertheless, their impressions of Amerika-mura belied a grudging admiration and fascination with the sheer disorder and ‘energy’ of the district, aspects which seemingly continued to distinguish it from fashionable districts
in Tokyo. This response brings up the issue of the _sutoriito_ as a supposedly homogeneous ‘cool’ space of youthful fashionability. The remarks made by editors in this section suggest that the notion of the _sutoriito_ is only partly successful in linking Amerika-mura to places such as Shibuya and Harajuku in Tokyo, creating a shared symbolic layer of meaning which nevertheless coexists with a multitude of distinctly local elements.

### 7.5 THEORIZING THE _SUTORIITO_: AN ABSTRACT SPACE?

The power of the _sutoriito_ as deployed by the _sutoriito_ fashion media derives from the fact that, while constituting a spatial metaphor, it paradoxically belongs nowhere, and can therefore be attached to any place or product. Just as generic images of youth and freedom are used by advertising agencies to sell products, so the notion of the _sutoriito_ is defined, redefined and continuously deployed by specialised fashion magazines in Japan as a kind of ‘brand-image’ through which places and objects authenticate each other. This section explores theoretical perspectives which may be useful in understanding the logic of the _sutoriito_ as a discourse of spatial identity.

#### 7.5.1 BETWEEN REPRESENTATION AND REALITY

The potency of visual or narrative representations in shaping lived experiences of place is one of several issues addressed by the growing theoretical body of literature on tourism (Shields 1991; Urry 1990, 1995; Frow 1997; Coleman and Crang 2002). Rob Shields (1991) proposes the notion of ‘place-images’, arguing that repeated and standardised representations of places within popular and media narratives (such as the Eiffel Tower as symbol of Paris) lead to an oversimplification of their complexity. He claims that the very pervasiveness of such stereotypical images plays a significant role in shaping engagements with the ‘real’ places which they represent, often long after these representations become ‘outdated.’

John Frow (1997) argues that tourist destinations are experienced through the framework established by representations of these destinations encountered prior to the first actual visit. Such
representations, he argues create "a form of knowledge which precedes and informs experience", and "has a greater force than the appearances of the world" (1997:66), adding that "what the traveller sees is (...) already given by the pattern" (1997:66). In this context, the authenticity of the tourist destination is largely determined by the perceived match between the real place and its representations in tourist brochures and guides, and the satisfaction of the tourism experience is derived from recognising the representation in the real.

Another theoretical approach to exploring the dynamics of the sutoriito as a 'framing discourse' involves adopting aspects of the theories of French author Henri Lefebvre (1991). In The production of space, Lefebvre (1991) firstly differentiates between 'representations of space' ('the conceived') and 'spaces of representation' ('the lived'). In the context of this research, depictions of Amerika-mura in tourist guides, mooks and the sutoriito fashhon media fall into the former category, while Amerika-mura as physical environment is an example of the second category. Important to our discussion of the symbolic sutoriito is Lefebvre's (1991) notion of the abstract space, a space which masks its own contradictions to present an impression of logical coherence, a space of representations where a "confusion gradually arises between space and surface, with the latter determining a spatial abstraction which it endows with a half-imaginary, half-real existence" (1991:313). Lefebvre (1991) argues that it is in the nature of abstract spaces to appear transparent and non-ideological.

Sutoriito fashhon magazines and tourist guide commentaries help in shaping 'place-images' (Shields 1991), attempting to blur the dividing-line between the street and the sutoriito in order to encourage the reproduction of represented practices in real places. An example is the way in which sutoriito fashhon magazines typically feature photographs of 'ordinary young people' (rather than professional models, although both are used in different types of feature) in order to enhance the level of identification among readers. Another common strategy is to use the English loanword riaru ('real'), as in the case of Boon's Kakkoman (1997b; further discussed in 7.3.4 above), which boasts that it contains "sutoriito riaru ('street real')" (1997b:1) photographs of 417 young men from around Japan,
or to use the term *sutoriito* as if it referred to a real place, as in the claim made in the June 1997 issue of *Cool Trans* that the “keyword on the *sutoriito* is ‘classic’” (1997:24).

### 7.5.2 THE *SUTORIITO* AS FRAMING DISCOURSE

The term *sutoriito* is often used without referring to any specific physical location, but regular references to places such as Amerika-mura in Osaka and Shibuya in Tokyo suggest that these are sites where the abstract space of the *sutoriito* can be readily accessed, and by extension, *should* be practiced. In this sense, the *sutoriito* becomes conflated with ‘real’ places and exerts an important influence on the behaviour and stylistic practices of the young people who visit them, including those who do not actively read *sutoriito* fasshon magazines. Just as the wider discourse of tourism frames both the Eiffel Tower and the Niagara Falls as ‘tourist sites’ where it is ‘normal’ to linger, look and take photographs before moving on to the next ‘site’, so the discourse of the *sutoriito* frames Amerika-mura and Shibuya as ‘fashionable places’ where it is ‘normal’ to dress in a creative and youthful manner, to wander, browse and consume.

The theoretical perspectives of fellow French theorist Michel de Certeau (1984; introduced in 6.2 above) complement those of Lefebvre (1991) through their emphasis on the notion of space as a practiced phenomenon. In the context of the *sutoriito* as abstract space, it is tempting to ascribe Certeau’s (1984) concepts of ‘strategies’ and ‘tactics’ to the practices of the media and young people respectively. While strategies attempt to control and monitor the practices of individuals through the conflation of street and *sutoriito* discussed above, tactics offer these same individuals opportunities to subvert this process. However, Certeau (1984) does not make specific reference to the possibility that a symbiotic relationship may exist between strategies and tactics. By romanticising individual ‘tactics’ and contrasting them with collective ‘strategies’, his approach fails to take into account the role of subjective interpretation in the construction of spatial identity.

Lefebvre (1991) specifically mentions the role of the aesthetic element in the production of such abstract spaces, suggesting that the
consumption and display of fashion constitutes an ideal medium through which to hide the constructed nature of the *sutoriito*. What is less obvious is the way in which the *sutoriito* not only prioritises the aesthetic component of fashion, but also that of those who wear it, thereby encouraging young people to consume each other as the objects of a critical gaze according to their degree of *kakkō-yosa* ('coolness'), a concept regularly employed in the *sutoriito fasshon* media. Readers are encouraged to borrow ideas from the young people featured in the articles, and compete in the fashion game on the streets, a practice further stimulating consumption. This concept may be usefully approached from the perspective of Debord's (quoted in Jenks 1995) notion of the spectacle, through which he emphasises the prioritisation of the visual in the contemporary urban context:

The world of consumption is in reality the world of the mutual spectacularization of everyone, the world of everyone's separation, estrangement and nonparticipation...the spectacle is the dominant mode through which people relate to each other. It is only through the spectacle that people acquire a (falsified) knowledge of certain general aspects of social life...It answers perfectly the needs of a reified and alienated culture: the spectacle-spectator is in itself a staunch bearer of the capitalist order (1995:155).

Jenks (1995) argues that individuals may avoid becoming subsumed within the urban spectacle through the kinds of tactical practices described by Certeau (1984). I would argue that while such practices may succeed in creating what Jenks terms "autonomous spaces" (1995:156), the *sutoriito* is an imagined context which is separate from the physical practices in places such as Amerika-mura. As a kind of ordering logic such as the mainstream tourist discourse and even the cultural essentialism discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 above, it is always limited to attempts to frame places and practices through subjective acts of grouping, linking and labelling. These attempts are continuously open to the equally subjective interpretations of their target audiences.

At this point, it is important to note Keith and Pile's (1993) argument that "landscape is made in the image of capital but this is not its sole image" (1993:8). While the notion of the *sutoriito* allows the media to valorise and authenticate a particular form of engagement with the physical streets of places such as Amerika-mura through
consumption, it cannot control the responses of individual readers to such representations.

Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise the ways in which the existence of a discourse of the sutoriito may influence the way in which Amerika-mura is perceived and engaged with. While encouraging the spectacularisation of the real streets of places such as Amerika-mura, this discourse, like those of tourism and urban planning, also incorporates and conceals a particular image of ‘appropriate’ dress and behaviour for young Japanese. This image evokes the promise of freedom and agency, while actually reinforcing largely invisible social boundaries. The message here is ‘When you are young, you should dress up and go to places like Amerika-mura. If you don’t, you are not cool. And if you do go, your attempts to express yourself should be aesthetic, not political.’ In this way, the abstract construct of the sutoriito sets up a particular age-specific form of engagement with lived space, and then subtly enforces it through the threat of peer alienation.

7.5.3 SUTORIITO FASSHON AS PUBLIC DRAMA

In Fictions of collective life: public drama in late modern culture, David Chaney (1993) makes a distinction between aesthetic and social dramas, the first concept referring to staged performances such as those seen at the theatre, and the second referring to the nature and contents of everyday life upon which such performances are commonly based. However, he places particular emphasis on the notion of the public drama, which he locates on a continuum between the aesthetic and social forms noted above, and this concept can be usefully explored and further developed in the context of this research. Chaney (1993) argues that such contexts play a crucial role in the process by which social orders are constituted and consolidated, and the notion of public drama therefore shares certain similarities with Lefebvre’s (1991) concept of abstract space.

Just as practices within physical places consolidate their ‘natural’ association with certain abstract spaces, so do the acting out of such public dramas serve to naturalise certain forms of behaviour through a process of framing. As Chaney (1993) argues, ‘...public dramas are
inextricably embedded in the ideological constitution of social order” (1993:20), later linking this concept to physical contexts with the suggestion that “public drama is(...) collective, predominantly traditional and expropriative in the sense that an environment is taken over and adapted to the needs of the drama” (1993:20).

Chaney (1993) further distinguishes between two types of society, the ‘spectacular society’ of early modern Britain, where “...form was etched into every aspect of(...) society” (1993:31) and the ‘society of spectacle’ of contemporary (late modern/postmodern) Britain, where “the formal imagery of dramatisation counterpoints the indeterminacy of personal experience” (1993:31). Although his arguments refer primarily to the British context, they incorporate elements and implications which can readily be applied to other sites, such as Amerika-mura, where relationships between spatial and personal identities and those between lived experience and representations are in a constant process of mutually constitutive flux. While in some aspects parallelling the arguments of Baudelaire, such as in his claim that late modern society is characterised by a privileging of the image and a collapse in notions of authenticity and authority, he also leans towards the ‘total closure’ approach of Foucault in arguing that individual freedom is an illusion carefully disguised among a large, though limited and ordered, series of potential consumer choices, and that the dominant social order is largely sustained not through active state surveillance, but rather through the critical gaze of fellow citizens.

Pictorial representations of people and places, such as those contained in fashion or tourist magazines, constitute particularly important contexts through which personal and spatial images become naturalised and reinforced. Chaney (1993) argues that it is the seeming transparency of the photographic image, its apparently authentic reproduction of ‘reality’ which provides it with such subtle power, and claims that this medium constitutes a significant force in the regulation of social behaviour. As he argues in relation to stereotypical portrayals of females in tabloid pin-ups and advertisements,

For one half of the population to be continually made aware that their sense of self is grounded in how they might be looked at or imagined
is massively constraining. A form of order is asserted while its limitations are troublingly apparent (1993:98).

While Chaney emphasises the importance of the photograph in constructing what may be viewed as deceptively constraining images of people and places, he does not ignore the potential of this same medium to permit a degree of agency in the spirit of Certeau’s (1984) ‘tactics’. Distinguishing photography from other forms of mass entertainment such as radio, and television, he implies that it is not the medium of photography itself which is inherently ideological, but rather the way in which certain photographic representations or poses become accepted as ‘normal’ or ‘natural’ through the mutually influential processes of cultural diffusion (e.g. the family snapshot) and mass distribution through the print and electronic media.

Returning to the point above, Chaney (1993) suggests that photography reinforces and intensifies the inherent tendencies of late modernity towards categorisation and reflexive self-monitoring. He argues that

...photographic pictures in general are ways of writing culture that are also dramatic resources within which particular types of staging as opportunities for reflection become possible (1993:104).

He later adds the claim that “the image mediates between the life-world of those seeing and the life-world of those seen” (1993:105). Chaney’s (1993) arguments are closely reflected in the writing of Japanese social theorist Katori Atsuko (1990; introduced in 7.3.1 above), who emphasises the potency of the gaze which pervades physical sites such as Amerika-mura and embodies a privileging of the visual. She argues that the fashion district plays a significant role in the formation of personal identity, as young people typically “become aware of being looked at each time they look at someone else” (1993:80), further emphasising the role of fashion as “not only a means of self-expression, but also one element of the social order” (1990:95).

This argument leads to a consideration of the process by which subject/object relations are constituted, a theme examined more closely by Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift (1995) in their essay ‘Mapping the subject.’ They utilise the notion of the ‘encounter’ as the primary
context through which such relations are negotiated, and suggest that the moment of awareness that one has become the subject of another’s gaze represents a critical stage in the development of power relations in multiple contexts:

The encounter provokes the subject into mapping subjectivity in a dual sense: the sovereign subject and the subjected subject. The bodies of (...) individuals become intensifying grids of meaning and power: the subject position of the one setting the frame for the meaning of the encounter with the other (1995:41).

However, Pile and Thrift (1995) also distinguish between contexts where one assumes that the other is like the self and those where one assumes difference, noting that the reaction to awareness of having become the subject of the other’s gaze will vary according to which assumption is made. In the context of this research and the above discussion, it may be possible to suggest that the process of framing incorporated in specialised sutoriito fashhon magazines with a predominantly young readership may lead many young people to assume that other young people in places such as Amerika-mura are at least partially drawing upon such representations when ‘judging’ them, and to be less self-conscious of, or perhaps even oblivious to, older people who may use different criteria when encountering them on the streets of Japanese cities. This conclusion appeared to be confirmed by the experience of businessman Nagura Kōji (discussed in 8.3.1 below), whose initial unease upon entering the district shifted to a relieved realisation that none of the young people were interested in him or bothered by his presence.

7.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the techniques by which the sutoriito fashhon media frame and characterise Amerika-mura. It discussed the similarities between these representations and the broader context of tourism. It also discussed the notion of the sutoriito as a symbolic construct used to link and authenticate disparate sites and objects. The latter section of this chapter examined a variety of theoretical approaches to understanding the operations and effects of this discourse. Chapter 8 below begins with an exploration of specific contexts in which the framing discourse of the sutoriito meets the
lived reality of the street in Amerika-mura. It also examines the internal dynamic of fashion as it is constructed within Amerika-mura, considering the relationship between notions of conformity and differentiation, and the idea of fashion as a personal project of progressive learning and stylistic refinement.
Plate 7.1: This feature in the February 1977 edition of Osaka community paper *Wow-Wow* (1977:1) prefigures the *sunappu* ('on-the-street photographic shoots') later used by the mainstream *sutoriito fasshon* media.
Plate 7.2: This illustration in the same publication (Wow-Wow 1977:6) provides detailed instruction to readers on how to get ‘the edge’ over fashion rivals, again prefiguring the rhetoric of later sutoriito fasshon magazines.
Plate 7.3: Map of Amerika-mura provided in February 1977 edition of Wow-Wow (1977:30-31), offering an early example of the ‘mook’-type fashion and city guides which would follow.
Plate 7.4: Front cover of Boon’s *Tokyō Osaka shoppu navi ‘97* (Tokyo Osaka shop navigator ‘97) (Boon 1997a:1), discussed in 7.2.1.
Plate 7.5: Map of Amerika-mura provided in Boon’s Tōkyō–Osaka shoppu navi ‘97 (Tokyo Osaka shop navigator ‘97) (Boon 1997a:95), discussed in 7.2.1.
One of the suggested itineraries for visitors to Amerika-mura included in the Osaka kanzen shopingu baiburu (Osaka complete shopping bible) (Fine Boys 2001:10), discussed in 7.2.2.
Plate 7.7: Fashion or lifestyle? Performing ‘punk’ in Triangle Park.
Plate 7.8: Introductory page of the Amerika-mura section in Boon’s Za kakkoman (The kakkoman) (Boon 1997b:36), discussed in 7.3.4.
Plate 7.9: Mr Akihiro Umeda, editor of Cazi-Cazi magazine, in his office.
CHAPTER 8

STANDING OUT IN ORDER TO FIT IN

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 7 explored the sutoriito (‘street’) as a framing discourse which borrowed elements from the broader tourism discourse in order to organise and link specific people, places and fashion objects using an abstract notion of youthful fashionability. Sharing aspects of Marilyn Ivy’s Exotic Japan campaign (discussed in 2.4.2 above) and Expo ’70 (discussed in 3.3.2 above), the discourse of the sutoriito operates by a process of framing, exoticising and incorporating. In such a context, places such as Amerika-mura and Yoshimi’s Shibuya (discussed in 2.6 above) become linked as part of a global urban space in which sutoriito fasshon is the common language. However, as explored in Chapters 5 and 6 above, the stylisation of Amerika-mura as a site of consumption operates alongside numerous other discourses of spatial and personal identity.

This chapter examines how the sutoriito is performed through fashion practices in Amerika-mura, incorporating desires to conform to shared codes as part of a collective project, and impulses to differentiate oneself from the masses through the construction of a unique personal sutairu (‘style’). The chapter begins with a key context which illustrates the ambivalent and complex relationship between the sutoriito and the street, the sunappu (‘photo shoot’).
8.2 STREET MEETS SUTORIITO: THE SUNAPPU (‘PHOTO SHOOT’)

All sutoriito fashhon magazines regularly feature sunappu (‘snaps’), photographic features which present young people photographed ‘on the street’ in particular places, a practice which can be traced back to the late 1980s and the early days of publications such as Boon and Hot Dog Press. Typically, magazines will either feature one city per issue, or a set of ‘mini-features’, including photographs taken in several cities and presented alongside each other for the purposes of stylistic comparison. Most of the sunappu are pre-arranged (and explored in 8.2.1 below), and a notice will be included in the magazine to advise readers of the date and location of the following month’s sunappu. However, magazines occasionally arrange less structured sunappu, sending photographers and journalists into the streets of ‘fashionable areas’ such as Amerika-mura to find ‘stylish’ subjects (as explored in 8.2.2 below). This section includes an example of each of these two types of sunappu, exploring the quite different dynamics which characterise each one. While the first invites young people to compete, consciously dressing to impress magazine photographers, the second aims to capture fashionable people in their ‘natural’ state. While the first views Amerika-mura as a zoo, the latter sees it as a wildlife park.

8.2.1 THE STAGED SUNAPPU: AN INVITATION TO THE SUTORIITO

An example of the first type of sunappu was conducted by the monthly sutoriito fashhon magazine Street Jack during the latter part of my fieldwork period. The September 1997 issue carried an announcement inside the back cover, calling on readers to “gather at Triangle Park in Amerika-mura, Osaka on Saturday 2 and Sunday 3 August” for a “readers’ fashion sunappu” (Street Jack 1997a:262).

The shoot took place on the first weekend after the reopening of the park, following a lengthy renovation process (discussed in 4.5.1 above). The park had been swiftly reoccupied by people since the fences had come down, and was bustling with activity on a hot summer afternoon. A Street Jack flag placed at one side of the park
showed that the session was underway, and a cameraman and two magazine staff were photographing young people in front of the newly-completed wall fountain on the south side of the park. I introduced myself to them, and held an informal interview with *Street Jack* deputy editor Mr Keiichi Abe (introduced in 7.4.3 above), subsequently gaining his permission to photograph part of the shoot and interview one of the participants.

All participants in the *sunappu* were asked to complete a form, which included boxes for inserting the name, age, address and phone number of each participant. However, the bulk of available space was devoted to a series of categories listed under the instruction: “Please tell us about [your] *kyō no fashhon* (‘today’s fashion’) today.” The categories included ‘top’, ‘bottom’, ‘watch’, ‘accessories’, ‘shoes’ and ‘bag’, and participants were invited to fill in the ‘brand’, ‘product name’, ‘shop at which it was bought’ and ‘price’ for each category. The final section of the form provided spaces to answer two further questions, “What is the main *pointo* (‘feature’, lit. ‘point’) of your fashion *kōdinēto* (‘coordination’) today?”, and “What is your *jiman no aitemu* (‘show-off item’) today?”

As such shoots are advertised in advance, there is a tendency among participants to dress up especially for the occasion, and most of the young people who drifted out of the crowd wore noticeably unique or elaborate costumes and accessories. Mr Abe explained that many young people aspired to being featured in *sunappu* so that they could show off to their friends, and emphasised that these events permitted a two-way relationship between the media and young people, claiming that many readers referred to *sunappu* articles for fashion ideas. *Street Jack* advertises each photo shoot approximately one month in advance, and conducts the shoots on the first Saturday and Sunday of the month, each time in a different city. An eight-page colour article based on each shoot is published approximately two-and-a-half months after the shoot, and each article forms part of a regular monthly feature called the *Sutoriito fashhon gran prii* (‘Street fashion grand prix’). The styles worn by participants are divided into *Ame-kaji* (‘American casual’), *panku* (‘punk’) and *mōdo* (‘mode’), and the articles feature the ‘winners’ of each category and a selection of ‘runners-up’. The names and ages of participants are included, in
addition to each person’s “show-off item” and some of their comments regarding their own styles. There are whole-body shots of each participant and separate close-up shots of their ‘key items’.

I was able to interview one of the participants in the sunappu, and photograph him being photographed by the Street Jack team [Plates 8.1, 8.2]. Takayuki (22), a tax official from Nishinomiya in nearby Kobe, was a veteran of such shoots, having appeared in sunappu articles in five other magazines, including Get On and Cool Trans, during the past year. When asked why he participated in the sessions, he replied: “They’ll be good souvenirs when I grow older.” He further explained that he had started to become interested in fashion while at high school, and that he had been coming to Amerika-mura for the past five years. He added that he now only came to the district when there was something in particular that he wanted. Explaining that he used magazines to keep up with fashion information, he added: “I look at magazines, get information [from them] and then go to my favourite shops”, and said that the magazines helped him to keep up with the many new shops which were opening.

In the end, Takayuki was not successful in having his photograph published in the Sutoriito fasshon gran prii feature on Amerika-mura included in the November 1997 issue of Street Jack (Street Jack 1997b) [Plate 8.3], however I noted that another two participants who had declined my request for an interview were among those featured. It is interesting to note that while the application form (noted above) did not ask participants to categorise their ‘style’ or ‘look’, the editorial staff had arbitrarily classified all of the participants into one of the three broad styles noted above. The article announced that “these are Osaka’s three main fashion trends” (1997b:211), and claimed that “within these three main trends, this line-up of kosei-ha (‘individualists’) stood out (lit. ‘shone’)” (1997b:211) However, not only had the styles of participants been divided into three ‘main trends’, each trend had been further divided into several subgroups, demonstrating a particularly thorough example of the ‘catalogue culture’ discussed above. While those participants placed in the Ame-kaji (‘American casual’) block were further divided into the ‘denimu-ha (‘denim group’), ‘cotton pants group’, ‘coloured print shorts group’, ‘six-pocket shorts group’ and ‘cotton shorts group’
(1997b:212-213), those in the *panku* ('punk') block were further divided into the ‘check pants group’, ‘cotton pants group’, ‘denim group’, ‘shorts group’ and ‘nylon pants group’ (1997b:214-215), and those in the *mōdo* ('mode') block were divided into the ‘wrap-around skirt group’, ‘use of Japanese items group’ and ‘simple group’ (1997b:216-217).

In addition, each ‘block’ presentation included a commentary by a local shop representative. As examples of the *karisuma* ('charisma') concept noted in 7.2.2, 7.3.4 and 7.4.1 above, these individuals were presented as arbitors of style suitably qualified to ‘judge’ each ‘look’. While Mr Uchida, a buyer for the Nylon store gently criticised a tendency among young participants to “think wearing one rare item (...) was [a sign of] individuality” (1997b:213), he urged *Ame-kaji* enthusiasts to “make the most of this environment [of Amerika-mura]” (1997b:213) and “meet the challenge and develop their own *Ame-kaji* styles” (1997b:213). In the *panku* section, A Store Robot shop manager Mr Azuma also begins his commentary with a criticism, claiming that

> There are lots of cases of people just copying the *sofuto-panku* ('soft-punk') [fashion] coordination featured in fashion magazines. There seem to be lots of people who are satisfied just wearing the shirts and jeans featured in the magazines (1997b:215).

Asked by a magazine representative to provide advice on how to “master *panku* style” (1997b:215), he responded that

> Firstly, the most important thing is to study something of punk culture. If you know about how ‘bondage’ [gear] came to be created, an understanding of how to wear it should naturally follow (1997b:215).

However, he ended his commentary by predicting what features would dominate this year’s *panku* ‘look’, suggesting a dual interpretation of punk as a ‘culture’ and a ‘fashion’ (1997b:215).

In relation to the *mōdo* ('mode'; European-influenced ‘smart’ fashion) block, Pure Plus shop manager Mr Ōi criticised people who dressed from head to toe in one *mōdo* brand of clothing, arguing that they “are not kosei-tekki (‘individualistic’), they are just kind of dressing according to a sample given to them” (1997b:217). Asked
by a magazine representative to provide a *pointo* (‘tip’) with regard to *mōdo* fashion, he replied that

even if they are wearing items of the same brand, they should insert one *hazushita* (‘contrasting’) item to express their own sense of playfulness. For example, by matching a Nemeth [*mōdo* brand] shirt with used Levis [*Ame-kaji*] or something...” (1997b:217)

In the latter part of his commentary, he cautioned young people against letting their preoccupation with brands lead them to match items of different materials which did not go together, adding that “Young Wada [one of the participants] is a good example of how to deal with this matter” (1997b:217).

The *Street Jack* articles can be read on a number of levels, and raise important issues relating to the internal dynamics of ‘conformity versus differentiation’ which characterise the discourse of the *sutoriito*. Although noted in Chapter 7 above, I would like to again emphasise the role of the *sutoriito fasshon* media in attempting to set up the ‘rules’ of this space by classifying the aesthetic practices of young people according to largely arbitrary divisions into ‘trends’ and ‘groups.’

It is also important to note the role played by persons commonly termed as *karisuma* (‘charisma’), such as the three shop representatives above, in determining the standards by which these practices are interpreted, judged, and often criticised. An assumption of ‘natural’ authority ascribed to the media and *karisuma* figures underlies a narrative strategy to manipulate and influence the consumption patterns of young people in places such as Amerikamura. As noted in Chapter 7 above, the *sutoriito fasshon* media use the ‘unquestioned’ expert knowledge of the *karisuma* to validate and enhance their own image as arbitors of style. In this process, the way in which *karisuma* are chosen and the contexts within which their comments are published are controlled by the *sutoriito fasshon* media. The combined use of *sunappu* and *karisuma* commentary is one of the most potent techniques used by the media in the construction of the abstract *sutoriito*. 
8.2.2 THE GUERILLA SUNAPPU: IN THE WILD

It is equally important to note here that not all sunappu involve participants who respond to advertisements and make special efforts in their self-presentation in order to have their photographs included in such articles. The second type of sunappu noted in 8.2 above is employed by the Osaka-based sutoriito fashhon magazine Cazi-Cazi (introduced in 7.4.2 above), which has a policy of trying to select people who are ‘naturally stylish’ for its monthly ‘Machi no me’ (‘Eye on the Street’) feature. Unlike other magazines which advertise such sessions in advance, Cazi-Cazi sends two or three of its staff out to a particular street corner for three or four consecutive weekday afternoons each month, where they spend several hours watching and waiting for people to photograph and include among the twenty participants in that month’s ‘Machi no me’ feature. Unlike the first type of sunappu discussed above, the quest for personal recognition and temporary fame is downplayed, as names, ages and occupations of participants are not included with each photograph, and there are no additional comments on fashion styles or items worn. Staff journalist Mr Sofue, explained to me that “photographs are more concrete [than words] and stimulate the imagination.”

I joined Mr Sofue and veteran fashion photographer Mr Takahashi [Plates 8.4, 8.5] on two sunappu sessions on Friday 5 and Tuesday 9 September 1997, squatting down with them on the kerb at the corner outside the live venue Sun Hall in the southern part of Amerika-mura. Many people who looked obviously stylish to me were overlooked or dismissed by the pair, while occasionally they would leap up and run after someone I had considered quite ordinary-looking to ask if they would participate in the session.

On the first day, they were relatively successful, despite one refusal from a man who was apparently on his way to work. However, a late start on the second day and a lack of ‘suitable’ subjects led them to return to the office without even one photograph. Mr Sofue explained that “the reaction is usually positive” among people they approach, however added that problems sometimes arose when a couple or a pair of friends was involved. On the second day, they approached a man and gained permission for his photograph, however he
As asked why they only take photographs on weekdays, Mr Sofue noted that “there are too many people on weekends”, adding that “[on weekends] people tend to try too hard [to be fashionable].” I then enquired as to how they would like their readers to use the ‘Machi no me’ segment [Plate 8.6]. Mr Sofue replied that he would like it to be “a reference for fashion style”, adding that he wanted to “take photographs which make the machi (‘area’) look fun.” Mr Takahashi said that the photos should “let you imagine the kind of lifestyle these people lead”, and further commented that “[we] want to make it a truly realistic page” (using the English loan-word *riaru* (‘real’)). Mr Sofue strongly agreed with the idea of portraying people ‘as they were’, further emphasising the word *riaru* and adding that “reality at *sutoriito reberu* (‘street level’) is (...) random, it’s (...) fun.” Their comments reflected those of *Cazi-Cazi* editor, Mr Akihiro Umeda (introduced in 7.4.2 above), where he noted the magazine’s policy of emphasising “reality”, and claimed that “what we are in contact with is the raw [i.e. unaltered] state.”

*Cazi-Cazi* is not the only magazine to approach people on the street to be photographed. During late August 1997, I interviewed Tatsuya (17) [Plate 8.7], a flamboyantly-dressed third-year senior high school student. I met him for the first time during an interview with several of his friends one Monday afternoon in Triangle Park. When one of the two girls in the group of four people I was interviewing pulled out a copy of *sutoriito fasshon* magazine *Fruits*, the first half of which was devoted to a *sunappu* in Amerika-mura, two boys walked up, one of them pointing to a photo in the magazine and saying “That’s me!” [Plate 8.8] This was Tatsuya, who was accompanied by his friend Shō (16). He explained that he had been approached by a representative from the magazine outside Big Step (discussed in 4.5.2 above) on 20 July (just over a month before my interview). As for his reaction, he replied that he had been “thrilled”, in a slightly disinterested, though not sarcastic, voice. Shō added that “it was a bummer that I wasn’t in it too”, at which point they both laughed.
8.2.3 SUMMARY: THE SUNAPPU AND THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE

The examples discussed here point to two quite different forms of engagement with the media by young visitors to Amerika-mura. While Takayuki (introduced in 8.2.1 above) rarely visits Amerika-mura, yet actively seeks out opportunities to be featured in *sutoriito fasshon* magazines, Tatsuya (introduced in 8.2.2 above) is a regular visitor to the district who adopts a somewhat blase and indifferent attitude to being photographed. While people like Takayuki are attracted to Amerika-mura by the media, the media is attracted to Amerika-mura by people like Tatsuya. Both are involved in the construction of the *sutoriito*, however their engagements with the physical street differ enormously. While Tatsuya appears to enjoy being part of the moving and highly sensory spectacle of flamboyant hairstyles, pumping rap music, chattering voices and car exhaust fumes in the streets of Amerika-mura, leaving his own traces in the spirit of Certeau (1984), Takayuki uses the street primarily as a medium through which to become part of the *sutoriito*, his image frozen in time and flattened in space, his body chopped up into small parts to allow a better view of the accessories he is wearing.

Both are engaging in different ways with what Japanese social theorist Mita Munesuke (1992; introduced in 2.5 and 2.6 above) terms “the impulse to evaporate and transform” in the contemporary urban environment (1992:444). Mita (1992) further argues that this type of context promotes attempts to escape from what he terms “the hell of eyes” (1992:426) by manipulating the gaze of others through acting out surface aspects of the self. This concept can also be explored according to Simmel’s (1971b; see also Frisby and Featherstone 1997) notion of the metropolis as the site of irreconcilable tension between the ‘defensive self’ and the ‘expressive self.’ The conflation of street and *sutoriito* which *sutoriito fasshon* magazines help to promote constructs Amerika-mura as a site in which a particular type of gaze encourages individual responses which negotiate the dichotomy between defensive and expressive selves, between conformity and differentiation, through the medium of *sutoriito fasshon*. 
On-the-street photographic shoots allow the media to present ‘authentic’ images of fashionable or stylish young people, while giving young participants such as Takayuki the opportunity to gain national exposure and express their own tastes through the creative use of fashion. It may be argued, however, that the photo shoot constitutes a uniquely pervasive means of simultaneously manipulating images of places, objects and individual identities. To borrow the terminology of Rob Shields (1991; introduced in 7.5.1 above), the collections of photographs taken on the streets of Amerika-mura constitute ‘place-images’ which collectively create ‘place-myths’, images which conflate the real and the representational by presenting a seemingly ‘natural’ link between the frozen and dissected images of the sunappu and Amerika-mura as a lived place. This link masks the process by which a symbolic sutoriito is being constructed behind and through the fashion objects and those who wear them. In this sense, Lefebvre’s (1991) notion of abstract space (introduced in 7.5.1 above) may be compared with a similar technique which Grant McCracken (1998) explores in relation to advertising. He argues that advertising transfers meaning from the ‘culturally-constituted world’ to goods by locating these goods within contexts which represent desired meanings, claiming that

World and good must be seen to enjoy a special harmony. (...) When this sameness is glimpsed, (...) the process of transfer has taken place. (...) This good now “stands for” cultural meaning of which it was previously innocent (1988:79).

In the case of the sunappu, the styles of clothing presented become validated as sutoriito fasshon through their presentation in the context of ‘fashionable places’ such as Amerika-mura. What McCracken (1988) fails to note, however, is that such meaning transfer is a two-way process; i.e. the sutoriito fasshon presented in such features also transfers meaning back to Amerika-mura as context, consolidating its fashionable ‘place-image.’

At the level of the individual, however, the sunappu at least partially and momentarily inverts the relationship between representer and represented in the production of the symbolic sutoriito by permitting a degree of agency in determining the way in which the real street is represented. In this sense, it provides opportunities for Certeau’s
(1984) ‘tactics’ to insert themselves, however fleetingly, into the ‘strategy’ adopted by the media, the sunappu itself.

Through contexts such as the sunappu, the sutoriito becomes a space jointly constructed by the media and young people. It provides a context in which young people can construct a sense of identity through aesthetic experimentation, while also functioning as a framing discourse which the media can deploy in its representations of specific places, people and objects. Like the participants in a London East End walking tour discussed by Michael Keith (1995), the young people photographed in the sunappu in Amerika-mura are able to “read themselves into the illegibility of the (...) city, (...) by writing the street, by translating the gaze into the script...” (1995:307) Although the very act of dressing up specifically for the purpose of being featured in a sunappu reinforces the constructed nature of such contexts, perhaps it is the thrill derived from being involved in the construction of a symbolic sutoriito somehow more authentic than the real streets which motivates many young participants to volunteer.

8.3 CONFORMITY AND DIFFERENTIATION

At another level, sutoriito fasshon also sets up a dialectical relationship between conformity and differentiation among young visitors to ‘fashion districts’ such as Amerika-mura. This relationship was perhaps best characterised by Cazi-Cazi magazine contributor and Machi no me (‘Eye on the street’, discussed in 8.2.2 above) photographer, Mr Masao Takahashi, who explained that young Japanese “feel at ease, to some extent, if they see someone else wearing the same style of clothing as themselves, even if that person isn’t a friend of theirs.” His Machi no me colleague, Mr Keiichi Sofue, then mentioned his belief that Japanese youth explored their desire to be ‘different’ within a framework of belongingness, and adopted “a minimalist approach.” Their comments share similarities with the argument made by Simmel (1971a) that “it is a peculiar characteristic of fashion that it renders possible a social obedience, which at the same time is a form of individual differentiation” (1971a:305).
When I asked shop assistant Ryūki (21) whether there were any ‘dress rules’ in Amerika-mura, he replied that “you can’t feel comfortable [here] unless you’re wearing clothes which are to some extent recognised by the people around you [on the street],” adding that “suits don’t fit in [here].” He further explained his perspective on the balance between conformity and differentiation by arguing that “there are loads of people with individuality here, [but that] individuality to some extent falls into categories.”

Shop manager Yasunori (age unknown; probably mid-twenties) offered a similar perspective when he claimed that young Japanese “express their individuality through imitation.” He was particularly critical of young shoppers in Amerika-mura, claiming that they were “just manipulated by the magazines”, and adding that “there are almost no kids doing their own thing [stylistically] by themselves.” He further commented that “even if they feel embarrassed [to wear something], they don’t feel embarrassed if everyone else is wearing it.” This comment also recalls one of Simmel’s (1997a) arguments, outlined in the context of his seminal essay ‘Fashion’, that

no matter how extravagant the form of appearance or manner of expression, as long as it is fashionable, it is protected against those painful reflections which the individual otherwise experiences when he (sic) becomes the object of attention (1997a:313).

Simmel (1997a) proposes that fashion operates as a kind of mask or cloak whereby “sensitive” (1997a:311) or “delicate” (1997a:312) individuals may deflect the social gaze from a vulnerable inner self. By being judged on a surface level by others as being ‘fashionable’, one escapes judgment on a deeper level; fashion acts as a kind of protective shield. This argument is reconsidered in 7.3.3 below in the context of the dichotomy between miihā (‘follower’) and maniakku (‘fanatic’).

This latter argument raises the simultaneous importance of particular forms of visibility and invisibility which the project of sutoriito fashhon encourages. In the context of the historical development of sutoriito fashhon, Boon editor Mr Yōichirō Maeda explains that while the early 1980s were characterised by a desire to wear items which were inherently ‘cool’, the American casual boom which his
magazine helped create from the late 1980s onwards encouraged a belief that “wearing clothes which people didn’t turn around and look at was ‘cool.’” While young people were encouraged by the sutoriito fasshon media to ‘stand out from the crowd’ by wearing “limited items” or “items that no one else had”, there was an insinuation that this should only be attempted within the comfortably familiar parameters of sutoriito fasshon. According to Mr Maeda, the result was a nationwide boom in sutoriito fasshon from 1994, resulting in a state of affairs (1997) where “everyone was wearing the same kinds of clothes.” In this sense, it may be claimed that sutoriito fasshon promotes what may be termed ‘collective differentiation.’

However, just as sutoriito fasshon allows one to blend in while standing out in places such as Amerika-mura, other forms of dress may create an uncomfortable sense of negative visibility among certain visitors to the district, perhaps compounded by age differences from the youthful targets of sutoriito fasshon magazines and retailers. In contrast to the notion of the gendered city, this process has promoted a generational divide between certain districts of major cities in Japan, in particular Amerika-mura in Osaka and Shibuya and Harajuku in Tokyo. While sutoriito fasshon was implicitly and explicitly portrayed as a vehicle by which young people (and only young people) could express their identities through specialised consumption, places where sutoriito fasshon was consumed and displayed became associated with the sutoriito, a space in which people outside the media-defined parameters of ‘youth’ in a sense became alien.

This argument shares aspects of Yoshimi’s notion of ‘frames of exclusion’ (discussed in 2.6 above). However, as argued in my examination of this concept, such frames only have power if they are interpreted as such. This type of argument presumes that places may be transformed by commercial forces into environments in which only one discourse remains. However, as the theoretical constructs explored in 4.6 above suggest, and as the case studies in Chapter 6 above illustrate, Amerika-mura continues to operate as a heterotopic, heterogeneous space in which smooth and striated spaces coexist and continuously interact.
8.3.1 THE ‘PSYCHO GEOGRAPHY’ OF THE SUTORIITO

Nevertheless, the power of the sutoriito to influence the ‘psychogeography’ of a district is difficult to refute, and is alluded to several times in the ‘sensory journey’ through Amerika-mura presented in 4.4 above. Writing in 1955, the French Situationist writer Guy Debord (1996) describes this type of phenomenon when he notes:

The sudden change of ambiance in a street within the space of a few meters; the evident division of a city into zones of distinct psychic atmospheres; the path of least resistance which is automatically followed in aimless strolls (and which has no relation to the physical contour of the ground); the appealing or repelling character of some places - all this seems to be neglected (1996:20).

Maria Luisa Palumbo (2000) posits the existence of ‘internal margins’ (2000:36; italics original) in the urban environment, which she describes as “changing but often vague boundaries, beyond which you are somewhere else” (2000:36).

This aspect of Amerika-mura was highlighted in comments made to me by the president of a local English language school, who admitted that he deliberately detoured around the district when coming to the school wearing a suit and tie because he felt like he “didn’t fit in.” Another example was provided by urban planning consultant Nagura Kōji in his personal website, where he recalls visiting the area on a business trip to Osaka from his home in Anjō (near Nagoya) on 20 September 1997:

It was Saturday evening and Amerika-mura was crowded with young people. Although it is described as a young people’s kaihō-ku (‘space of liberation’) swirling with anarchic energy, it was full of teenagers. I couldn’t see any people in their thirties wearing suits like me. I felt like I had entered an ikikkan (‘strange/other space’). (...) I needed some courage to be able to walk through this strange space. However, today’s young people have a strong desire to show themselves off, and I felt that they were quite disinterested in other [i.e. older] people. To the contrary, today’s young people might be [more] predisposed to accepting other people [than earlier generations] (http://www.townnet.com/tsunagu/osaka.html).

In my own case, I found myself skirting around its periphery when walking to my part-time job formally dressed. I found that the easiest
way to feel comfortable in Amerika-mura was to adopt what might be called a *sutoriito* identity, wearing a muted form of *sutoriito fasshon* to mitigate the age factor in much the same way as the older shop assistants in the district. In other words, I attempted to ‘fit in’ in Amerika-mura by making myself as invisible as possible. In this sense, I disagree with Elizabeth Wilson’s (1991) argument that “there is no identity without visibility” (1991:120), and would suggest that attempted invisibility is the most powerful act of identification.

A further example of this process was provided in the first of a series of articles on Amerika-mura published by the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper in 1992. Titled ‘*Iwakan doko e, ima ya heiki*’ (‘Where has that awkward feeling gone? Now I’m fine [here]’), it describes the unease felt by housewife Ms Kōko Terauchi (46) upon learning that she would have to visit Triangle Park in Amerika-mura in order to watch her daughter’s jazz dance group perform. Recalling that she had been told “‘That’s the place with all those weird young people’” (*Asahi Shimbun* 1992a), she tells how her husband suggested the whole family go as “lookouts” (1992a). The article explains how Ms Terauchi’s attitudes towards the young people in Amerika-mura were transformed, noting that:

> when the big day came, the young people with their dyed hair gelled to stand up in strange directions who had appeared dangerous at first glance turned out quietly to watch the performance. When the disco music began to play and the group called on spectators to ‘please dance with us, everyone!’, a fair number of punk boys joined in, their chains clinking and clanking. Before she knew it, the mothers who had been watching the show found themselves joining in the ring of dancers. It was a huge success (1992a).

The article continues by noting Ms Terauchi’s embarrassed confession that “‘it was us who had the prejudice’” (1992a), noting that she now happily shops in the district with her friends. It concludes with the appraisal that “the kids they used to think of as ‘strange young people’ may now be thinking of them as ‘strange adults’, but nowadays they feel totally at ease [in the district]” (1992a).

All of the above cases include different responses to a perception that one doesn’t ‘fit in’ or belong in Amerika-mura. While my language
school boss avoided the area, and I dressed in a purposely casual style, Ms Terauchi joined in the shopping, and Mr Nagura reassured himself with the belief that young people were more interested in themselves than in staring at him. Both Mr Terauchi and Mr Nagura implied that their discomfort upon first entering the district had largely been derived from their own misguided preconceptions.

8.3.2 STANDING OUT WHILE STILL FITTING IN: COMMENTS FROM THE STREET

This section examines a selection of comments drawn from interviews conducted in Amerika-mura during 1997 which relate to the process of negotiation between conformity and differentiation in the context of sutoriito fasshon.

Many of the teenagers I spoke to in Amerika-mura expressed a desire to medatsu (‘stand out from the crowd’), although several agreed with my suggestion that it was becoming increasingly difficult to do so in an environment where green hair and pierced noses had become almost commonplace. The first examples I give below relate exclusively to hair dyeing and body piercing, arguably the most extreme elements of sutoriito fasshon, while the final example concerns the use of brands.

Asked about his hair, which was dyed pink with a blond streak, Tatsumi (17) replied that he had first dyed his hair two years ago because he “wanted to have a different colour of hair from other people.” When I suggested that it might be becoming harder to stand out, he explained that “I like it [i.e. fashion], so I can’t stop.” When I made the same suggestion to Maki (20), she replied that “[even if I can’t stand out], as long as I like it, that’s fine”, while Shiho (17) commented that “[even if that is the case], I still want to stand out.” Tatsuhiro (20), who had short, orange hair and an earring, explained that his hair had been long until recently, and that he had first dyed it when he was fifteen, changing to the present style “because I wanted to stand out...even more.” He first had his (left) ear pierced when he was seventeen “because it started to be trendy (and) the guys at school weren’t doing it yet.”
Second-year senior high-school student Yoshifumi (17) had been coming to Amerika-mura for the past four years. On the day I interviewed him, he had coordinated his shirt and shoes with his green hair, and had a pierced nose, lower lip and ears. Yoshifumi had first had his ears pierced after entering senior high-school, later having his lower lip and nose pierced before getting a ‘body pierce’ (in his case, a large opening in his right earlobe, through which he had attached a pink plastic ring). He explained that his motivation for having the piercings done was a desire “to stand out from other people.”

While the young people in the previous examples demonstrated a desire to differentiate through dyeing their hair and piercing their bodies, second-year university student Yusuke (19) explained how he paradoxically adopted similar practices in order to conform. He had chapatsu (‘dyed brown hair’), and recalled that he had begun dyeing his hair when he was sixteen “because everyone was doing it.” He had had his ear pierced when he was fifteen, explaining that he had been following “the trend at that time.” He described his own fashion style as “sutoriito (‘street’),” suggesting that he used fashion as a means to avoid standing out from the crowd.

One further context in which individual stylistic differentiation and collective identification can be attempted is through the use of brand-name items. While Street Jack magazine deputy editor Mr Keiichi Abe (introduced in 8.2.1 above) claimed that “wearing a certain brand shows that person’s individuality”, second-year senior high-school student Sho (16; introduced in 8.2.2 above) mentioned that he liked the brand 20471120 because it was “koseiteki (‘individualistic’).” However, when asked where he had first found out about this brand, he replied “from someone I know”, suggesting that peer networks constitute an extremely important medium through which stylistic identities are constructed.

Perhaps the clearest evidence of this tendency towards ‘collective individualism’ was found in the case of second-year senior high-school students Yoshimi and Momoko, whom I interviewed in August 1997 [Plate 8.9]. They were wearing blouses in identical styles, only differentiated by colour. Yoshimi explained that when
they had visited Amerika-mura in June, they had seen the outfits they were now wearing, which they thought were “cute”, and agreed with my suggestion that they had chosen different colours to show their ‘individuality’, while choosing the same style to show their similar tastes. Yoshimi further explained her choice of colour by adding that “I don’t suit pink.”

8.3.3 FROM MIIHĀ TO MANIAKKU

The simultaneous use of fashion to ‘blend in’ and ‘stand out’ may also be explored through the Japanese terms miihā (‘follower’) and maniakku (‘fanatic’). Several young people and fashion magazine staff used these terms in suggesting to me that there was a temporal aspect to engagement with sutoriito fashhon, and that it was typical to ‘graduate’ from dependent to independent fashion behaviour. The term miiha is commonly used to refer to people who copy styles from other people or from media sources. These people are contrasted with maniakku, who are seen as being sufficiently independent to use fashion items in the construction of individual styles.

Third-year senior high-school student Tatsuya (17; introduced in 8.2.2 above) recalled his own ‘progression’ from miiha in junior high school to maniakku in his first year of senior high school. Asked to define the terms, he replied that miihā “look at the clothes featured in magazines and imitate them”, while his friend, second-year senior high-school student Shō (16; introduced in 8.2.2 and 8.3.2 above) explained that maniakku “express their own individuality.” Defining himself as an “all-the-way” maniakku, Tatsuya further demonstrated his self-confidence in his claim that “we are the chiishin (‘core’) [in Amerika-mura]...the fashion leaders of this area.” His reference to the notion of chūshin recalled Mr Inoguchi’s use of the term chūshinsen (‘central line’, meaning ‘unchanging core’; discussed in 6.2 above) and Mr Matsunaga (6.5.1) and Mr Furutani’s (6.5.2) notion of koa (‘core’). However, Tatsuya was not referring to a lifestyle, but rather a role as pioneer and trendsetter in the aesthetic space of the sutoriito.

Second-year senior high-school students Yoshifumi (17; introduced in 8.3.2 above) and Tadashi (17) [Plate 8.10] were visiting Amerika-
mura for the day from a rural area of Shiga Prefecture (about one hour’s travelling time from Osaka) when I approached them for an interview. Yoshifumi had been coming to Amerika-mura for the past four years, while Tadashi was visiting the district for the first time at the suggestion of his friend. As noted in 8.3.2 above, Yoshifumi had coordinated his shirt and shoes with his green hair, and had a pierced nose, lower lip and ears. By contrast, Tadashi had adopted a more reserved ‘look’, comprising *chapatsu* (‘dyed brown hair’), a light short-sleeved shirt, dark blue ‘long shorts’ and sneakers.

During the interview, Yoshifumi confidently claimed that his ‘look’ was “my own style”, while Tadashi admitted that the inspiration for his ‘look’ was drawn from “magazines.” Similarly, in response to my question: “Is fashion a means of self-expression for you?” Yoshifumi immediately agreed, while Tadashi replied that he considered it a matter of “taste.” When asked how they chose fashion items, Yoshifumi pointed to “colour”, while Tadashi replied that he looked for items which were “*kakko-ii* (cool).”

The responses of Yoshifumi and Tadashi illustrate two distinct forms of engagement with fashion which may also be examined in the context of the *miihã/maniakkã* continuum. Interviewees demonstrated varying degrees of confidence in their use of fashion items, with a general tendency towards lesser reliance on magazines as a personal style or ‘look’ became consolidated. While relative newcomers to fashion such as Tadashi preferred to borrow from the choices presented in *sutoriito fasshon* magazines and were influenced by notions of ‘coolness’ which such publications promoted (for example, *Boon’s Kakkoman*, discussed in 7.3.4 above), relative ‘veterans’ such as Yoshifumi stressed the uniqueness of their own personal ‘styles.’ A similar argument was advanced by Uncle Sam shop assistant Mr Naohiro Ueda, who claimed that “cool people are those who know what suits them” (*KG Jôhô* 1999:21). He suggested that people should “at first try wearing all kinds of clothes” (1999:21), explaining that “soon, there comes a time when you realise ‘this [style] doesn’t work’” (1999:21).

A division into *miihã* and *maniakkã* behaviour was also evident in the comments of several young people working in retail outlets in
Amerika-mura. Shop assistant Pakko (22) divided visitors to the district into two kinds, “kids who don’t know what to wear” and “[kids who] have their own styles”, adding that “kids who come around here don’t know anything.” He used the terms *miihā* and *maniakk* respectively to refer to the above groups of people. According to Pakko, *miihā* kids “wander around open spaces” such as the Big Step complex in the centre of the district, and are mainly teenagers, while *maniakk* are “kids with strong individuality” who tend to frequent the southern part of Amerika-mura and visit shops such as those in the labyrinthine collection of stores Mukokuseki Hyakutaten.

Rap dancer and shop assistant Kōji (24; further introduced in 9.3.1 below) recalled that he had begun practicing rap dancing at junior high school, describing this as his “mane (‘imitation’)” period. He said that it took several years for him to become a *maniakku*. Asked if *maniakk* associate with each other, he agreed, referring to them as “yararete-iru (‘done in the head’)”, pointing to his head. He further explained that his hairstyle and clothing were the same at work, home and play (reflecting the *chūshinsen* (‘central line’, ‘unchanging core’ notion discussed in 6.2 above), because hip hop was the “main” element of his life. He mentioned that he had had the same hairstyle for five years, only having his dreadlocks redone once every two months (a five-hour process costing 20 000 yen). He also claimed that he rarely looked at magazines, adding that they were only for “*shoshinsha* (‘beginners’).” He also said that he did not worry much about fashion trends, saying that those who did were *miihā*.

### 8.3.4 THEORISING THE FASHION DICHOTOMY

The above examples point to the existence of two kinds of *miihā/maniakk* dichotomies. The first, evident in the case of Kōji, seems to refer to the level and extent of engagement with a particular locus of specialised knowledge; in his case, hip hop (explored in Chapter 9 below). Clothing constitutes only one element of this engagement, and the *miihā/maniakk* distinction is used to refer to a process of gaining confidence to express oneself in unique ways through the medium of that knowledge. This process is akin to that of an apprentice craftsman following in the footsteps of his (actual or
perceived) masters before himself becoming a master worthy of emulation. The second, suggested in the comments by Pakko, Tatsuya and Shō above, appears to refer to the type of engagement with *sutoriito fashhon* magazines. Following this definition, *miihā* are those who copy styles from magazines, while *maniakku* are those who focus on developing their own styles using fashion.

The *maniakku* concept is also linked to that of *karisuma*. In this sense, it implies that an individual is to be respected for confidently constructing a unique personal *sutairu* ('style'), which may include aesthetic elements but which is presumed also to reflect an eclectic and refined set of tastes and interests. A quintessential example of the *karisuma* phenomenon in 1990s Japan is Fujiwara Hiroshi (discussed in 7.4.1 above), a highly influential media personality who was partly responsible for introducing hip hop to Japan in the mid-1980s. Another is Nigo, owner of the highly successful ‘niche’ fashion label, A Bathing Ape.

The *miihā-maniakku* phenomenon may be further explored through a reconsideration of Simmel’s (1997a) notion (noted above) of fashion as a form of ‘defense mechanism’, behind which people who lack confidence or a strong sense of identity (such as women, in his case) may take shelter from a judgmental gaze. Adolescent Japanese may begin their engagements with *sutoriito fashhon* by copying styles from magazines and other sources in the safety of the knowledge that they are displaying aesthetic tastes that have already been ‘sanctioned’ by those who present themselves as ‘gatekeepers’ of the abstract space of the *sutoriito*. The shift from *miihā* to *maniakku* may also be compared with Simmel’s (1997a) argument that fashion expresses “the desire for imitation and conspicuousness” (1997a:308). These concepts may also be understood with reference to his notions of ‘social fashion’ and ‘personal fashion.’ Simmel (1971a) describes the latter in the following way:

> The need of imitation, of similarity, of the blending of the individual in the mass, are here satisfied purely within the individual himself (sic), namely through the concentration of the personal consciousness upon this one form of content, as well as through the imitation of his (sic) own self, as it were, which here takes the place of imitation of others (1971a:315).
An even bleaker view of *mihiha*-type behaviour is found in Theodor Adorno's (1981) discussion of jazz music followers. Arguing that "what is important to them is the sense of belonging as such, identification, without their paying particular attention to the content" (1981:128), he later claims that "merely to be carried away by anything at all, to have something of their own, compensates for their impoverished and barren existence" (1981:128). It is likely that Adorno (1981) is referring here to lack of cultural refinement, rather than economic deprivation, however this latter claim strongly suggests a derogatory and somewhat elitist appraisal of what may be termed 'mass cultural behaviour.' Nevertheless, his emphasis on the importance of achieving a sense of identification through participation in collective practices offers an important insight into the motivations behind the imitation which characterises so-called *mihiha* practices.

The *mihiha/maniakku* dichotomy raises the issue of whether or not Simmel’s argument that fashion acts as a medium through which the individual attempts to reconcile the tension between differentiation and conformity may be applied universally. Based on his own ethnographic research in Trinidad, Daniel Miller (1994) challenges Simmel’s assertion by arguing that, in his fieldsite:

*We have a highly normative form of fashion in which individuals are subsumed into convention, and we have opposed to that a highly individualistic and competitive sense of style* (1994:86).

However, Miller (1994) forgets to acknowledge the possibility that the pursuit of style, rather than constituting an individualistic project *in contrast with* the collective project of fashion, may, by remaining within a field of display, comparison and judgement, instead constitute a *subset* of fashion, or simply a manifestation of its most spectacular aspects. For Miller’s (1994) ‘style’ to have its desired effect, there must be common codes which others may use to ‘read’ it. In this sense, it becomes increasingly difficult to separate ‘style’ from ‘fashion’, let alone to construct these two notions as oppositional.

For this reason, the notions of *mihiha* and *maniakku* discussed above should not be seen as oppositional, but rather as constituting two poles between and around which notions of fashionability are
constructed. While it would be tempting to equate the former concept with a notion of conformity through adherence to a standardised fashion and the latter with a notion of differentiation through the pursuit of style, it may be more accurate to suggest that style is an aspect of fashion, constituting that element which allows for, and even encourages, experimentation within the parameters of an aesthetic code. My fieldwork in Osaka suggested that there were no grounds for suspecting that this argument was less applicable in late 1990s Japan as in Simmel’s Europe of the late nineteenth century.

In Amerika-mura, as noted in the ‘sensory journey’ in 4.4 above, people move in a slow, mesmeric shuffle, or sit alone or in small clusters, islands in the sea of young, fashionable people swarming around them. Between and around these movements and pauses, innumerable trajectories of an aesthetic gaze form an invisible yet acutely sensed ‘negative’. In such contexts, the gaze and the masses share a dialectical relationship. Rather than being detached from its object, the gaze shapes its very form, one depending upon the other for its existence. Young people in Amerika-mura experience varying levels of ‘comfort’ in the district, paralleling the extent to which they have shifted from a sense of ‘entrapment’ to a sense of ‘liberation’, manipulating this gaze rather than feeling constrained by it. It is at this level that self-perception on the miïhã/maniakkû continuum is continuously constructed and challenged. Furthermore, it is also in such contexts that Debord’s (1997) notion of ‘psychogeography’ (discussed in 8.3.1 above) is experienced, not only by ‘older’ visitors to the district, but (perhaps even more acutely) by the young people who simultaneously walk the street and the sutoriîto.

8.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the internal dynamics of the fashion project as it is played out on the streets of Amerika-mura. It explored the how the notion of the sutoriîto (discussed in Chapter 7 above) incorporates a dichotomy between conformity and differentiation, suggesting that it resulted in a spatial dynamic dominated by an aesthetic gaze. However, it also suggested that this dynamic was interpreted and engaged with in a variety of ways, ranging from eager participation to blase indifference. It also explored the notion of
fashion as a progressive personal project, narrated through the concepts of miiha and maniakku.

Chapter 9 below explores hip hop as a context through which many of the themes of the thesis come together. Although originally derived from cultural practices which developed in the United States during the late 1970s and early 1980s, hip hop is now deployed by a diverse range of individuals in a multitude of international contexts as a medium through which to construct unique individual identities. Encompassing practices as diverse as rapping, graffiti writing and break dancing, it has succeeded by incorporating and juxtaposing disparate elements and reconfiguring them as vehicles of both political expression and aesthetic creativity. In this way, it represents a context which encapsulates many of the paradoxes of modernity, including the simultaneous blurring of boundaries and the desire to construct and recuperate a unique sense of personal identity in a world of mass production and consumption. At the same time, hip hop has encountered a stylistic 'reappropriation', its aesthetic element presented, marketed and consumed as a fashion style. Chapter 9 explores hip hop through the medium of a selection of personal narratives and an examination of several contexts in Amerika-mura where it is used to construct and consolidate 'authentic' personal identities. It also discusses examples of media representations of hip hop and its association with Amerika-mura.
Plate 8.1: Mr Tatsuya Onoe taking photographs of Takayuki for the Street Jack magazine *sunappu* in Triangle Park in August 1997.

Plate 8.2: Close-up photographs of Takayuki’s footwear being taken during the above *sunappu*.
Plate 8.3:

Plate 8.4: Mr Sofue (l) and Mr Takahashi (r), the 'guerilla sunappu' team for Osaka-based sutoriito fasshon magazine Cazi-Cazi.

Plate 8.5: Mr Sofue (l) and Mr Takahashi (r) taking photographs for the Machi no me ('Eye on the street') feature in Cazi-Cazi magazine.
Part of the *Machi no me* ('Eye on the street') feature in the November 1997 edition of *Cazi-Cazi* (*Cazi-Cazi* 1997), including photographs from the 'guerilla sunappu' discussed in 8.2.2. The subject being photographed in Plate 8.5 above is seen in the right-hand centre photograph.
Plate 8.7: Tatsuya, holding open a copy of *Fruits* magazine with his photograph.
Plate 8.8: Tatsuya's photo in Fruits magazine (1997.3).
Plate 8.9: Senior high school students (l-r) Kenichirō, Masakazu, Yoshimi and Momoko sitting in front of the ‘fountain wall’ in newly-refurbished Triangle Park in late August 1997.
Plate 8.10: Yoshifumi (l) and Tadashi (r).
CHAPTER 9

HIP HOP AS LIFE AND STYLE

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Amerika-mura functions as a site for the mediation of discourses which attempt to reclaim a sense of authenticity in an environment of constant change. As was explored in Chapter 5 above, these include historical narratives of a purer, simpler and friendlier Amerika-mura. These also include, as discussed in Chapter 6 above, personal narratives and practices through which individuals construct identities around specialised tastes, private passions or a role as one of Mr Inoguchi’s koa (‘core’) individuals (noted in 6.2 above), linking and channelling multiple discourses. In the context of fashion, these also include attempts to construct a unique personal sutairu (‘style’). Paralleling these practices, but by no means independent from them, another set of discourses strives to play a role in defining Amerika-mura and shaping the way in which individuals interpret and engage with it, both physically and at the level of the imagination. These include the discourses of tourism (discussed in 3.5 above), urban planning (examined in 4.5.2 above) and the sutoriito (‘street’) as a space of ‘youthful fashionability’ (as discussed in Chapters 7 and 8 above).

As discussed in the Conclusion to the previous chapter, few contexts encapsulate the juxtaposition of discourses mediated through Amerika-mura more clearly than that of hip hop. The first section of this chapter presents an overview of the historical development of hip hop in Japan, while the second includes a series of narratives based on interviews with eight individuals, all of whom are now involved in hip hop-related practices in Amerika-mura. Through these narratives,
it is possible to gain an understanding of the diversity of pathways which individuals follow in their engagement with hip hop and Amerika-mura, and it will become clear that there is no 'natural' link between the two. My objective here was not to construct a definitive history of hip hop in the district, but rather to explore the diversity of individual and collective practices which helped to construct hip hop as a discourse of personal authenticity.

The third section further explores the association between hip hop and Amerika-mura, while the fourth introduces three hip hop 'moments', describing in detail several contexts in which this discourse is constructed and performed at various sites in and around the district. The fifth section includes an assessment of the links between hip hop and Amerika-mura, while the sixth section presents a series of examples in order to illustrate the ways in which the sutoriito fasshon and specialised hip hop media attempt to frame and exoticise aspects of this discourse. While the former group of publications tends to represent hip hop as a fashion style, emphasising its aesthetic component, the latter group instead presents hip hop as a way of life.

9.2 A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF HIP HOP IN JAPAN

This section provides an overview of the historical development of hip hop in Japan, as described by three observers. The first is an American academic who spent approximately twenty months between 1994 and 1997 conducting fieldwork related to the Tokyo hip hop scene for his doctoral thesis, later submitted to Yale University. His observations are drawn from an essay which summarises elements of his research findings. The second is a Japanese magazine which includes discussions of social issues and phenomena. The third is a hip hop dancer who introduces the Japanese hip hop scene on his personal website.

9.2.1 HIP HOP: IMITATION AND AUTHENTICITY

Ian Condry (2000) explores this theme in his essay, 'The social production of difference: imitation and authenticity in Japanese rap music.' He argues that the break-dancing movie *Wild Style* played a pioneering role in introducing the concept of hip hop to Japan, and describes how it was followed by a series of performances by
American dance groups in Tokyo discos. He notes that “although the ghetto origins were poorly understood by the audience, the toughness and the originality of the style clearly offered some of those present a challenging recreation and a way to show off” (2000:170).

Condry (2000) argues that while hip hop’s association with “black Americans from the ghetto” (2000:171) initially appealed to lower class Japanese males, it later grew to represent a medium through which young people in general could “set themselves apart from what they see as the country’s homogeneous mainstream” (2000:171). He suggests that in Japan, hip hop offers a platform from which to problematise and deconstruct the myth of cultural homogeneity promoted in the national discourse of identity, adding that “because of its association with black struggle, rap music has an authority that Japanese pop music lacks” (2000:175). Condry suggests that young Japanese are attracted to hip hop because it provides a context in which they can stage a generational protest against the values, prejudices and authority of their parents and teachers.

He nevertheless points out the continued ubiquity of imitation among followers of hip hop music and practices. Central to this phenomenon, which I allude to in 9.5.2 below, is a tendency to adopt aspects of a ‘black’ look, including dreadlocked hair, studio-tanned skin and woven beanies evoking a Rastafarian mood. Condry (2000) also notes that while older Japanese view local hip hop practices as “a simplistic adoration of anything American” (2000:174), young followers and specialised magazines tend to style hip hop as “‘black culture’” (2000:174). He points out that imitation itself is a subject of debate among hip hop fans, quoting a rap artist, MC Shiro, who claims that “We do not want to be black, although there are lots of Japanese kids that do; we love hip hop, the music” (2000:176).

Condry (2000) distinguishes between “party rap” (2000:176) and “underground hip hop” (2000:176), noting gender distinctions in their production and consumption. Citing the example of the 1995 hit song “Maicca” by rap outfit East End X (‘plus’) Yuri, he argues that the former genre is aimed at the female market, and includes songs with “light, funny lyrics that speak of themes from everyday life” (2000:177). The latter genre, by comparison, consists of songs which
are “more abstract, darker, and at times in opposition to mainstream Japanese society”, Condry noting groups such as King Giddra, Microphone Pager and Rhymester (2000:177). In the case of King Giddra, he argues that “for them, authentic hip hop must embody opposition to authority” (2000:179).

Condry (2000) also points out differences in the way in which hip hop music is promoted in Japan. While non-Japanese hip hop is found alongside Western musical genres in large record stores, he notes, Japanese-language hip hop is found in the Japanese music section. However, “in realms closer to the core of devoted hip-hop fans and musicians” (2000:174) such as specialised record stores, both Japanese and non-Japanese artists are grouped together. This practice suggests that hip hop music is consumed at two levels: firstly, as a mainstream musical genre, and secondly, as part of a global discourse mediated through networks of specialised sites, people and practices. In this way, it appears to parallel aspects of the ‘shallow’ and ‘deep’ concepts discussed in 6.2 above.

9.2.2 A HIP HOP TIMELINE: FROM IMPORT TO INCORPORATION

Quick Japan is a monthly magazine which includes cartoons, interviews and articles about cultural and artistic projects. In August 1997, it featured an interview with Japanese-language rap artist Rino, and also provided a timeline presenting key dates in the development of hip hop in Japan. Interestingly, it ignores the ‘party rap’ genre described by Condry (2000) above, concentrating on ‘underground hip hop’ as an ‘authentic’ set of practices. The article proposes that many Japanese were first exposed to hip hop culture through the US rap group Run DMC, who released their hit single ‘Walk this way’ in 1986. It further implies that the music video featuring the group wearing Adidas tracksuits had a major impact on the creation of an image of hip hop as a radical and progressive medium. In Reflecting black: African-American cultural criticism, Michael Dyson (1993) notes that in the US, Run DMC “is widely recognized as the progenitor of modern rap’s creative integration of social commentary, diverse musical elements, and uncompromising cultural identification” (1993:5). The Quick Japan article also notes the
release of the first Japanese-language rap song by the group Tiny Punks in the same year as the Run DMC single (1997:140).

The article describes how hip hop had a limited audience in Japan during the late 1980s, noting the overwhelming popularity of mainstream pop and rock artists (1997:140). Rap and disc jockey competitions began to be held in Japanese clubs from 1987, and the local rap label Major Force was established the following year (1997:140). The *Quick Japan* article describes how two developments helped to expand the hip hop audience in Japan and encourage the development of Japanese-language rap. The first was the debut of American group De La Soul in 1989, with its casual rap style (1997:140). This was at a time when Condry (2000) notes an increasing frequency of visits to Japan and concerts by US rap artists (2000:171). The second was the popularity of the weekly television programme, *Dansu Kōshien* (*Dance Kōshien*; Kōshien being a major baseball stadium in Kobe where the programme was filmed), in 1991. This programme featured young Japanese participating in a hip hop dance competition, and the *Quick Japan* article notes that it played a significant role in exposing elementary and junior high school students to hip hop (1997:141).

During the early 1990s, the article argues, Japanese-language rap entered a period of decline, which was rapidly reversed with the success of two songs in 1994, ‘*Konya wa bugii bakku*’ (lit. ‘Tonight is boogie back’) and ‘*DA YO NE*’ (lit. ‘That’s [right] isn’t it?’) (1997:141). These tracks introduced Japanese-language rap to a much wider audience, and the article notes that it even began to be sung at karaoke booths (1997:141). It notes that the following years were marked by greater popularisation of Japanese-language rap, describing how formerly “*andāguraundo* (‘underground’)” (1997:141) artists begin to release music on major labels (1997:141).

### 9.2.3 HIP HOP: THE DANCE SCENE

In his introduction to the hip hop dance scene in Japan, dancer Kōzō argues that dancing has played a central role, claiming that “dancing has a visual impact[,] so everyone can understand” (http://www.msu.edu/user/okumurak/japan/history.html; unless otherwise noted,
Kōzō traces the arrival of hip hop dancing to the movie *Flashdance* in 1983, followed by *Wild Style* (noted by Condry (2000) above), *Beat Street, Breakin’* and *Breakin’ 2*. He also notes visits by American break dancing ‘crews’ to Japan during the early-to-mid 1980s, arguing that “they came to Japan and planted the seeds of hip-hop dancing.”

Kōzō describes how the late 1980s and 1990s saw the emergence of a large number of Japanese hip hop dancing teams, their styles later characterised as ‘old school’. He explains that a ‘new school’ emerged in 1989-1990 with “New Jack Swing music”, noting artists such as Bobby Brown and MC Hammer. He points to the importance of a range of dance shows on Japanese television which helped to popularise these forms, such as “DADA LMD”, broadcast from 1989, which incorporated a dance lesson “introducing the latest trendy steps.” However, he emphasises the critical role played by the show *Dansu Kōshien, as noted by Condry (2000) and Quick Japan (1997)* above, claiming that “the show had a great impact on young people who began to dance.” Kōzō concludes his historical overview by arguing that the success of the above television shows incited a momentary fad, after which “many people stopped dancing.” However, he makes a distinction between these people and others who have maintained a long-term personal interest in hip hop dancing, suggesting that through the latter group, “street dancing became [a] real culture[,] not a trend.”

Kōzō also discusses the issue of imitation and authenticity in Japanese hip hop in his website presentation, arguing that Japanese hip hop fans still (1997) exhibited a tendency to imitate the styles and practices of black Americans as ‘authentic’ role models. He claims that this tendency “has kept Japanese hip hop culture from getting real.” He points again to the language barrier, arguing that the visible
aspects of hip hop (such as dance and fashion) are the easiest to adopt, at times rendering the local scene “superficial.”

Kōzō presents an interview with Japanese disc jockey Krush, who successfully built up an international following during the 1990s. In the context of this interview, taken from hip hop magazine Bang, Krush comments on the theme of imitation among Japanese hip hop fans, especially the practice (noted by Condry (2000) above) by which young Japanese hip hop fans sometimes tan their skin and get dreadlocks in order to look ‘black.’ He claims that:

> It’s only young people who do this because they care about the externals of hop-hop, not the internals. They think if you have the external [the look] that’s enough...Unless these kids perceive that they just can’t go around imitating and carbon copying these people [black rappers], the Japanese hip-hop scene is not going to grow (http://www.msu.edu/user/okumurak/japan/crush.html; parentheses in original version).

Nevertheless, Kōzō is hopeful about the creative potential of Japanese hip hop, arguing that fans are beginning to understand that it is a “lifestyle” rather than a fashion.

9.2.4 SUMMARY

As Condry’s (2000) essay, the Quick Japan (1997) article and dancer Kōzō’s website (http://www.msu.edu/user/okumurak/japan/history.html) show, hip hop was largely viewed as a ‘foreign’ element during the 1980s, with few Japanese dancers or rappers taken seriously. However, as discussed above, the 1990s witnessed four major developments. Firstly, Japanese-language rap began to be viewed as an authentic and credible element of a global ‘scene’ among Japanese consumers. Secondly, hip hop dancing became widely popularised among Japanese youth through increased media exposure and the provision of a vehicle through which ‘beginners’ could engage with this new and unfamiliar ‘imported’ practice. Thirdly, both developments led to the erosion of the ‘authentic=foreign’ versus ‘imitation=Japanese’ dichotomy. Fourthly, the discourse of hip hop fragmented on numerous levels into a collective and commercial aspect (typified by the popularity of ‘party rap’ and ‘hip hop fashion’) and a personal and anti-commercial
aspect (typified by ‘underground hip hop’, the continued existence of local hip hop dance groups, schools and events, and the notion, further explored below, of hip hop as a philosophy of life).

Styled as a centre of wakamono bunka (‘youth culture’), Amerika-mura acts as a key context in which this latter phenomenon is played out at the level of individual practice. While numerous retail outlets specialise in ‘hip hop fashion’, a series of individuals construct their own narratives of hip hop identity around a set of shared practices. Downplaying the role of fashion, their stories recall elements of the historical accounts of the ‘veterans’ (discussed in Chapter 5 above) and the trajectories of the individuals introduced in Chapter 6 above.

For these individuals, the project of personal ‘authenticity’ is not to be confined to the creation of a unique sutairu (‘style’) within the aesthetic context of fashion. Instead, they suggest, it must be constructed around a chūshinsen (‘central line’, ‘unchanging core’), as discussed in 6.2 above. As Condry (2000) notes in relation to those he groups under the category of “underground rappers” (2000:177), these are individuals who “tend to emphasise being true to who they are, regardless of whether it leads to pecuniary rewards” (2000:177). For each of the individuals presented in the next section, an engagement with the discourse of hip hop has led them on unique trajectories. However, all of these trajectories have taken them through and beyond physical sites in Amerika-mura, and all of their narratives share a sentiment of hip hop as chūshinsen.

9.3 ROUTES AND ROOTS: HIP HOP NARRATIVES

The following narratives demonstrate the multitude of trajectories followed by individuals in Amerika-mura in their engagements with hip hop. As will be seen, however, while each story necessarily differs in its details, all share certain similarities. Firstly, each individual’s interpretation of hip hop has played a significant role in the shaping of their personal sense of identity. Secondly, this interpretation has exerted a major influence on their physical movements towards, through and beyond the district. In this context, unlike the discourse of sutoriito fasshon explored in Chapters 7 and 8 above, the association with Amerika-mura itself is relatively weak. Instead, a series of temporary and permanent sites concentrated in
(but not confined to) the district operate as sites for the continuous construction of hip hop as a discourse of personal authenticity.

As in the case of the nostalgic discourse presented in Chapter 5 above, these narratives are constructed around notions of authenticity. However, whereas the historic accounts of early Amerika-mura are based around notions of spatial identity, the following stories are constructed around notions of personal identity. Rather than differentiating between an authentic past and a commercialised and corrupted present, these narratives differentiate between authentic hip hop practices and 'shallow' imitation. While rapping, dancing and graffiti art may be the most visible manifestations of such an affiliation, what is perhaps most important is less the practices themselves than the sense of 'authenticity' or 'being true to oneself' which they give to the actors, and the sense of common identification which is created and maintained between actors and audience.

The circumstances surrounding my initial contact with each of the individuals presented in this chapter ranged from chance encounters to arranged meetings. My first contact with hip hop in Amerika-mura came through my interview with Pakko (introduced in 8.3.3 above), a shop assistant who worked at the clothing store Beast at the back of the Times Square shopping area opposite Big Step, during my first fieldwork trip in May 1997. My next contact was not until August of that year, when I approached some hip hop dancers practicing outside the Parco Due complex (in the western part of Amerika-mura) one night. Two of these dancers were Kōji (introduced in 8.3.3 above) and Naoki, members of the dance team Force 1. My next contact came by chance in late August, when I overheard a customer in a convenience store asking the cashier to charge his purchases to the account held by Club Flatt, a nightclub where hip hop events were occasionally held. This was rap artist Akihito. Next came Shigechiyo, rapper with the group Desperado, whom I first found out about while flicking through a hip hop feature in the sutoriito fasshon magazine Fine Boys.

My contact with other individuals involved in hip hop in Amerika-mura came during my second fieldwork trip in early 1999, and resulted from my re-establishment of contact with Pakko and Kōji.
Pakko, by now working at hip hop clothing store The Edge, introduced me to fellow employee and rap artist Yukio, in addition to shop owner and rap dancer Masahito.

The following section explores the trajectories which each of these individuals followed (with the exception of Pakko), concentrating on their engagements with the two levels of hip hop discourse ('collective and commercial' versus 'personal and authentic') noted in 9.2.1 above. The examples also illustrate the role of Amerika-mura as 'front' and 'backstage' (as discussed in 5.2.2) acting both as a site for the consumption and display of hip hop as *sutoriito fasshon* and as a concentration of 'nodes' in the informal network of hip hop as a discourse of personal authenticity. At the same time, they demonstrate how hip hop can act as a vehicle through which to escape from 'mainstream' lifepaths, recalling earlier examples such as Yasutomi (introduced in 6.4.2 above), who gave up an engineering career to set up a *furugi* ('used clothing') store in Amerika-mura.

9.3.1 MR KŌJI AKAMA: SHOP ASSISTANT, SUN(1997), CULTURE COMPLEX(1999); RAP DANCER

Kōji (24; introduced in 8.3.3 and 9.3 above) originally came from a rural area in Shimane Prefecture in the far western corner of the main island of Honshū. He first became interested in hip hop music when he was in junior high-school (in the late 1980s) after hearing it on a jukebox at a bowling hall. He began practicing hip hop dancing alone in the school gym every day after class, and regards that time as his *mane* ('imitation') period. Telling his parents that he was going to get a company job, he left for Osaka at the age of fifteen. He knew that to be part of the hip hop scene, he had to be in a big city, and was familiar with the Osaka scene from several previous visits to the city. He quit his first office job after six months and started working at the Sun store in Amerika-mura. His parents’ reaction to his change of job was extremely negative. They wouldn’t let him come home for a year, and even hung up the phone when he called at first.

Kōji explained that it was at night when he really came alive. He worked at Sun from 11am to 8pm, ‘hanging out’ for night time, when he would typically gather with a few friends to drink. Later, they
would often go back to his place in nearby Sakuragawa, where they would listen to hip hop records they had bought and chat until late. He mentioned that he also liked soul music from the late 70s and early 80s by artists such as George Benson and Grover Washington Jr, and that he collected records from that period, typically spending 20,000 yen per month on four to ten records. He noted that he often bought records at Jellybean, Cisco and DMR, all three shops located in Amerika-mura.

Asked about the various ways that young people in Japan became interested in hip hop, Kōji claimed that there were generally three pathways which people followed. Explaining that while for some people “dansu kara hairu (lit. ‘enter[ed] through dancing’)”, he noted that others bought records and became disc jockeys, while some ‘entered’ the scene directly through rap itself. However, he added that “once you get into one of them, you become interested in the whole lot.” He also pointed to the connections between different musical styles, such as hip hop, jazz, reggae and blues, arguing that they were “black people’s music” and adding that “they are all connected.”

Kōji explained that there were “tons” of dance teams in Osaka, adding that “only a tiny fraction are found in Amerika-mura.” He divided the types of dance styles into hip hop, house and jazz. Dancer and shop owner Masahito (introduced in 9.3.5 below) confirmed that there were now (1999) approximately one hundred hip hop dance teams in Osaka, but added that this estimate included “people who just started dancing yesterday.” Kōji’s friend and dance partner Naoki (24; introduced in 9.5.1 below), who also taught hip hop dancing at a studio in Amerika-mura once a week (discussed in 9.5.3 below), explained that there were more than ten such studios throughout Osaka, of which only three were located in the district.

9.3.2 MR AKIHITO TERAOKA: EMPLOYEE, CLUB FLATT; RAP ARTIST

Akihito (22) explained that he had first visited Amerika-mura at the age of 16 as a first-year high-school student. He liked (hip hop) dancing, and came to the area “to buy street dance clothing”, having
first heard of the area from the magazine *Fine*. He became interested in hip hop at the age of fifteen (around 1990), recalling that until that time he had listened to the Rolling Stones. His first exposure to hip hop was through television, and he remembered that “I started to like it after watching MTV.” From around this period, he practiced dancing “on the side of the street” in his native Mino on the northern outskirts of Osaka, thinking it was “cool.” While practicing, he would meet people with a similar interest in hip hop who “taught me things I didn’t know.” He began visiting hip hop clubs from the age of sixteen. The first club he had been to was the now-defunct Pierot in Umeda in the Kita district, introduced in 3.4 above). At that time, he recalled, there were few such clubs in Osaka, although hip hop nights had also been held at clubs in and around Amerika-mura, including Sunday nights at QOO in nearby Namba and Friday nights at Club Antena (his spelling). He went to the former club until the age of twenty and the latter until the age of eighteen (when it closed down), although he didn’t go to clubs every week.

Akihito began rapping three years ago (around 1994), and he dates his transition from *miihā* to *maniakk*, (concepts discussed in 8.3.3 above) to this period, explaining that “I gradually changed from *miihā* to *maniakk*, when I started rapping... I bought a set of turntables”, and adding that “Until then I had been listening to CDs.” He started rapping “because I liked hip hop.” Rapping was much more difficult than he had first imagined, but he was motivated by the thought that “it would be great if someone heard my rapping and liked it.” He also noted his belief that that “hip-hop is music for everyone to enjoy together.” At first, Akihito practiced rapping at home, using his pair of turntables, mixer and microphone, but he would also often make up tapes at home containing instrumental versions of tracks and practice rapping over them in his car or even at McDonald’s using a Walkman.

Akihito started studying to be a customs officer at technical college after his graduation from high-school, however he lost interest around the time that he started rapping, and failed all of his exams. He would study at college during the day, and then practice rap at night. He also began making live appearances at Club Dawn in Umeda. Akihito’s first live performance as a rap artist was in September 1994
at an event called ‘Rap Noodle’ at Club Dawn, while he was still in his first year of senior high-school. He remembered feeling “very nervous” and recalled that “the lyrics would go out of my head.”

Persevering with ‘mainstream’ life for a short time after graduation from college, he worked for six months at a company which leased office equipment before quitting. “It was just too boring”, he explained. “The work too...I was doing the same thing every day”, he recalled. He moved to a general merchandising company in his native Mino, but was dissatisfied with that job too, as he had hoped that his work there would involve dealing in clothing. On days off from work, he would go to Amerika-mura to buy records at stores like Jellybean, Cisco, DMR and King Kong, and in 1996 became friendly with Shohei, who was working at Jellybean after leaving his position as manager of Club Flatt. While out drinking together in February 1997, Shohei offered to arrange work for him at the nightclub, and soon afterwards he left his job in Mino to work full-time there.

Akihito still (1997) regularly participates in live rap performances, appearing twice monthly at Club Flatt, and irregularly at other venues, including Club Dawn. Performances are often made at one-off events, and vary in frequency between three and ten times per month. Although on his first forays into rapping he was joined by a friend from senior high-school, he has been rapping since 1996 with another partner under the name Sun Road. This name is taken from a shopping mall in his native Mino. (At this point in the interview, he wrote in my notebook in English: “Sun-Road represent (sic) Ishibashi Station”). He now works at Club Flatt six nights a week from 9am to 3 or 5am, and swaps shifts with other staff in order to participate in events.

9.3.3 SHIGECHIYO: SHOP ASSISTANT, B-MATIC(1997); RAP ARTIST, DESPERADO(1997)

Shigechiyo (19) [Plate 9.1] had his first contact with hip hop during his first year of junior high-school (around 1991). At that time, there had been a programme on Japanese television (noted in 9.2.1 above) called Dansu Kōshien hosted by celebrity Takeshi Beat and featuring “street dance.” Shigechiyo explains that “I had listened to it [hip hop]
before that, but it was that programme that led me to buy it.” However, there were not many hip hop records available in Japan at that time, and he recalled that “I used to borrow CDs from CD rental stores and get information from various magazines...I think I was in the same position as a lot of people.” Nevertheless, he “sugoi hamatta (‘really got into it [hip-hop]’), and privately imported a set of turntables from overseas a year later while in his second year of junior high-school, responding to an advertisement in “a black music magazine from over there”. He remembered that at that time “it was half admiration [of overseas artists]”, meaning that his desire to create music himself was yet to become dominant, adding that “I wanted to have contact with that sort of stuff.”

Shigechiyo started practicing rap dancing in local roadways and parks, and remembered that “there were always kids of the same age [practicing] in the park. It was these people, and not his schoolmates, who he would practice with. He also started working as a disc jockey around this time, although he mentioned that “I never really practiced.” Shigechiyo’s parents did not try to discourage him from his interest in hip hop. He noted that “our family is really open [used English word]”, adding that “Everyone likes music, and my parents accepted it [hip hop] as music.”

By the time he entered high-school, his resolve had firmed. In an interview published in hip hop magazine Woofin (further discussed in 9.6.2 below), he remembered that

There was a feeling that I wanted to spend the rest of my life doing this...like, if I could make a living doing it, that would be great. As I did dancing and DJing, inside of me it was rap where the possibilities lay (Woofin 1997b:58).

Shigechiyo continued to listen to American rap music through his high school years, and started writing his own lyrics, also influenced by the early Japanese language rap music (‘J-rap’) of groups such as Microphone Pager and Rhymester. (Woofin 1997b) In his second year of senior high-school, he formed his first rap team, Dynamo, with a friend from the same class, Atsu. Later, he formed a new rap outfit, Desperado [Plate 9.2].
Shigechiyo’s first contact with Amerika-mura was around the same period as his first contact with hip hop, in the first year of junior high-school, and he first heard about the area from his elder sister. Coming alone on his first visit, he remembered that it was “a place you needed a certain amount of courage to come to” and that “it had a scary image.” He didn’t visit the area often in those days, as “I didn’t have any money, so couldn’t go shopping.” To buy hip hop music, he would go to Umeda, which was closer to his home in suburban Toyonaka. He remembered that “at that time, people who listened to hip hop were not so young”, and added that “the arrival of Japanese-language rap has led to [hip hop music] being appreciated by a really broad range of ages.”

Shigechiyo had been spending much more time in Amerika-mura since starting a part-time job at the clothing store B-Matic in May 1997, two months after its opening. The store was operated by the production team No Damage, comprising DJ Kensaw and DJ Tankō, and it was the latter who had invited him to work there. However, Shigechiyo emphasised that his job accounted for only one element of his activities, noting that “I/we have to make records, I/we have to do live performances [as Desperado].” Still living at home, he felt that it was difficult to make a living from rap in Japan, and added that his income from the shop was “just pocket-money.”

Shigechiyo was wary of the idea that Amerika-mura was the centre of the Osaka hip hop scene. He claimed that the link between Amerika-mura and hip hop was largely a media creation, and added that “according to the media, [Amerika-mura is the] centre [of hip hop], but my centre of hip hop is my house.” Apart from his work commitments at the B-Matic store in the district, Shigechiyo explained that he came to Amerika-mura “to buy records, to buy clothes, to get information, to see shows.”

9.3.4 MR YUKIO OKI: SHOP ASSISTANT, THE EDGE(1999); RAP ARTIST

Yukio (24) [Plate 9.3] had first heard about Amerika-mura from “a magazine” during his second year of junior high-school, but had “no interest” in the area at the time. He first visited the area with a friend around the time of his junior high-school graduation when he was
fifteen (around 1990). He recalled that his first impression had been: “Wow! Places like this really exist!”, and he remembered that “there were lots of different kinds of people.” He also agreed that it had been scary, explaining that “there were more koa (‘core’) people rather than ordinary people”, defining koa as “people who seem to be into something...music, fashion” and adding that they had “a different aura.”

Yukio’s first exposure to hip hop was around the age of sixteen or seventeen, when he saw the hip hop dance programme Dansu Kōshien on television (noted in 9.2.1 and 9.3.3 above). He remembered that he saw it and was “yarareta (‘transformed’)”, thinking the performers were really “kakkō-ii (‘cool”).” He added, laughingly, that he also thought “if I could do this, I could pick up lots of girls, couldn’t I?” He began practicing rap dancing by himself at home for about a year, later attending a dance studio from his second year of senior high-school. Around this time (when he was aged seventeen to eighteen), he also worked at a clothing store in the Brutus building in the centre of Amerika-mura. He formed a dance team with four friends whom he had met at nightclubs, and began performing at clubs such as Club Dawn (in Umeda), Donflex and Club Gross (both in Amerika-mura) under the name B-Nuts. He remembered that “four years ago [1995], there weren’t rap events like there are now.” The team stayed together for a year or so, and Yukio mentioned that one of the former members was now in New York, while another was now working as a rap artist and promoter in Tokyo under the name Yosutebito (meaning ‘hermit’; lit. ‘someone who has left the world behind’). Yukio has continued to appear at various events as a freestyle rap artist.

Yukio argued that although there was a concentration of hip hop record shops and clothing shops in Amerika-mura, “It’s not a case of you having to be here.” He added that “You can [be part of it] anywhere you go, kimochi sae areba (‘as long as you have the feeling’).” However, he admitted that “the number of koa (‘core’) people is decreasing.”
9.3.5 MR MASAHITO YASUDA: CO-MANAGER, COLORS; RAP DANCER

Masahito (29) had his first encounter with hip hop fifteen years ago (approximately 1984), when he saw the movie *Breakdance* (noted in 9.2 above). He remembered thinking “‘What’s this all about?, ‘I didn’t know these kinds of moves existed’”, and added that the movie had made “quite an impression” on him. He began practicing rap dancing by himself during his second year of junior high school, studying and copying the moves using video tapes. At that time, he was not yet old enough to enter nightclubs. Some of his classmates practiced with him, but “they all gave up...for various reasons.”

Around the time of his graduation from junior high school, Masahito began going to the Navio Building in Umeda to watch people breakdancing in the nearby mall. He recalled that they used to practice during the day on Sundays, as the mall was closed at night. At that time, he lived in Umeda, moving to Miyakojima (approximately five kilometres northeast of Umeda) in his third year of senior high school. Watching the breakdancers, he thought to himself, “I can do this too”, and continued practicing “all the way” at home, despite the doubts expressed by other members of his family, who would occasionally see him and ask: “‘Are you all right?’” Much later, in 1996, he finally won the support of his parents when he invited them to see him perform at a huge event in Tokyo, featuring famous Japanese musicians such as Komura Tetsuya, Amuro Namie and Globe, and drawing an audience of 70 000.

During his first year of university, he recalled that he “only had fun” (i.e. did not study). Approximately ten years ago (around 1989), he performed live for the first time, working as an in-house dancer at Club Pierrot in Umeda for approximately one year. He remembered that there had been a weekly Showtime featuring a team of six or seven dancers, initially performing as Too Funky, a name chosen by a *sempai* (‘senior colleague’) of his known as Wild Cherry. Masahito “immediately changed [the name] to Colors”, named after the complex within which Pierrot was located.
Colors has undergone a number of personnel changes over the years, and Masahito is the only member who has been involved continuously since the team’s inception. He explained that the group now (1999) included two members, Masahito (under the stage name Jahma), and his friend Leo. He explained that Colors had performed “countless times” “all over the place” in Osaka, Tokyo, Kobe and in provincial areas. The group had has been involved in the instruction of a large number of students, and Masahito explained that he still conducted classes at the EN Studio (in the same building as Taiki’s ‘Satanic store’, discussed in 6.3.2 above) every Wednesday evening from 7.30. He explained that he had been teaching for the past two years, adding that he had experienced a rough patch when the promoter who had handled Colors was arrested on fraud charges two years ago, and the group abruptly lost its source of income. The members of the team ended up in various places, Masahito working on construction sites for a year or so.

Masahito’s shop, also named Colors, opened in September 1998, and occupied the first floor of the Naughty Building, directly above The Edge (where Yukio, introduced in 9.3.4 above, worked) and below the restaurant Locals Only. Masahito and his wife Yuki [Plate 9.4] had chosen to locate their store in Amerika-mura after walking past the Naughty Building one evening on their way to Club Splash and noticing a ‘For Lease’ sign, their story recalling aspects of Ms Higiri’s narrative of her Loop cafe (discussed in 5.2.1 above). Masahito already knew Yukio (introduced in 9.3.4 above), as he had previously been a member of the Colors dance team, and he introduced Masahito to the Naughty Building landlord. Soon, it was arranged that Masahito and Yuki would lease the vacant floor in the building, and the new store was launched. The couple travelled together to New York to source stock, opening Colors only three days after their return to Japan. They personally designed the layout and were responsible for decorating the interior and constructing all fittings, the completed store representing the accomplishment of a dream they had both had since beginning to date each other approximately five years previously (around 1994).

Masahito explained that he travelled to the New York area (including New Jersey and Newark) every two months, staying there for
approximately one week on each visit. He added that although his main objective was to buy stock for the shop, each trip also including an “asobi (‘fun’)” component. He noted that he visited “shops that people like [soul singer] Lauren Hill often go to.” Masahito also claimed that his own dance skills opened doors for him in sourcing new suppliers, explaining that it was not uncommon for a supplier to agree to trade with him after watching an impromptu demonstration of his dancing abilities.

9.4 A MULTI-LAYERED DISCOURSE

The above accounts problematise the notion of the United States as the ‘core’ of hip hop culture to be contrasted with ‘peripheral’ places such as Amerika-mura. Each person’s engagement with the discourse of hip hop culture mimics the way that hip hop borrows, mixes and matches a multitude of elements produced in a variety of physical locations around the globe, a tendency described by American rapper Harry Allen as “massively hypertextual” (Wired 1995). At the level of individual engagement with hip hop culture, absolute and clear-cut distinctions between core and periphery become highly problematic as each person moves through their own personal geography of hip hop.

While the centre of Shigechiyo’s (9.3.3) hip hop world was the home where he practiced rapping, his affiliation with hip hop culture took him to the ‘b-boy’ clothing shop in Amerika-mura where he worked, and across Osaka and to other parts of Japan in order to perform. While Kōji (9.3.1) began his engagement with hip hop through the media while living in a rural area far from the bright lights and clubs of Osaka, his geography of hip hop now (1999) included the places where he practiced dancing, the club where he organised a monthly hip hop event (discussed in 9.5.2 below), the shops where he bought hip hop records, the bar where he met his friends, and the home where he invited them to listen to and talk about the latest hip hop releases.

Unlike Kōji, Akihito (9.3.2) channelled his interest in hip hop through his identification with his hometown, claiming to ‘represent’ Ishibashi station in his native Minō. However, his geography of hip hop included the club where he worked on the periphery of Amerika-mura and the other venues around Osaka where he performed rap. In Masahito’s (9.3.5) case, it included the clothing shop where he
worked, the venues inside and outside Amerika-mura where he performed as part of the dance team Colors, and the shops in New York where he sourced stock.

All of the above individuals engaged with hip hop and Amerika-mura along unique personal trajectories. What all shared, as noted above, were a desire to construct an authentic personal identity around their interpretations of hip hop. The following section examines theoretical approaches to the notion of hip hop as a unifying and authenticating discourse.

9.4.1 THEORETICAL APPROACHES

The discourse of hip hop has also inspired the development of a variety of theoretical approaches in the fields of anthropology and cultural studies. These have tended to exhibit similar tendencies to broader debates surrounding the notions of 'culture' in anthropology and 'society' in sociology (as discussed in Chapter 1 above). While certain authors have styled hip hop as a 'cultural essence', others have concentrated on its role as a site of 'resistance' to mainstream norms and values. In his exploration of the Sydney hip hop scene, Ian Maxwell (1997) claims that the hip hop notion of 'representing' (as evidenced in the case of Akihito, introduced in 9.3.2 above) "claims for itself a full positivity, an 'authentic' culture that exists for and of itself, not as a subset of another, parent culture" (1997:52). Maxwell (1997) argues that for those active in the scene, hip hop "exists as a cultural essence, preceding, cohering and structuring these key activities [writing, rapping and breaking] and the community that is constellated around them" (1997:52).

However, what is important here is not the argument about whether or not such an essence exists, but to what extent a sense of a shared 'spirit' or community motivates, underlies and links people, practices, objects, styles and places. While Shigechiyo (9.3.3) spoke in almost religious tones about the sense of meaning and direction which hip hop culture had given him, Kōji (9.3.1) clearly revelled in his role of bringing together followers in a monthly celebration of hip hop culture (discussed in 9.5.2 below). In order to gain a deeper sense of the specific sites and practices through which this notion of hip hop as
a unifying and authenticating discourse is constructed, the following section presents a series of 'hip hop moments.' These illustrate a series of nodes in the trajectory taken by Kōji (9.3.1) in the construction of his personal 'topography of hip hop.'

9.5 HIP HOP MOMENTS

The following section examines three 'moments', contexts in which the discourse of hip hop is constructed through specific practices at sites in and around Amerika-mura. Each of these 'moments' includes common actors and common practices, yet highlights the importance of specific and often temporary sites, rather than the construct of Amerika-mura as a whole in the construction of 'authentic' personal identities. The 'moments' are presented in chronological order, beginning with my discovery of a practice session for an upcoming hip hop event, continuing to a sensory evocation of the event itself, and later moving to a dance studio where one of the performers conducts regular weekly dance lessons for newcomers to the scene.

9.5.1 HIP HOP MOMENTS I: THE PRACTICE SESSION

Walking around Amerika-mura during my first fieldwork trip in 1997, it was easy to recognise numerous examples of hip hop as fashion on the streets of the district (as discussed further in 9.6 below). However, it was much more difficult to identify examples of performative or narrative practices, and the first case I discovered was in August 1997. Since moving to Amerika-mura in mid-April of that year, I had occasionally noticed groups of young men practicing rap dancing in the evenings outside the Brutus building near Triangle Park (discussed in 4.5.1 above) and the Parco Due complex in the northern part of Amerika-mura. Feeling slightly uncomfortable with the idea of talking to them, I walked by many times before finally mustering the 'courage' to talk to a group outside Parco Due around 9.30pm one Friday evening in early August 1997. Upon introducing myself to one of the four dancers, he immediately called another dancer, who appeared interested in talking to me. This was Kōji (introduced in 9.3.1 above), who was also the organiser of one of Osaka's regular hip hop events, Big Bang (discussed in 9.5.2 below), held on the first Sunday of every month at Club Gross in the southern
part of Amerika-mura. The dancers were practicing for the larger-than-normal 20th Big Bang to be held two days later.

Kōji explained that he and friend Naoki were the two members of the hip hop dance team Force 1, its name taken from a type of Nike sneaker, and that they would be performing at Big Bang [Plate 9.5] with the other two dancers, whose team name was Glow. He said that Force 1 had been established about a year ago (around late 1996), and that they appeared at about ten events each year at clubs such as Gross and Corn. He added that they practiced for about two weeks before each event in the area in front of King Kong record shop (Parco Due), and that they usually practiced for two-and-a-half hours, starting around 9pm. He characterised their style of dancing as “New York rap-influenced.” Kōji also commented that the people who practiced hip hop dancing in front of the Brutus building were into “Old School hip hop”, referring to the pre-1990 way of dressing and dancing predominant until the arrival of the group Run DMC (noted in 9.2 above). Asked whether there were any other kinds of dance teams in Osaka, he replied that “there are only hip hop dance teams”. Visiting Kōji, Naoki and friends during a subsequent practice session in a quiet backstreet of Horie (located immediately to the west of Amerika-mura) [Plates 9.6, 9.7], I asked them how they decided which team had the right to practice in which area, to which Naoki replied it was “free choice”, agreeing with my suggestion that the first people to get to a space could use it. He further explained that Kōji had wanted to move their practice area to this new location in Horie for a while. The reason was that the other location in front of Parco Due was in a busy area and friends often dropped by, whereas “it’s easier to concentrate here.” Asked if there were any complaints about them practicing at the new location, Kōji replied that there were not, and agreed with my comment that “no one will say anything if the music is not too loud.” (The music was playing at quite a low volume).

9.5.2: HIP HOP MOMENTS II: THE CLUB EVENT

I attended the 20th, 21st and 22nd Big Bang events (for which Kōji and Naoki had been practicing) at Club Gross, however decided not to conduct any interviews with other participants or patrons in order
to sample the atmosphere of the event in a relatively natural and spontaneous way. Club Gross is unique among the clubs in Amerikamura in that it is only visible at night. During the daytime, the building in which it is located operates as the clothing outlet Casado Mart. At night, the central section of the shop becomes the entranceway to the nightclub. After paying at a counter placed near the opening to the street, patrons venture down a dark narrow stairway to the first level of the club. This section, dark and smoky and containing a dancefloor and disc jockey booth, is where the Big Bang performances are held. The stairway continues down to a tiny bar and lounge area two floors below street level with tables and chairs. Performers often spend time here with friends before and after the show.

I arrived at the club each time between 11 pm and midnight. Wanting to appear inconspicuous yet relatively fashionable, I wore a T-shirt and/or loose shirt, Levis and black Converse sneakers, a similar outfit to that which I wore for on-the-street interviews. Descending the dark staircase on my first visit, I felt like I was entering a different and quite unfamiliar kind of space, excitement mingled with a faint sense of trepidation. The reaction to my arrival by other patrons varied from complete indifference among the majority to friendly surprise and genuine appreciation by Kōji and his friends that I had fulfilled my promise to attend the event. The dancefloor was half-filled with a relatively even assortment of male and female patrons, many of whom were dancing alone. I noticed that while most male patrons wore distinctly ‘hip hop’ clothing (loose, baggy T-shirts and pants, reggae-influenced woollen beanies), the female patrons tended to dress much as they might for a night out at a ‘conventional’ (i.e. non-hip hop) event. Kōji told me that this was in imitation of blacks in New York (the acknowledged birthplace of hip hop culture), where males wore so-called hip hop gear while females dressed up in a conventional manner.

I moved between the dancefloor and the lower level during my three visits to Big Bang, on occasions chatting with co-manager Ken when I found him working at the bar. At some point between 11.30pm and 12.30am, the word would go around that the show was about to begin. (I would usually get this information directly from Kōji or Naoki).
The host of the show would grab a microphone and ask everyone to sit down. Most of the patrons would sit around the walls of the dancefloor, while some stood near the doorway to watch. The dancers and rappers who were to perform also sat among the audience, rising from the crowd when they were called to perform by the host.

The 20th Big Bang featured a larger-than-normal number of performers, including five disc jockeys, over seventeen dance teams, eleven rappers or rap teams (including Shigechiyo’s Desperado, noted in 9.3.3 above), four reggae dancers and two graffiti artists. The second and third events I attended were much smaller in scale, usually featuring two or three disc jockeys, five or six dance teams and two or three rappers or rap teams. Performances typically lasted between three and five minutes, linked together in a show lasting approximately twenty-five to thirty minutes. While the 20th Big Bang featured two shows throughout the evening, the second (21st) and third (22nd) Big Bangs I attended each included only one show.

Although most of the dancers and all of the rappers were male, there were two or three all-female dance teams at each event, and I saw at least one performance by a combined male-female dance team. Male dancers tended to wear hip-hop style baggy clothing, with little attempt at coordinating appearance among the members of each team, whereas some female dance teams wore identical or similar outfits either in hip hop or ‘conventional’ nightclub style.

Audiences at all three events were extremely enthusiastic, shouting out encouragement after particularly impressive moves and cheering loudly at the end of each performance as the performers returned to sit down among them to watch the rest of the show. The atmosphere was lively and it was clear that most of those present were enjoying the music and show, and generally having a great time. After the last performance, the host thanked all performers, the disc jockey returned to playing a mixture of hip hop tunes as he had before the show, and patrons stood up to dance or walked down to the bar for drinks. Most of the performers went to the bar.
9.5.3 HIP HOP MOMENTS III: THE DANCE LESSON

After a separate interview with Kōji, Naoki and some of their friends at Locals Only, a restaurant in the Naughty Building above Colors (9.3.5) and The Edge (9.3.4), I walked with the group to EN Studio in the southern part of Amerika-mura to observe part of Naoki’s weekly hip hop dancing lesson.

Naoki explained that he had moved his classes from another location in Jūsō (near Umeda, in the Kita district introduced in 3.4 above) in July 1998, and that he now taught one class every Friday night from 10pm until 11.30pm. He had found out about EN Studio from Kōji, who used to practice there, and explained that it was cheaper to hire than other locations (2000 yen, or approximately A$30 (2002) per hour). He added that there were ten students in the class, evenly divided between males and females and aged in their teens and twenties, and mentioned that he charged 2000 yen per lesson or 7000 yen (A$105 (2002)) per month (i.e. four lessons). (Some students paid each time, while others paid on a monthly basis). Both Kōji and Naoki emphasised the difficulty in learning hip hop or rap dancing. While Kōji claimed that “it’s not something you can pick up right away”, adding that “it takes at least half a year [to learn]”, Naoki countered that “even six months is not enough.” He added that “everyone starts with mita me de (‘first appearances’)...later they realise how deep it is”, noting that “If it wasn’t for that, they probably couldn’t continue.”

The atmosphere was relaxed although subdued as the students trickled in and began warming up before the lesson. Another of Kōji’s friends had joined us at Locals Only, and now began selecting and playing some records on the twin turntable at the entrance to the studio, occasionally ‘scratching’ them for effect. These records would form the background music for the dance lesson. It was only when the lesson began that I realised that Kōji was taking lessons as a student in Naoki’s class, whereas I had previously considered Naoki as Kōji’s kōhai (‘junior’) in the dance crew. During the lesson, Naoki occasionally called out instructions in a friendly though direct tone, stopping now and then to offer advice or comments to one of the students or the group as a whole. On one occasion, he told a male
student that “you have short arms, so you’ll have to work harder to compensate for that, but you will be OK.” On the whole, the group seemed well-coordinated, and had little difficulty in following Naoki’s instructions. They also appeared to be enjoying themselves. Although I was able to take several photographs during the lesson after obtaining Naoki’s permission [Plate 9.8], I felt that it would be too intrusive to attempt to interview the students directly. I also felt that they would not necessarily feel free to speak openly about their motivations for taking the class in Naoki’s presence.

9.6 THE MEDIA AND HIP HOP

The following section explores aspects of the relationship between media representations of hip hop and the practices and narratives of individuals such as those introduced above. It also examines the context where hip hop as a discourse of personal authenticity meets and overlaps with that of the sutoriito (‘street’; discussed in Chapters 7 and 8 above) as a space of youthful fashionability.

Media engagement with hip hop in Japan operates on at least two levels. The first, represented by specialised hip hop magazines, actively attempts to construct and consolidate a ‘subcultural’ space, and present the magazine as an authentic inside guide to specialised information about musicians, music releases and events. In this context, the narrative and performative aspects of hip hop are emphasised, although the aesthetic element is by no means overlooked. Probably the most successful example of this genre of publication is the monthly magazine Front. The second, represented by the sutoriito fashhon magazines, attempts rather to position hip hop as one of a series of fashion styles from which young readers may choose in constructing their own ‘look’. Hip hop style is commonly termed ‘b-boy’, borrowing a term first used to refer to rap dancers during the formative period of hip hop culture in New York in the early 1980s. In this context, the aesthetic aspect of hip hop is emphasised, and information about music or events is rarely included. Launched in 1997, Woofin (discussed in 9.6.2 below) is a new type of publication which engages with hip hop on both levels.
All of the specialised hip hop magazines, like the majority of general sutoriito fasshon magazines, are produced in Tokyo. However, they are distributed widely throughout the country, and commonly feature information on events, performers, and retail outlets handling hip hop music and ‘b-boy’ style clothing [Plates 9.9, 9.10, 9.11] in various cities. Before considering examples of the ways in which areas such as Amerika-mura are presented in such contexts, it may be useful to firstly explore one or two more general articles which illustrate the different ways in which the sutoriito fasshon magazines and hip hop magazines engage with the discourse of hip hop.

9.6.1 HIP HOP AS STYLE: THE SUTORIITO FASSHON MEDIA

The first example comes from the September 1997 edition of Street Jack, a relative newcomer to the sutoriito fasshon magazine market. Based on a nationwide survey of three thousand people who participated in its sunappu (‘on-the-street photographic shoots’; discussed in 8.2.1 above), it presents a breakdown of the most popular ‘styles’, and features photographs of young people dressed in each style (Street Jack 1997a). Hip hop-style clothing is introduced using the terms “B-kei (‘B-style’)” (1997a) or “B-boy-kei (‘B-boy-style’).” Furthermore, in a somewhat extreme example of categorisation, the b-boy style is further divided into micro-styles according to the footwear of each of the participants photographed, including “Fila-kei (‘Fila-style’), “butsu-kei (‘boots-style’), “Nike Hitec-kei (‘Nike Hitec-style’)” and “Nike Lowtec-kei (‘Nike Lowtec-style’)” (1997a).

The commentary presented alongside the photographs explains that b-boy style quickly became the face of the sutoriito when it broke onto the scene a few years ago. Since then, the heat has died down, but it still holds its place as a representative of sutoriito sutairu (‘street style’) (1997a:25).

The feature then informs readers that “a loose fit based on the original American hip hop-style is the foundation” (1997a:25) of this style, and includes suggestions for achieving the right ‘look’, such as lengthening the straps on one’s backpack, wearing a silver or leather bracelet which matches one’s watch, and buying pants that hang loose...
around the hips. There is no mention here of the origin of the b-boy style, or of the practices associated with it in the hip hop discourse, such as breakdancing, rapping and disc jockeying. Here, the aesthetic element of hip hop space is appropriated in isolation as 'b-boy style' to become one of a series of fashion options from which magazine readers are encouraged to choose. It is at such points that hip hop space and sutoriito space intersect.

The second issue of *Fine Max*, published in August 1997, demonstrates a strategy similar to that used by Boon in the *Kakkoman* mook (*Boon* 1997b) discussed in 7.3.4 above. In this case, it is the concept of the ‘b-boy’ itself, rather than the *kakkoman* which is employed to simultaneously create a sense of unity among readers and encourage stylistic differentiation within the framework thus constructed. It includes a photographic feature titled ‘Yo! B-Boy sunappu’ (*Fine Max* 1997), which begins with the following text:

> Wadaaa! [expression of excitement] We travelled from Hokkaido in the north to Hakata in the south taking *sunappu* ('on-the-street photographs') to get a real feel for the unity of b-boys spread around the country. Check out these real shit shots. Check out the *sunappu* of the New York b-boys too (1997:138).

The first part of the article is devoted to a guide to four hip hop ‘looks’ (‘East Coast’, ‘West Coast’, ‘old school’ and ‘dancer’), accompanied by cartoon drawings, captions and commentary. However, the bulk of the feature is devoted to the *sunappu* noted above, taken in Tokyo, Osaka, Sapporo, Fukuoka and New York. Spread over two pages, the Osaka section includes 27 photographs of ‘b-boys’ and two small sections introducing the shops B-Matic (introduced in 9.3.3 above) and Five Star Megastore, the first located in Amerika-mura and the second found in nearby Horie. In the introduction to this section, the connection between Amerika-mura and the local hip hop scene is emphasised:

> To meet Osaka b-boys, we wandered around Amerika-mura. While there was an overpowering abundance of Harajuku-kei (‘Harajuku-style’) or Ame-mura-kei (‘Amerika-mura-style’) fashion, we were able to kyatchi (‘catch’) Osaka b-boys in front of Cisco, Tower Records and b-boy shops. There is a belief that Osaka fashion is ‘heavy’, but it’s no different from Tokyo, with lots of o-share-kei

322
What is interesting to note here is the way in which the people and the style of clothing which they are wearing are blurred under the rubric of ‘b-boy.’ Unlike other fashion styles such as modo (‘mode’) or Ame-kaji (‘American casual’), an association between fashion and wearer is created in a way not even found in the use of the term panku (‘punk’) in the sutoriito fa ss hion magazines. In the latter case, panku-kei (‘punk style’) only denotes a style or look, and there are no references to ‘groups of punks’ or ‘ punks hanging out’ in certain areas.

As with Boon’s concept of the kakkoman (7.3.4), the implication here is that ‘b-boy’ is not only a fashion style, but a type of person, all of whom share a particular kind of lifestyle or sense of taste, and who show their ‘individuality’ not through the type of clothes which they wear, but rather the way in which they choose and coordinate items within the ‘b-boy’ style. Captions beside each photograph are mainly filled with information on the clothing worn, with occasional comments from an anonymous karisuma (‘charisma’) figure within the magazine staff. These include judgmental remarks similar to those found in the Get On sunappu feature (discussed in 8.2.1 above), such as “it’s good the way he has used Timberland boots that are not the standard type” (Fine Max 1997:142), or “overall, he’s put together a stylish look, and his pose is cool too” (1997:143).

Names and ages of each individual are provided, with a selection of their comments, including “Let’s study more about the history of hip hop”, “I’m recharging at the moment, but I’ll explode soon. I am Shinnoji!”, and “I’m working at a shop called Samdra in Amerikamura, so come and visit, everyone!” (1997:142) In the photographs, many of those featured are adopting ‘b-boy’ style poses commonly used by rap artists, principally by bending their knees slightly, stretching out one or both arms and curling the fingers. While each pose is different, the practice is so common in the photographs that it is arguably reduced to the level of meaningless parody or imitation, becoming just one more accessory in the construction of a purely aesthetic ‘b-boy’ style.
The final section of the *Fine Max* feature includes twenty-six photographs of people taken on the streets of New York, which is described as “the *mein sutoriito* (‘main street’) of hip hop” and “the source and sanctuary of the hip hop vibe” (1997:147). The introduction continues:

*Sutoriito wo aruku hezzu* (‘the ‘heads’ walking the street’) lead a hip hop lifestyle, dressing up in rough, tough gear and swaying their bodies to the phat hip hop beat. *Kore ga riaru na sutoriito raifu no shotto da!* (‘These are shots of real street life!’) (1997:147)

The use of English loanwords such as *riaru* (‘real’) and *sutoriito* (‘street’) are common to many such features in *sutoriito fasshon* magazines (as noted in 7.3 above), however the emphasis here is on constructing an image of New York as the home of hip hop culture and the site where it is found in its purest and most authentic form. There is also a claim that, in New York above all, hip hop is no mere fashion style but a way of life. Hip hop slang, such as ‘heads’ and ‘phat’ are used to further promote an image of exotic style.

However, a more important aspect of this type of feature, and one which is common to similar *sunappu* features in other *sutoriito fasshon* magazines, is the connection made between Japanese cities and certain overseas cities as sharing a symbolic space of youthful fashionability. Here, the logic of *sutoriito* space is being used to appropriate the aesthetic element of the hip hop discourse, simultaneously linking certain physical locations through the medium of ‘b-boy’ fashion. However, in this case, places such as Amerikamura and Hakata in Kyūshū are not only connected to each other, but linked to a ‘core site’ (New York) which may be used as a reference in judging the ‘authenticity’ of the ‘look’ presented by Japanese ‘b-boys’. Interestingly, however, New York is included at the end of the feature and given no more space than Osaka, for example, suggesting that the magazine is attempting to present ‘b-boy’ style as an aesthetic practice which is not remote from, but readily accessible to, its Japanese readers. The use of ‘ordinary people on the street’ rather than professional models is also a common feature of *sutoriito fasshon* magazines, here reinforcing the message that “these are people just like you. You can be a b-boy too if you follow their lead, wear b-boy fashion and hang out in trendy urban areas.”
9.6.2 HIP HOP AS LIFE: THE SPECIALISED MEDIA

The first issue of the specialist hip hop magazine *Woo.fin* [Plate 9.12], published in June 1997, adopts a more detailed and sophisticated approach, using Japanese models to illustrate aesthetic, performative and narrative aspects of hip hop space. Labelled "The complete strategy guide for super b-boy style" (*Woo.fin* 1997a:22), the feature spans several sections scattered throughout the issue. Straddling the twin roles of textbook and product guide, it begins by assuring readers that "if you read this, you'll be able to completely master the '97 b-boy style" (1997a:22). Each major photograph is accompanied by advice in English, including "Don't forget to work out, Make big muscle" (sic) (1997a:25), "Don't forget to escort. Make sweet situation" (sic) (1997a:26), "Don't forget to hung out with your sweet honey" (sic) (1997a:29) and "Don't forget to clean up your shoes" (1997a:22). Later in the issue, hip hop is introduced as an element of "deep and wide black culture" (1997a:72). The following commentary appeals to the reader's sense of curiosity:

What sort of things do they [i.e. black Americans] pay attention to in their private lives? What kind of things do they use? Here we introduce secret goods which no one knows about. Study them right down to the last detail! This is the real b-boy style! (1997a:72)

Readers are then taught, through step-by-step pictures, the art of cigar smoking, how to maintain their dreadlocks, and how to keep their sneakers clean, each section accompanied by relevant product information [Plate 9.13]. Here, the magazine is attempting to claim that hip hop culture incorporates a core body of secret knowledge to which it has gained access, and concerning which it is an unquestionable authority. Further, hip hop is not only presented as one of a collection of aesthetic styles to be sampled and enjoyed, but also as a set of practices which collectively embody a particular lifestyle or taste. However, the majority of such practices concentrate on the consumption and care of commercial products.

The role of places such as Amerika-mura becomes apparent in a feature near the end of the above issue, which introduces 'b-shops' in Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto and Kobe (*Woo.fin* 1997a:75). All nine of the Osaka stores featured are located in Amerika-mura. Here, the tag 'b' is attached to retail venues in an attempt to create or reinforce an
association between them and the wider discourse of hip hop. However, the parallel use of the term ‘b-boy style’ in the general *sutoriito fashhon* magazines has meant that such a tag may instead reinforce the association between these shops and hip hop fashion, rather than narrative or performative elements such as rap dancing. Adopting a format common to *sutoriito fashhon* magazines, the feature includes photographs of each shop’s products and staff, in addition to a location map. An interesting additional feature is the inclusion of information on what music is played in each store, under the title “heavy rotation in-store” (1997a:75-83) Curiously, none of the maps for the nine ‘b-shops’ in Osaka include the name ‘Amerika-mura’, preferring to provide street names and landmarks such as the Big Step shopping complex (discussed in 4.5.2 above) and Triangle Park (discussed in 4.5.1 above) to orient prospective customers.

The second issue of *Woofin*, published in August 1997, includes a black-and-white feature called “Osaka diggin’ guide and mini event report” (*Woofin* 1997b). This article begins by explaining that

we welcome as this month’s navigator DJ Tatsu of the unit Gunn Production. [The shops he introduces to us here] are selected from among Osaka’s ‘record shop jungle’ and are those which are *honshi muki-na shoppu* (‘suited to this magazine [and its readers]’). All are unique stores and worth making the journey to visit, even from other regions (1997b:63).

In a format again similar to the *sutoriito fashhon* magazine, a local *karisuma* (‘charisma’) character (in this case, disc jockey DJ Tatsu) is presented as a type of cultural intermediary, and his assistance is sought in ‘navigating’ around one aspect of an urban ‘jungle.’ The article features six local record stores, four of which are located in or very near to Amerika-mura. In a similar fashion to the previous issue’s feature on ‘b-shops’, no mention of the district’s name is made on the accompanying maps (1997b).

This practice may be a response to the image of Amerika-mura more as a somewhat frivolous place for high school students to gather and browse for the latest fashions than as a ‘serious’ hub of the Osaka hip hop scene. It also confirms the suggestion (discussed in 9.3.3 and 9.3.4 above) that no ‘natural’ association exists between Amerika-mura itself and the local hip hop scene. Further evidence of this image is found in a short feature in the first issue of the magazine.
(Woofin 1997a), which introduces an Osaka-based graffiti artist, Zen, and refers to his most prominent commissioned artwork on the wall above a shop in the district as being found in Shinsaibashi, not Amerika-mura (1997a:98).

A similar argument may be made in relation to the connection between Amerika-mura and the hip hop club and concert scene. The same edition of Woofin (1997b) includes an event guide, concentrating on venues in Tokyo, Yokohama and Osaka where hip hop events are regularly held (1997b:73-75). It includes two Osaka clubs, Corn and Bayside Jenny, the former located in Horie, approximately twenty minutes' walk west of Amerika-mura, and the latter found in the Osaka Port area, a 30-minute subway ride to the northwest. A similar segment included in the third issue of the magazine (Woofin 1997c), features information on six events held at three venues: Bayside Jenny, Club Flatt and Sam and Dave II, the latter two venues located just outside the western and eastern extremities of Amerika-mura respectively (1997c:76-77). While there appears to be a slightly higher concentration of hip hop venues in the vicinity of the district, club and concert activity is by no means confined to this area.

9.7 CONCLUSION

Hip hop represents an important example of the 'grey zone' between the modern and the postmodern. By creating a sense of common identity through paradoxically borrowing, mixing and juxtaposing stylistic components from diverse sources, it creates a sense of stability through endless flux, a feeling of wholeness through pastiche.

The connection between hip hop and Amerika-mura is a complex one. It appears clear that a strong association exists between the district and the notion of hip hop as fashion style in the abstract context of the sutoriito. On this level, hip hop offers a pre-packaged 'b-boy style', and young people are invited to use it in the construction of a personal 'look' without necessarily engaging in specialised practices such as rapping and dancing. On another level, for those individuals presented in 9.3 above, clothing forms only a peripheral element of
hip hop as a project of personal authentication. For these individuals, hip hop is not a fashion style, and therefore there is no 'natural' connection between it and 'fashionable places' such as Amerika-mura. As noted above, while the trajectories of these individuals take them into, through and beyond Amerika-mura on a regular basis, it is the social contacts, practices and specialised knowledge which are given priority and linked to the construct of hip hop.

It is interesting to consider these arguments in the context of the theories of Japanese social commentator Nakano Osamu (1991), introduced in 7.3 above, particularly his concept of 'manual culture.' In the context of the relationship between hip hop and Amerika-mura discussed in this chapter, it may be possible to examine the performative and narrative aspects of hip hop, including the notion of a common 'spirit', as internalised knowledge, and to explore the aesthetic aspect of 'b-boy' style as externalised information. Here, the *sutoriito* is consumed and performed as information, while the street is produced and practiced as knowledge. Paradoxically, each authenticates the other, the striated and the smooth together producing a dynamic, heterotopic and heterogeneous space.

According to this approach, hip hop can be interpreted as incorporating both the 'deep' and 'shallow' aspects explored in 6.2 above. Existing as information in the pages of *sutoriito fashhon* magazines as an aesthetic style, it simultaneously exists as knowledge in the practices and ideas of certain individuals. While information links hip hop to Amerika-mura (and especially its hip hop fashion stores, such as those in which many of the interviewees in 9.3 work), knowledge links these people to each other and to sites and practices inside and outside the district.

In this way, hip hop in Amerika-mura embodies the juxtaposition at the heart of modernity as it is experienced in the district. Here is a context in which attempts to frame, organise and classify urban spaces, objects and practices variously meet, mingle with, and are opposed by attempts to construct 'authentic' personal identities. This theme, also played out in the nostalgic narratives of Chapter 5, the personal accounts of Chapter 6 and the stylistic experimentation of Chapter 7, is closely linked to a key question posed by this thesis:
how to create personal and spatial identities and control how these are interpreted in the modern media age?
Plate 9.1: Shigechiyo at B-Matic clothing store.
Plate 9.2: Shigechiyo rapping with team Desperado during a performance at Amerika-mura club I to I in October 1997.
Plate 9.3: Mr Yukio Oki, rap artist and shop assistant at The Edge.
Plate 9.4: Mr Masahito Yasuda and wife Yuki in their store, Colors.
Plate 9.5: Promotional poster for 20th Big Bang event.
Plate 9.6: Naoki (l) and Kōji (r) taking a break from dance practice in Horie, immediately west of Amerikamura.

Plate 9.7: Kōji (l) and Naoki (r) practicing their routines in Horie.
Plate 9.8: Naoki (m) leading a dance class at EN Studio. Kōji is on the left.
Plate 9.9: Hip hop fashion and graffiti on display outside store operated by retail chain Walkin' Store.
Plate 9.10: Senior high school students Saburō (l), Satoshi (m) and Takeshi (r), wearing hip hop fashion. Takeshi strikes a ‘b-boy’ pose of the kind found in rap videos and posters.
Plate 9.11: Young shoppers in hip hop fashion in the southern part of Amerika-mura.
Plate 9.12: Front cover of the inaugural issue of hip hop magazine Woofin (Woofin 1997a:1).
Plate 9.13: Dreadlock, sneaker and suede shoe care are described in the first issue of Woofin under the title “Catalog & Easy How To For B-Boy” (sic) (Woofin 1997a:72).
CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION: MODERNITY AS FRAME,
MODERNITY AS OPENING

This thesis has followed my own trajectory through Amerika-mura, and has adopted its own ‘framing’ process in selecting, presenting and theorising aspects of those elements of the district with which I had contact during my preparatory fieldwork and research. As such, it is a representation and interpretation of a place which is necessarily fragmented, subjective and incomplete. To build a more thorough picture of the dynamics of Amerika-mura, a series of similar investigations by different authors would assist, according to a kind of psychospatial triangulation, in filling in blank spots and joining dots. Each would constitute an intrinsically ‘true’ reflection of the district, and each would demonstrate the unique relationship between each author and the places which their trajectories led them to and through.

In an era where ‘representation’ has become problematised and politicised to the point of the extinction of neutral objectivity, the role of anthropological investigation becomes at once ponderously difficult and dizzyingly liberating. The researcher is certainly no longer able to assume and proclaim a paradoxically ‘detached and engaged’ role as participant observer. Nor is it possible to simply attempt to unearth patterns of behaviour, structure such patterns into cultural models, formulate grand theories in relation to these patterns, and impose both models and theories as conceptual ‘frames’ for understanding specific instances of human practice. In this sense, the entire approach around which anthropology first developed as a ‘scientific’ discipline has been comprehensively challenged and deconstructed. Nevertheless, the very flexibility permitted by the anthropological methodology of ethnographic fieldwork allows it the
potential to gain newfound significance in the contemporary study of social meaning.

As noted in Chapter 1 above, the project of modernity involved a comprehensive attempt to 'make sense' of the world through the detailed observation, documentation, classification and analysis of every aspect of existence, from rare Amazonian plant species to schizophrenia, from geological formations to urban space. The exploration of Amerika-mura in this thesis has explored a variety of contexts in which the processes and outcomes of modernity have incited a variety of personal responses, ranging from cooption to negation. It is at this level that anthropology remains of great importance in an ostensibly postmodern world. While originally part of the project of modernity itself, anthropology is now ideally placed to act as a vehicle for the study of the nature and effects of modernity as these are played out in multiple contexts and discourses throughout the world. Its mission shifts away from the increasingly problematic 'middle ground' of 'culture', allowing it to concentrate on the unique ways in which global phenomena are given local meanings.

In relation to urban spaces such as Amerika-mura, such an approach necessitates an investigation of the mutual interaction between personal and spatial identity. As argued in Chapter 1 above, this involves a blurring of boundaries (already underway) between anthropology and geography. For each of these two disciplines, no longer can 'meaning' be traced to 'culture' or 'place' respectively. Rather, it must be viewed as a fluid process which is mediated through multiple discourses, which include, but are not limited to, discourses of cultural or regional identity. It is in this context that the theories of Foucault, Edensor, and Deleuze and Guattari (discussed in Chapter 4 above), and those of Rodman and Massey (discussed in Chapter 1 above) are of greatest significance, as they imply a more sophisticated understanding of the contingency and complexity of meaning in the context of specific sites. For these authors, it is the 'gaps' inherent within the framing discourses of modernity which ensure that all places remain essentially heterotopic, heterogeneous, smooth and striated, and 'multilocal' constellations of temporary coherence.
As noted above, this thesis has only ‘scraped the surface’ of one site in contemporary urban Japan in order to investigate aspects of its multifaceted identity. It has largely hovered at the level of the district as a centre of ‘youth culture’, occasionally probing into contexts in which individuals use specific sites and practices to construct ‘authentic’ and unique personal identities. A further investigation of my fieldsite might narrow its scope to a particular musical scene or network of specialised taste, the clientele of a particular shop or cafe, or the practices and trajectories of a particular group of individuals. It would be of interest to explore the relationships between ‘information’ and ‘knowledge’ discussed in this thesis in these contexts. It would also be of interest to further explore the ‘psychogeography’ of Amerika-mura (discussed in Chapter 7 above), in order to gain insights into the dynamics of sensory engagement with urban space.

To conclude, I would like to return to the image of Walter Benjamin and Paris introduced at the beginning of Chapter 1 above. I would like to imagine how he would engage with modern-day Amerika-mura, if it were possible for him to make a brief, posthumous visit. It is possible to imagine that he would recognise many of the elements which inspired both horror and fascination in his writings on nineteenth century Paris. As a paradoxical site of order and myth, Amerika-mura might inspire the completion of his seminal Arcades Project. Its collected fragments would reflect the nature of modernity itself, as a force through which the very imposition of structure necessitates the creation of gaps and margins. It is at the points where both meet that meaning is created.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adorno, T.

*Akurosu Henshūshitsu (Across Editorial Office)*
1985 *Shinjinru ga yuku (The new generation is coming)*. Tokyo, Parco.
1995 *Sutoriitto fasshon: wakamono stairu no 50 nen shi (Street fashion: 50 years of youth style)*. Tokyo, Parco.

Allison, A.

Ando, K.
1977 *Ginza saiken (Detailed observation of Ginza)*. Tokyo, Chuokoronsha.

*Asahi Shimbun*
1992a ‘Iwakan doko e, ima ya heiki’ (‘Where has that awkward feeling gone? Now I’m fine [here]’). 18 February, p.20.
1994b O-share supotto gomi ni naku (Fashionable spot crying under the garbage). 27 October, evening edition, p. 10.

Auge, M.
Barthes, R.

Bauman, Z.

Befu, H.

Benedict, R.

Bennett, T.

Berman, M.
1982  *All that is solid melts into air*. New York, Simon and Schuster.

Boon
1997a  *Tōkyō Ōsaka shoppu navi '97 (Tokyo Osaka shop navigator '97)*. Tokyo, Yōdensha.
1997b  *Za kakkoman (The kakkoman)*. Tokyo, Yōdensha.

Bow Relations

Burū Gaido Kokunai Shuppanbu (Blue Guide Domestic Publication Department)
1997  *Osaka machi-aruki gaido (Walking guide to Osaka)*. Tokyo, Jitsugyo no Nihonsha.

Cazi-Cazi
1995a  January, p.52.
1997  November, p.144.

de Certeau, M.
Chaney, D.  

*Chikyu no Arukikata Henshūshitsu (Globetrotter Editorial Office)*  
1995  *Globetrotter travel guide: Osaka.* Tokyo, Diamond Big.

Clammer, J.  

Coleman, C. and Crang, M. (eds.)  

Condry, I.  

*Cool Trans*  
1997  June, p 1.

Creighton, M.R.  


Dale, P.  

Damisch, H.  

Debord, G.  
Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F.  

*Dentsūhō*  
1978  Osaka Minami no ‘Amerika-mura’ (‘Amerika-mura in Minami [district], Osaka’). 16 October, p.8.

Doi, T.  

Doi, T.  
1994  Kita wa ōkina depāto, Minami wa ōkina shōtengai (Kita is a big department store, Minami is a big shopping area). *SOFT* October, pp. 14-16.

Donald, J.  


Duncombe, S.  

Dyson, M.E.  
1993  *Reflecting Black/African American cultural criticism*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

Edagawa, K.  
1994  *Ōsaka daitanken (Grand exploration of Osaka)*. Tokyo, Shio Shuppansha.

Edensor, T.  

Fine Boys
1999  Ōsaka kanzen shopingu baiburū (Osaka complete shopping bible), Tokyo, Hinode.
2001  Ōsaka kanzen shopingu baiburū (Osaka complete shopping bible), Tokyo, Hinode.

Fine Max
1997  20 August, pp. 138-149.

Finkelstein, J.L.

Frisby, D. and Feathersone, M. (eds.)

Frow, J.

Fruits
1997  October, p.3.

Foucault, M.

Geertz, C.

Get On

Gilloch, G.

Goffman, E.
Hanes, J.E.
1996 Taishū bunka/kai bunka/minshū bunka: senkanki no Nihon no toshibu ni okeru kindai seisatsu (Mass culture/subculture/popular culture: modern life in interwar urban Japan). In Yoshimi, S. (ed.), Toshi no kukan, toshi no shintai (The space of the city, the body of the city). Tokyo, Keiso Shobo, pp. 91-136.

Harootunian, H.

Hashizume, S.

Hebdige, D.

Heibon Punch

Hendry, J.

Howard, J.S.
Isomura, T.

Iwama, N.
1995 Sengo wakamono bunka no kōbō. The rise and fall of postwar youth culture. Tokyo, Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha.

Ivy, M.

Jameson, F.
1991 Postmodernism or the cultural logic of late capitalism. London, Verso.

Jenks, C.

Kadono, Y.

Kadono, Y., Fujimoto, K., Hashizume, S. and Itō, M. (eds.)
1994 Osaka no hyōgenryoku (The expressive power of Osaka). Tokyo, Parco.

Katori, A.
1990 Wakamono to media (Youth and the media). Tokyo, Liberta Shuppan.

Keith, M.

351
Keith, M. and Pile, S.

Kuramitsu, H.

*KG Jōhō (KG Information)*

Lebra, T.S.

Lefebvre, H.

Lie, J.

Littlewood, I.

Louis, L.

Lunn, S.

MacCannell, D.

Maher, J. and Kawanishi, Y.
Maher, J. and Macdonald, G. (eds.)

Mainichi Shimbun
1998a Shumi to shōbai: mujun ga aru ga ima mo sutenai kaguya no yume (Hobby and business: there’s a contradiction, but he can’t give up his dream of having a furniture store). 14 April, evening edition, p. 3.
1998b ‘Jūnen no asobi ga hana hiraita’ bando shōnen no karisuma (An icon for the band-loving kids, ‘blossoming after ten years of fun’). 28 April, evening edition, p. 3.
1998c Kihon konseputo wa ryōshitsu na deirii wea (The basic concept is quality everyday clothing). 30 June, evening edition, p. 5.
1998d Kawaranu tēma wa ‘genki ga deru fuku’ (The unchanging theme is ‘cheerful clothing’). 28 July, evening edition, p. 3.
1998e ‘I bunshi’ de sutāto, ima ya chūkaku sonzai (It started as a ‘foreign element’, and now it is a central feature). 4 August, evening edition, p. 3.
1998f Atarashii mono motomeru wakamono ni dezainā hakkutsu de oeru (Responding to young people’s desire for new things by excavating designer items). 25 August, evening edition, p. 3.

Mappuru Henshibu (Mapple Editorial Division)

Massey, D.
Matsushita, K.

Maxwell, I.

McCracken, G.
1988 *Culture and consumption: new approaches to the symbolic character of consumer goods and activities*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

*Meets Regional*
1997a No. 89, May, p. 84.
1997b No. 90, June, p. 88.
1997c No.91, July, p. 104.
1998 No.100, April, pp. 30-33.

Miller, D.

Mita, M.

Miyoshi, M. and Harootunian, H. (eds.)

Morris-Suzuki, T.

Mouer, R. and Sugimoto, Y.

Murakami, K.
Murobushi, T.
1929 Kafe shakaigaku (Sociology of the cafe). In Chūō Kōron, September, pp. 188-91.

Nakane, C.

Nakano, O.

Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha

Nikkei Ryūtsū Shinbun

Nonno
1979 Amerika-mura. 20 July, pp. 71-78.

Nova Incorporated

Onoe, K.

Ōtani, K.
1994 Ōsakagaku (Osaka studies). Tokyo, Keiei Shoin.
1997 Ōsakagaku tsuzuki (Osaka studies continued). Tokyo, Keiei Shoin.

Ought to Japan, inc.

Ouwehand, C.

355
Ozasa, M.  
2000 Amerika-mura Sankaku Kōen no saiseibi to shuhen chiiki no kasseika (Restoration of Triangle Park in Amerika-mura and revitalisation of the surrounding area). *CLA Journal* 149:30-33).

Palumbo, M.L.  

Parsons, C.  
1989 *People the Japanese know.* Tokyo, The Japan Times.

Picaud, A., Le Louarn, M. and Ambrois, F.  

Pile, S.  

Pile, S. and Thrift, N.  

Polhemus, T.  
1994 *Street style: from sidewalk to catwalk.* London, Thames and Hudson.


Powers, A.  

Random, M.  

Reischauer, E.O.  
Rifkin, A.

Richie, D.

Rodman, M.C.

Satō, I.

Shibamura, A.

Shields, R.

Simmel, G.


Shuppan Jigyōkyoku Rurubu Henshūbu (Publications Bureau, Rurubu Editorial Division)
2001 Ōsaka Rurubu ’02. Tokyo, Japan Travel Bureau.

Sibley, D.

Soja, E.

357
Street Jack
1997a September, p.262.

Suzuki, J.

Tipton, E.K.

Tsuzuki, K.

Urry, J.

Wakabayashi, M.

Washida, K.

Washida, S. and Kaneko, R.

Willis, P.
1977 Learning to labour: how working class kids get working class jobs. Westmead, Saxon House.

Wilson, E.
Wired
1995  November, p. 69.

Woofin
1997a  June, pp. 22-29, pp. 68-73, pp. 75-83, p. 98.
1997b  August, p. 58, pp. 63-65, 73-75.
1997c  October, pp. 76-77.

Wow-Wow

Yomiuri Shimbun

Yoshimi, S.
1987  Toshi no doramaturugii: Tōkyō sakariba no shakaishi (The dramaturgy of the city: a social history of Tokyo entertainment districts). Tokyo, Kōbundo.
1994  Media jidai no bunka shakaigaku (Cultural sociology in the media age). Tokyo, Shinyōsha.

Yoshino, K.
1997  Bunka nashonarizumu no shakaigaku (The sociology of cultural nationalism). Tokyo, Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai.