Maid-Up:
Conceptions of Power and Space in Japanese Maid Cafés

Luke Sharp

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ORIGINALITY STATEMENT

'I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial proportions of material which have been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at UNSW or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis. Any contribution made to the research by others, with whom I have worked at UNSW or elsewhere, is explicitly acknowledged in the thesis. I also declare that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work, except to the extent that assistance from others in the project's design and conception or in style, presentation and linguistic expression is acknowledged.'

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the links between 'otakuism', maid cafés, *meido* (the Japanese maid persona), and the experience of *moe* (pseudo-romance). It pays particular attention to how these links are forged in relation to power and space. The study is informed theoretically by Lefebvre (1974, 1991), Kitabayashi (2005) and Enomoto (2009), and epistemologically by the overlap of two 'chronotopes': *Reading and Interpretation* (influenced by Goffman [1959]) and *Power/Knowledge and Defamiliarisation* (influenced by Foucault [1977, 1990]). The study design for this research is guided by ethnography as a methodology, and has been structured utilising the "key concepts in ethnography" developed by O'Reilly (2009). It also draws on the work of Pink (2007, 2009) in considering both the visual and the sensory elements of ethnography.

The analysis of space and power in maid cafés revealed the following two conclusions. The maid persona rests heavily on the fetishisation and embodied dynamics of *gyappu* (a rift in how phenomena are perceived and how they are actualised), and that, despite a tendency in academic literature and local print media to homogenise and essentialise maid cafés (and their customers), both space and power display heterogeneous qualities. This heterogeneity concerns the production of different "spaces", shaped by the availability of interactive services (such as the taking of Polaroid shots [known as *cheki*], food art [*rakugaki*], board games and *moe* incantations), in addition to how conversation is generated in these "spaces". This act of conversing can be between maids and customers, or between customers themselves (made possible by the convergence of the "private" and the "public" in the limited geometric dimensions of establishments). Maid cafés thus form an important part in the construct of 'otakuism' and act as significant locales of homosociality.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

All Japanese names used in this thesis are written, as in Japan, following the order of surname first, and given name second.

Japanese words are written in italics, with the original script presented in either parentheses or a footnote at the end of the chapter. The Hepburn system of Romanisation has been employed, implementing macrons except for in the case of words commonly used in English (such as Tokyo and Osaka).

All translations in this thesis (both Japanese and French), unless otherwise stated, are mine. Where a translated quote has been given, I have provided the original text in a footnote, both in *rōmaji* and Japanese script. I take full responsibility for any errors.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.0 Background to the Study

Had the female domestic servants of nineteenth-century Britain known their influence would resonate more than a hundred and fifty years into the future and more than half a world away on the islands of Japan, they would no doubt have been stupefied. They were a potent and widespread force, numbering an estimated two million at their apex and at one time representing forty percent of all working females in the south of the country (Henshall Momsen 1999: 3). They have since become the undisputed cultural icons of Victorian Britain (1837-1901), encroaching even on the "collective imagery" of the Edwardian epoch (1901-1910) [Gregson & Lowe 1994: 51]. This status as a cultural symbol can be attributed to their many representations across various popular media, including British television dramatisations (e.g. *Upstairs, Downstairs* [1971-1975, 2010] and *You Rang, M'Lord?* [1990-1993]), acclaimed novels such as those by Ivy Compton Burnett (e.g. *Manservant and Maidservant* [1947]), and autobiographical pieces by working-class British women themselves (e.g. Rosina Harrison's *Rose: My Life in Service* [1975]) [Gregson & Lowe 1994: 51].

The Japanese avatar of the Victorian maid, the *meido*,[1] has also become a cultural icon of her time, despite being a relatively recent addition to the artistic imagination of the country. Popularised during the 1990s as a protagonist in erotic visual novels (Azuma 2009: 42),[2] interest in the *meido* soon spread to other media, culminating in several manga and anime series where the central female character was depicted as a maid ingénue.

Examples of these include the eponymous heroines from the series *Super Maid Chirumi-san* (by author Shiwasa Tōko), *Emma* (a love story set in the Victorian era), and *Mahoromatic* (a science fiction comedy centring on the life of an android maid). Expectedly, because of her origins in amatory tales, she also influenced the gamut of erotic productions.

From the fantasy worlds of computer games and comic books, the maid persona sprang to life in the late 1990s with the advent of the maid café. Beginning as a makeshift food stall at a cosplay event and subsequently snowballing into a variety of full time establishments (*sotokanda.net*), maid cafés are said to have numbered as many as sixty in Akihabara alone (the main hub for anime and manga enthusiasts in Tokyo) at the peak of their boom (Hayakawa 2008: 33). The maid café was further propelled into the mainstream with the 2005 television production of *Densha Otoko* ("Train Man"), a drama series that depicted the male protagonist as an ardent habitué of one such establishment (Fisch 2009: 131).

The *meido* as a cultural symbol of Japan is undeniable. Once exclusively a staple of the otaku subculture,[3] the persona is now so mainstream and ubiquitous that she is touted in tourist brochures,[4] listed in international guidebooks,[5] is an official welcoming mascot to the Akihabara district (see Fig 1.0), and is the visage for the Akihabara branch of Yodobashi Camera, a leading electronics store in Japan (see Fig 1.1). The maid café too has transmuted significantly. In December 2010 the Seibu Railway Group opened up a maid café-style train service between Tokyo and Saitama, making available many of the services in their stationary Akihabara counterparts (*Japan Today* 2010). Indeed, the influence of the maid café can be seen transnationally, with establishments having been opened in South

Korea, mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, the USA, Canada, and most recently in 2011, the Philippines (Blaza 2011).[6]

Fig 1.0   *Fig 1.1*
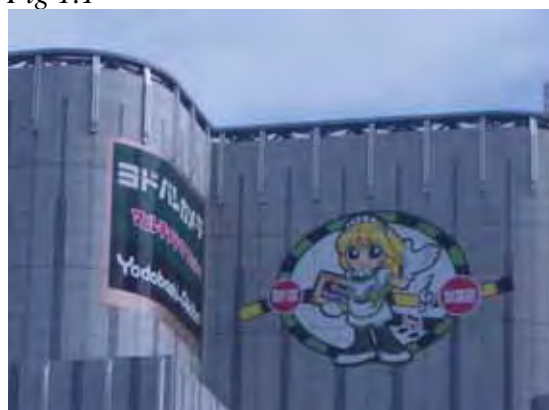
Images of the maid character have become integrated into mainstream popular culture, such as this welcome sign (Fig 1.0) on the main street of Akihabara (chūō dōri) that greets visitors to the area, and the logo for Yodobashi Camera (Fig 1.1).

The antecedent to this present study is Sharp (2005), a research project that examined the links between fetishism and *shōjo* (young girls) in relation to their commodification and eroticisation. The study explored representations of *shōjo* across four different media: the heroines of the cult anime series *Sailor Moon*, protagonists in erotic manga, the J-pop band *Morning Musume* in the music industry and the central characters of the films by Miyazaki Hayao. This study demonstrated that *shōjo* assume numerous roles and have multiple, often conflicting representations across these media. For example, the truculent depictions of her in *Sailor Moon* that convey a sadistic disposition contrast overwhelmingly to the erotic comic book storylines of her inciting violence against herself (making her characteristically masochistic). *Morning Musume* demonstrate that she is simultaneously versatile and expendable, while the characters of Miyazaki always exude elements of naïveté, innocence and vulnerability. The *shōjo* and her associated

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paraphernalia, such as things cute (*kawaii*), have been fetishised and commodified in Japan in a number of ways. These include crystallised fetishes such as underwear, *burumā* (underwear-like nylon pants worn by schoolgirls during physical education classes) and school uniforms sold at *burusera* shops (specialised fetish stores dealing with articles of clothing). Life-sized *shōjo* figurines are also a readily available product at adult convenience stores (known as *adaruto konibi* in Japanese).

This present study continues the theme of the eroticisation and commodification of a salient female figure in the iconography of Japanese popular culture. I view the maid as an emergent personage along a continuum of feminine symbols in Japan, which include the geisha, the *shōjo* and the *joshikōsai* (schoolgirl), all of whom precede her historically. In the wider landscape of these female icons, the geisha, I would argue, sat on the throne as the unrivalled queen in both prewar and postwar Japan, becoming an obvious object of fantasy for the West and one its major clichés of the East (Dunbar 2011: 71). As memories of her faded, an interest in the *shōjo* came to light (possibly against the backdrop of the "Lolita Complex" phenomenon),[7] with which the spectacularisation of the schoolgirl also unfolded (in all her avatars, such as *kogal, burikko, ganguro,* and *yamamba*). The history of this development is extensive and its legacy is powerful. While Treat believes *shōjo* culture only came to the fore in the 1980s (1993: 363), Bornoff claims the schoolgirl has been a part of Japanese sexual iconography for more than half a century (2002: 50). However long the history, its impact has been great. Ashcraft (2010), while writing of the recent contributions of the schoolgirl in making Japan internationally "cool", suggests she effectively replaced the geisha as the ultimate female symbol of Japan.[8]

While I am unsure that the geisha could ever be replaced in the popular imaginary, a coexistence with the schoolgirl and the *shōjo* as equal feminine icons is certain. And it

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would be no understatement to suggest that the maid is now close to achieving a similar status, if indeed she already has not. Yet despite the immensity of her popularity, the presence of the maid has gone largely understudied, attributed in part to her naissance being a comparatively recent event. It is for this reason I direct my attention to her, in an effort to balance out not only the vast amount of research that has already been dedicated to these other icons, but also to future endeavours centred on "Oriental Lolitas" (Jones 2003). As such this study is an attempt to shine light on the maid persona and her vivification in the maid café, through an investigation of her relationship to *moe* and by analysing her position in the otakuism construct.[9]

1.1 Significance of and Need for the Study

Hayakawa states that the popularity of maid cafés saw a sharp rise in 2005, influenced by the television drama *Densha Otoko* (2008: 33). This is reflected by the number of establishments that opened in the months following the screening of the production. In the summer of 2005 there was a total of 15 maid-themed venues in Akihabara (maid cafés as well as other maid-related establishments, such as reflexology clinics). A year later during the same period in 2006, this number had soared to 48, before reaching a peak of 59 twelve months later in 2007 (Hayakawa 2008: 33). Additionally, Akihabara no longer remained the niche of the maid café, as the popularity of such places spread to other parts of Japan - not only to its largest cities like Osaka, Nagoya and Sapporo, but also to smaller prefectural capitals such as Hiroshima and Okayama (Hayakawa 2008: 33). In 2009 it was reported that the number of establishments in Akihabara had stabilised, with no predictions that their popularity would soon be in decline (Galbraith 2009c). In fact, by then the demand for maid workers was so great it had necessitated a "Maid

Cooperative", an organisation that continues to provide the training and qualifications essential for becoming a maid (Galbraith 2009c). It is beyond doubt then that at this point in time, ten years after the first one opened in 2001, maid cafés are not merely a passing fad.

Despite the commercial appeal of the maid persona and the enormity of the maid café phenomenon, little academic attention has been paid to either. The largest proportion of publications that exist on these subjects are essentially photographic collections, which detail the costuming styles of individual cafés.[10] Indeed, this trend of theoretical disregard appears to span the entire transnational cosplay spectrum. Winge notes that most discussions concerning cosplay are mainly restricted to websites, online publications and blogs, and since most are generated by anime and manga fans themselves, many facts are tainted with a questionable personal bias (2006: 66). While the reasons for this academic neglect of the maid character are not conclusive, the current state of affairs of academia in Japan suggests several possibilities. Aoyama claims the marginalisation of women and children in Japan has resulted in an academic disinterest of them as research subjects (2008: 285), while McLelland asserts there is a lingering reticence amongst Japanese scholars to regard sexuality as a serious topic (2000: 61). According to him, sex (which would indubitably imbue any discourse on maids) is a particularly ungainly subject in Japan, and its status as a type of *asobi* (play) renders it a topic that respectable people should refrain from openly discussing. The reserve of Japanese academics to approach the *otaku* subculture (on which characters such as the maid rest heavily) is also a likely cause of her neglect. While in recent years there has been a tremendous surge in studies examining the *otaku* phenomenon, Azuma (2001) claims that for a large part of their history they were maligned by the mainstream press as perverted sociopaths and deemed an unwholesome topic of research (I expand on this in Section 1.3). English-language research on maids is

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also (profoundly scarce), due, perhaps, to Iles' (2009) claim that academics are discouraged by the potential of discussions on *otaku* culture to result in never-ending critiques of contemporary Japanese society (these issues are explored in further detail in Chapter 2).

A small amount of Japanese literature dealing directly with the theorisation of the maid persona and maid cafés has surfaced in recent years, however, with the exception of a few cases, English language publications seem to be all but nonexistent. The significance of this study then is that it aims to establish a direct link between maid cafés and the manifestation of the maid character inside them, and what this may reveal about the otaku construct and its connection to the concept of *moe*. The omnipresence of the maid character and the engagement by anime and manga aficionados all over Japan with her prompt a need for such research.

1.2 Purposes of the Study and Research Questions

This study has three specific purposes. The first is to investigate what functions maid cafés serve and why they exist. The second purpose is to explore the links between maid cafés, the maid persona and the concept of *moe*. Finally, the third purpose is to identify the role maid cafés play in the construct of otakusim.

To address the three purposes above, I have formulated four research questions. The first is to assist in addressing the first purpose, while Research Questions Two and Three are related specifically to the second purpose. Research Question Four is designed to address the third purpose.

1) What functions do maid cafés serve for customers?

2) How is *moe* manifested in maid cafés?

3) How is the maid persona developed inside maid cafés?

4) What role do maid cafés play within the construct of otakuism?

1.3 Definition and Considerations of Key Terms Used

In this section I discuss the problematics of two keys term used in this study: 'otaku' and '*moe*'. Perceptions of what 'otaku' means have evolved considerably since its inception, and its contentious history leaves it particularly open to dispute. '*Moe*', on the other hand, suffers from too little academic attention and thus often relies on common-sense notions of what it is. Here I synthesise these issues and reflect on my own applications of these words.

1.3.1 *Otaku*

The term 'otaku' is protean and highly complex, having experienced several modifications in meaning over time (Iles 2009). It is important to explore in this section these changes, but more critically to highlight how these particular changes impact the use of the word 'otaku' in this study. In considering the amelioration of academic studies into the otaku phenomenon, Lamarre suggests that one asset is for researchers to disengage themselves from the naturalised assumptions and essentialised stereotypes that have been perpetuated in the mass media, and to define 'otaku' in a way that "sets the parameters for discussion" (Galbraith & Lamarre 2010: 362). This, he holds, has been a major deficit in

anthropological and sociological research undertaken on otaku, and so to avoid such an inadequacy I aim in this section to establish a working definition of 'otaku' that demarcates this study. Of particular interest are the emergent opinions that 'otaku' be used in reference to a set of cultural activities and practices, instead of being used to describe a fixed type of person. This idea that otaku are a certain demographic appears to be firmly embedded in the research praxis of both Japanese and non-native academics today, perpetuated largely perhaps by the "us" and "them" binary approach to the phenomenon that has been so prevalent in the past (this will be discussed further in Chapter Two Section 2.1).

While the etymology of the term 'otaku', as it is commonly understood in its contemporary format (i.e. to describe a particular social group), has obscure origins, the word itself has long been a part of the Japanese language. According to Barral, 'otaku' has two meanings (1999: 25). The first is based on a Japanese character that is used to represent "a dwelling, the place where one lives".[11] The second is an extension of this first meaning, and is used as a personal pronoun to indicate 'you' (literally 'your home'). Barral insists it is an "impersonal way of calling someone 'you', which expresses distance and is used by the Japanese when they need to address someone without wanting to establish a sense of familiarity" (1999: 26).[12] This effectively and ironically encapsulates a commonly perceived characteristic of many otaku: "averse to creating personal relationships, they prefer to stay locked up in their rooms at home where they collect whatever assuages their passions" (Barral 1999: 26).[13]

This image of otaku described above as socially inept manga and anime aficionados emerged in the public mind during the late 1980s, stemming directly from the sensationalised media coverage of a young serial killer (Azuma 2009: 4). Originally there had been no such negative associations, and Schodt claims the word was first used amongst

adolescent male anime and manga buffs as a polite form of address (1996: 44). While Brenner asserts the reasons for why they adopted such an unorthodox honorific are unknown (2007: 194), Macias & Machiyama attest it was directly appropriated by fans of the 1982 anime *Super Dimensional Fortress Macross,* whose characters frequently used the title 'otaku' to refer to one another (2004: 14). The term subsequently appeared in a manga publication in the early 1980s as part of an article by Nakamori Akio (1983), who had also allegedly overheard fans at a *dōjinshi* market address each other in this manner. It was not until 1989, however, that usage of the term widened and became known to the general public due to the Miyazaki Tsutomu incident. Miyazaki, a necrophile in his mid-twenties, was arrested and put on trial for the murder and cannibalisation of four female toddlers (Lewis 2008). As an avid collector of pornographic manga, anime and slasher films, over five and half thousand pieces of media were discovered in his room upon his arrest (Galbraith & Lamarre 2010: 363). The press labelled him the "otaku murderer", and a public backlash against manga and anime enthusiasts ensued (Kelts 2006: 157). Ito claims that after the incident, "the term came to be used and recognised by the mainstream as a stigmatising label for somebody who is obsessed with media mix content and out of touch with everyday social reality" (2006: 53).

The "moral panic" surrounding anime and manga fans continued in the following years, and Azuma credits the 1995 hit anime *Neon Genesis Evangelion* for reviving otaku culture (2009: 5). The series achieved cult status and international recognition, and its widespread success opened up the possibility for discourse on the activities of manga and anime fans and the issues surrounding them. Despite this newfound freedom, Azuma maintains that otaku remained living on the fringes of society, and it was still awkward to discuss otaku culture openly until the end of the 1990s (2009: 5). According to Galbraith,

the turning point for otaku was the burgeoning popularity of manga and anime on an international scale, which prompted the Japanese government to promote such media under the policy of *Cool Japan* (2009a: 173).[14] It was also discovered that the spending habits of 'otaku' were not curbed by the recession in Japan, suggesting that authorities were now more interested in capitalising on their fan practices rather than vilifying them as sociopaths (Galbraith 2009a: 173).

Abel and Kono state that "otaku are those Japanese, usually males and generally between the ages of 18 and 40, who fanatically consume, produce, and collect comic books (manga), animated films (anime), and other products related to these forms of popular visual culture and who participate in the production and sales of derivative fan merchandise" (Introduction in Azuma 2009: 15), They also insist that the term was burdened with a heavy stigma prior to the year 2000, and attribute its ultimate popularisation to the success of *Densha Otoko*, after which it entered the Japanese vernacular to mean "an over-the-top fan, hobbyist, or enthusiast of any sort" (Abel & Kono, translator's notes in Azuma 2009: 117). Azuma supports this, saying that nowadays 'otaku' essentially is "a general term referring to those who indulge in forms of subculture strongly linked to anime, video games, computers, science fiction, special-effects films, anime figurines, and so on" (2009: 3).

In recent years, this typecasting of otaku as the quintessential male geek - antisocial, incapable of establishing personal relationships (especially with women), generally unsuccessful at life - has met with resistance. Miyadai believes that the concept of 'otaku' as a type of person has diminished somewhat, and has been replaced with the notion of 'otaku' as a locus in Japan's cultural sphere (Condry refers to this as "a kind of cultural orientation" [2006: 125, 227]). Ito appears to agree with this, stating that "it is a term that

has come to connote a sociocultural logic or gestalt, which takes as its core a sense of connoisseurship, attention to esoterica, media mixing, and amateur culture production" (2006: 54). She elaborates by explaining that 'otaku', unlike the words 'fan' or 'Trekkie' in English, is not bound by any one type of group, activity, media type, genre or artist, and as such the cultural connotations it produces are wider ranging (Ito 2006: 54). Lamarre also argues for a viewpoint that sees otaku "less as an identifiable type of person…and more as a set of activities related to constructing personalised worlds amid the media flows exemplified in anime" (2009: 109). This is the base for Lamarre's espousal of otaku as "a new mode of social existence, as a kind of social being" (Galbraith & Lamarre 2010: 364). This consideration, he emphasises, does not involve delimiting the ontology of otaku, but is rather about the "specificities of otaku activities or practices" that are connected to changes in capitalism, as well as interactions with commodities and technologies.

The continuance to frame 'otaku' rigidly by pigeonholing anime and manga fans based solely on gender, age and marital status, is likely a legacy of the Miyazaki incident. These fixed notions of who otaku are and what otaku do appear deeply ingrained in the subculture itself, manifested as a type of self-branding that goes unquestioned and as an identity that is firmly secured to a base of *a priori* assumptions. These predetermined constituents of identity are problematic, and as During argues, they marginalise the particularities of a person by amplifying only one aspect of who they are (which may, among other things, be based on a physical trait, a belief or a cultural preference) [2005: 145]. In effect, identities weigh people down to only a single component of whom they actually are. The problem, then, of categorising otaku as unsocialised 20-40 year old single males who obsessively consume manga and anime, is that it isolates and ignores other possible features of fans (ones that I encountered in my research): their occupation

(businessmen are also maid café patrons), their physical abilities (I witnessed a man in a wheelchair inside an Osaka maid café and communicated with a deaf patron at another), or their sexuality (most otaku research is heteronormative and I have yet to encounter any literature that problematises whether gay and lesbian otaku exist), to name just a few. Otaku have in effect been homogenised by the media (Ortabasi 2008: 278), and the variegations that exist within the cultural orientation have mostly been ignored. This strikes me as something very similar to *nihonjinron,* the essentialist theorising of the Japanese character that, by treating phenomena in a blanket fashion, downplays the existence of competing cultural groups and the individuals within them (Sugimoto 2009: 8).[15] This is something I shall discuss at length in Chapter Two Section 2.1.

These fixed notions of identity peripheralise those who may also have similar tendencies, but are not aligned with the rules and presupposed values of who/what otaku are: males who are married but still engage in hobbies linked to manga, anime and video games, those who are over forty or under twenty, and, perhaps most neglected of all, women. The term 'otaku' has historically been, and continues to be, used in a highly gendered fashion. While female otaku certainly exist, especially avid fans of the *yaoi* genre,[16] women are rarely identified as (or identify with being) 'otaku'. Instead the appellation 'fujoshi' is used, a homonymous pun on "woman" or "wife", which literally means "rotten girl" (Macwilliams 2008: 23). This self-deprecatory term, referring to these women's interest in material considered unwholesome by mainstream society, was spawned in the new millennium to avoid the negative connotations of 'otaku' (Kotani 2007: 224).

Finally, the extent to which one has to engage in their hobby to be labelled an 'otaku' is an issue, for as Okada highlights, there is "a little bit of otaku in…everyone"

(Okada 1997: 12, cited in Ortabasi 2008: 281). Elements of otaku-like behaviour undoubtedly exist in the everyday actions of people the world over - watching the same television program on a weekly basis, downloading files of a particular style of music, following the competitive events of a certain sport. This raises the question then of *when is an otaku?,*[17] in opposition to the *what is an otaku?* structure that has been so prevalent.

With all these complexities involved in the word 'otaku', it is obvious that translating the term into English with words such as 'nerd' and 'geek', as is so often done in both the mass media and academic writings, is grossly insufficient and at best is an enormous oversimplification. Indeed, as Galbraith notes, "no one definition is sufficient" as the term ultimately "evokes multiple contradictory discourses and images" (Galbraith & Lamarre 2010: 370), leading him to assert that 'otaku' is ultimately a fluid label that transforms with changes in particular social climates (Galbraith 2010: 211). In light of the issues raised above, for the purposes of this study I am disinclined to view otaku strictly as a fixed identity, but more a form of "cultural orientation" (Condry 2006) that revolves around a set of activities and practices (based on Lamarre's [2009] suggestion) - in this instance, specifically those involved in the maid café. While I shall explain the epistemological and theoretical underpinnings of the study in Section 1.4 of this chapter, it is important to note at this point that in setting the parameters for this discussion, I view these set of practices within the orientation as manifestations of both space and power. Indeed, in Section 1.4.2 I suggest that 'otakuism', where the suffix '-ism' indicates an action or its result, may be a better way of framing the phenomenon to place emphasis on the "sets of activities and practices" aspect (if not for extricating 'otaku' from the essentialised "nerd" perspective). However, it is difficult to completely reject the idea that regular activities and sets of practices can also *produce* a type of person. I suggest then that

perhaps a useful way to approach 'otaku' is in a hybridised form that occupies a liminal

space - the set of practices (and spaces and power dynamics created by them) within this

cultural orientation of maid cafés invariably *produces* a particular type of aficionado, which

in no way should be restricted by age, gender, marital status or physical traits. As will be

discussed in Chapter Five, maid cafés are frequented not only by those consistent with the

hackneyed cliché of the unattractive and overweight "nerd", but also by couples,

businessmen and businesswomen on lunches, males well over the age of forty, and teenage

girls. They are all bound by one consistency however - an interest in maids and a common

set of practices grounded in maid cafés, which create this convergence of multiple

demographics at one particular locale.

In order to both illustrate and summarise the issues above, I have constructed a

chronology of select definitions of 'otaku'. This can be viewed in Fig 1.2.

Fig 1.2 Chronology of select 'otaku' definitions

Author(s)	Year	Definition of 'otaku'
Miyadai	1990	Young "unbalanced specialists" who live in "worlds" constructed by use of particular media (p. 187) [cited in Condry 2006: 28].
Okada	1997	One with an inquisitive mind who aims to gather as much information as possible to add to their field of interest (p. 829).
Tobin	1998	Young men with a narrow interest in manga, anime, music or television who engage in accessing and distributing information about this interest via the Internet (p. 109).
Saitō	2000	Adult fans of Japanese animation, manga and video games, and associated phenomena. "Things that children normally graduate from in elementary or junior high school " (p. 226).
Kelts	2006	A "reference to a person who is densely obsessed" (p. 156).
Eng	2006	Extreme fans of any medium, whose labelling as an 'otaku' does not hinge on their object of interest but on their level of devotion to and expert knowledge of it (p. 189).
Condry	2006	"A cultural orientation" (p. 125, 277).
Ito	2006	A sociocultural gestalt founded on connoisseurship, esoterica, media mixing, and the production of amateur goods (p. 54).
Abel and Kono	2009	Male, aged 18-40, obsessively engaged in activities restricted to collecting anime and manga (p. 15) OR a generic term for an excessive fan (p. 117).

Azuma	2009	Those engaged in forms of subculture connected to anime, video games, computers, anime figurines and the like (p. 3).
Lamarre	2010	"a new mode of social existence" relating to the "specificity of otaku activities or practices" (Galbraith & Lamarre, p. 364).
Galbraith	2010	"a label, which fluctuates with social conditions and 'common sense'" (p. 211).

1.3.2 *Moe*

According to Enomoto, any discussion about otaku will always lead to a discussion about *moe* (2009: 30). The origins of the word in its contemporary context are unknown, however it most likely derives from the verb *moeru* [萌える], which means "to sprout" or "to bud" in the sense of a plant or tree. The word is also a homonym for the verb *moeru* [燃える], meaning "to burn" (Galbraith 2009a: 154).

There are several possibilities as to how the word *moe* came into use by otaku. Macias and Machiyama claim the term was first used on an Internet forum in a discussion on female anime characters, and possibly came into existence through a typing error (here the hiragana for *moeru* was changed into the incorrect Chinese character, thus altering the meaning from "to burn" into "to bud") [2004: 154].[18] Another conjecture is that it came from the names of a string of young female anime characters, such as Sagisawa Moe in *Dinosaur Planet*, Takasu Moe in *Taiyo ni Smashu* and Tomoe Hotaru from *Sailor Moon S* (Galbraith 2009a: 154). Lastly, it has been suggested that the word was used by otaku to describe the "budding beauty" of *Gravia Idols,* Japanese pinup girls who pose in men's magazines (Galbraith 2009a: 154).

Since *moe* is an intangible phenomenon, Enomoto believes it is a near impossibility to articulate with precision what it is. Nevertheless he makes an attempt, stating that fundamentally:

when otaku look at the objects of their interests (such as anime, games, idols…) they may think to themselves things like "wow, I like this", "what a rush", or "this is great!". These intuitive feelings of pleasantness, which cannot effectively be put into words, have all been placed under the category of *moe*. (2009: 30).[19]

Narumi also describes *moe* in this way, defining it as a "word to describe the ardent affection otaku have for anime, manga or game characters" (2009: 74).[20] This, however, is a formation of fetishism (*fetishizumu no keitai*) which Morinaga believes runs deeper, claiming that *moe* is actually about being in love with an animation character (2005: 36). This is not just a strong penchant in the sense of being a fan, but love for and the need to be with the character as if it were human. Galbraith seems to agree with this, claiming these sentiments are directed towards or internalised by younger girls, defining *moe* as a softer incarnation of the "Lolita Complex" (2009a: 154). It is essentially used "among otaku to mean getting fired up for beauties" and *moe* characters invariably have infantile features such as large bright eyes, though many can appear "animal-like, alien or androgynous" (Galbraith 2009a: 154). He insists that the Lolita image is "now considered too 'real', and too sexual, so *moe* is used instead to define a fantasy love or desire" (Galbraith 2009a: 155). Balmain also remarks on this tendency for *moe* to be manifest vis-à-vis *shōjo,* stating that while it does not necessarily connote anything sexual, it does refer to the "absence of vanity, or self-awareness, or cuteness" of young girls (208: 122).

Enomoto describes this response to characters as a "pseudo-romance" (*gijiren'ai*) [疑似恋愛], and insists that after all "there are fewer hurdles in lusting after a two-dimensional anime character or a three-dimensional idol than there are when it comes to real love" (2009: 31).[21] This meaning only came into existence after the *Densha Otoko* phenomenon swept the country in 2005. In both the narrative and the adapted television

series, the main otaku protagonist is depicted as having *moe* tendencies for anime characters. This changes when he comes to the aid of a woman in need during a train commute home, and a chance to develop an intimate relationship with a real female surfaces for him (Fisch 2009: 133).

For Enomoto, considering both these meanings is the safest way to approach *moe:* it fundamentally "expresses a liking or a preference, thought what may be contained in that penchant will vary from person to person" (2009: 31).[22]

This definition seems apt for this study, since *moe* appears to come in many forms and does not have any particular constituents, even inside maid cafés themselves. *Moe* itself is not tangible, but does have a concrete existence through activities that take place inside maid cafés. This will be discussed at length in future chapters. Additionally, for this study I do not seek to translate the word *"moe"* but will use its original Japanese form.[23]

1.4 Research Underpinnings

According to Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, qualitative research is grounded in a set of traditions that equip it with tactical tools and assumptions, and simultaneously assert its limitations (2005: 23). While these traditions have been developed over time in different ways and described varyingly by scholars, all qualitative research consists minimally of four interrelated components.[24] These are:

> 1) epistemologies
>
> 2) theories
>
> 3) methodologies
>
> 4) methods

The aim of this section is to unpack the first two components, by highlighting the epistemological position this study has taken and the theoretical framework in which it has been developed. Importantly, it describes the alignments between these two components and how they inform one another. To do this, and as a useful starting point, I will provide a brief definition of these terms to display how they have been implemented, a task which Kamberelis and Dimitriadis indicate is ignored all too often in academia (2005: 13):

Epistemology - a way of explaining knowledge and how people come to know of things in the world (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2005: 13). This involves justification as a process for beliefs that are grounded in a particular source (e.g. a visual experience) [Audi 2011: 7].

Theory - a set of assumptions and assertions for interpreting social and cultural processes (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2005: 15). They ground the logic and criteria of methodologies (Crotty 2003: 3).

The last two components (methodologies and methods) are defined and their considerations discussed in Chapter Three Section 3.1.

1.4.1 Epistemological Position

For the first aim of this section, I draw on the work of Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005), who reconsider traditional qualitative research approaches by offering more fluid and variegated paradigms in which qualitative studies can be located. They explain that their work has developed from a need to rethink the fixed definitions associated with qualitative inquiry and its predetermined guidelines that have been concretised over the years, despite the very origins of qualitative research itself being a pastiche of disciplines. This tendency for qualitative researchers to compartmentalise their studies has been noted by other academics. Holbrook and Kay, for example, acknowledge the pressure on

researchers to position their studies within epistemological paradigms based on "sets of versuses" (e.g. critical versus poststructural, positivist versus interpretivist) [2007: 282]. Likewise, O'Reilly acknowledges the propensity of researchers to label their studies as exclusively "interpretivist", "realist", or "postmodern", but suggests since there is so much overlapping of these paradigms, it is far more useful to reflect on how they influence a study rather than categorising it as one type or another (2009: 123). It is precisely this type of epistemological demarcation that Kamberelis and Dimitriadis reject with their development of the *chronotope.* A term borrowed from Einstein by Bakhtin (1981), chronotopes are constructs for looking at qualitative research, including its assumptions about the world, knowledge, and the set of methods employed for conducting it (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2005: 26). They identify the following four chronotopes:

I) Objectivism and Representation

II) Reading and Interpretation

III) Scepticism, Conscientisation, and Praxis

IV) Power/Knowledge and Defamiliarisation

Kamberelis and Dimitriadis stress the fluidity and overlapping of these chronotopes, highlighting that they become internalised by the researchers who implement them, affecting their already variable form (2005: 27). They also offer a caveat and "admit to living a paradox" (2005: 26) by seeking to regulate a dynamic space of inquiry, instead proposing the taxonomy of chronotopes be used as a heuristic rather than as a set of dictating rules. Fig. 1.2 demonstrates the overlap and fluid nature of the proposed chronotopes.

Fig 1.2 Overlap of the Predominant Chronotopes of Qualitative Inquiry developed by Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005: 28)
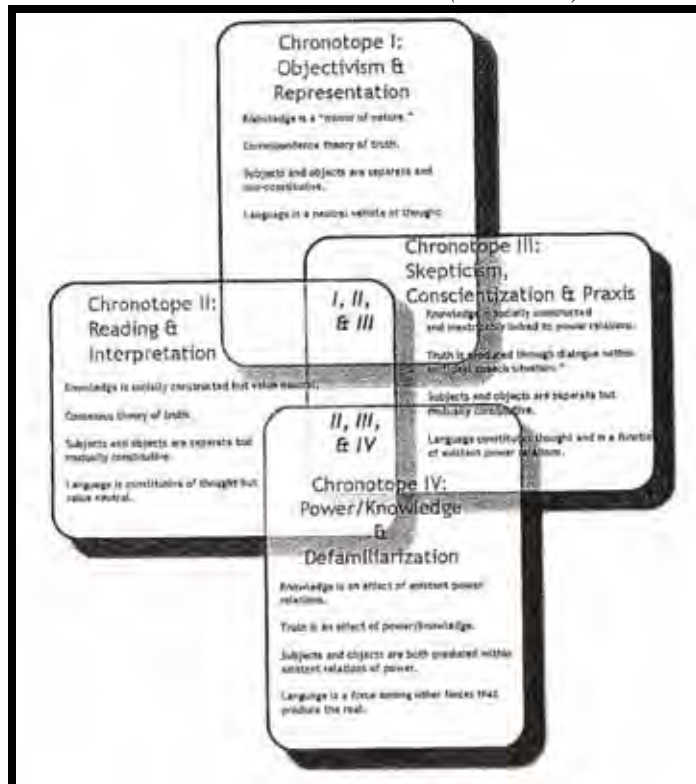
I shall now summarise each chronotope briefly and provide a statement of their aims, before discussing which ones this study is best situated in.

Objectivism and Representation (Chronotope I)

This chronotope derives from the attempts of Enlightenment figures to emulate the methods of the "natural sciences" and employ them in studies of social sciences. It is based on the belief that phenomena exist "out there" in the world, and that all things have an inherent meaning that is in no way contingent on human cultures or experiences. In effect, knowledge mirrors nature, and when an object is ascribed meaning by humans it is simply a case of them having discovered something inherent about it. Direct observations are the key to knowing the nature of reality through a "logic of verification" - empiric consistencies

and replication of findings confirm that knowledge and facts are true. This is often perceived to be problematic by other chronotopes, as it fails to recognise that knowledge is either partial or perspectival, and that the actions of researchers can influence the outcomes of their findings. Under *Chronotope I* then, knowledge is not contextual and is completely extricated from power relations. It also takes the view that subject and object are radically separate, based on Descartes' dualism of mind and body, which proposes that the individual human subject can view the external world objectively through the application of reason.

Aim of *Chronotope I:* "to 'find' interpretation-free brute facts…through controlled observation and experimentation" (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2005: 29).

Reading and Interpretation (Chronotope II)

This chronotope is modernist and grounded in social constructionism. While it does not completely reject Enlightenment perspectives of knowledge, rationality and truth, it does not regard them as mirrors of the world, instead viewing them as relative and perspectival constructs of the actions human beings make vis-à-vis their world. When compared to *Chronotope I,* then, which is concerned with "brute" facts, *Chronotope II* is vastly different as it is in interested in facts that are "semiotically mediated". This arises through the implementation of hermeneutics, which is the process of understanding meanings and practices in relation to the situations in which they occur. Under this model, understanding the "part" (such as a text, an act, a person) always involves understanding the whole (the context, the activity setting) and vice versa.

Aim of *Chronotope II:* "to refine and deepen our sense of what it means to understand other people and their social practices within relevant contexts of interaction and

communication" and to have an "interest in understanding and enriching the 'life worlds' or 'lived experience' of others (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2005: 33).

Scepticism, Conscientisation, and Praxis (Chronotope III)

The chronotope of Scepticism, Conscientisation, and Praxis derives from a direct criticism of Chronotope II. Classical interpretivism was maligned for its neglect to draw attention to how "dialogue" and "understanding" were shaped by power relations, such as those between early ethnographers (some of who were missionaries and military men) and natives in far-flung "exotic" lands. Impelled by their own religious or colonial enterprises, their interactions with natives were forged under the guise of humanitarianism (a pattern repeated by mid-twentieth century ethnographers who began writing accounts of racial and religious minorities living in American cities). From the scrutiny of these power imbalances and the failure to deal with ideology and domination, critical interpretivism, on which this chronotope is based, was born. Chronotope III, with its origins in neo-Marxism, is clearly modernist and is primarily concerned with issues of human freedom. It is based on the "hermeneutics of suspicion" (Ricoeur 1970), or a radical scepticism about what truth is presumed to be, and is interested in Gadamer's (1972) claim that the prejudices and personal interests of researchers shape their studies more than their judgments. It also rests on Freire's (1970) belief that the enactment of critical reflection leads to individual and collective emancipation in social circles, and as such, most researchers who employ this chronotope strive for democratic social change. They believe that structural conflicts and contradictions hide behind all face value meanings and actions.

Aim of *Chronotope III:* "to deconstruct or unmask the "reality" or "truth" of prejudicial understanding and to reveal the contingency, relativity, and historicity of consciousness,

other people, and the world" (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2005: 37) *and* "to deconstruct one set of language practices or one discourse and replace it with a better one" (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2005: 53).

Power/Knowledge and Defamiliarisation (Chronotope IV)

Postmodern and poststructural perspectives form the basis of this chronotope. At its heart is the concept that knowledge is related to power, resting of Foucault's (1975, 1977) theory that whatever is perceived to be true or false depends on "games of truth" and "regimes of power" - from these all knowledge claims emanate. To highlight this, Kamberelis and Dimitriadis use the example of Foucault's reservations about the "repressive hypothesis" of modern society, in which he expresses three doubts: whether sexual repression is truly an established fact, whether the workings of power belong to the category of repression, and whether the critical discourse concerning repression hindered or added to a power imbalance by calling it "repression" (Foucault 1990: 10). By bringing these doubts to the fore, Foucault maintains his aim was not to demonstrate that they were a mistake, but to reconsider them within the wider discourse of sex in modern society. Likewise, his writings on power had the same intention. Power, he argued, is relational and produced by people in their everyday practices, operating through "technologies of self". Rejecting a model of power where one entity completely dominates another, Focault believed people build asymmetrical power relations against the backdrop of institutional affiliations, which add to the asymmetries also:

> By power, I do not mean 'Power' as a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state. By power, I do not mean, either, a mode of subjugation which, in contrast to violence, has the form of rule. Finally, I do not have in mind a general system of domination

exerted by one group over another, a system whose effects, through successive derivations, pervade the entire social body" (Foucault 1990: 92).

This rejection of hierarchical and unilateral notions of power (which Lash describes as "A necessarily having power over B" [2007: 59]) was a direct challenge to the "from the top down" perspective prevalent in Marxist ideologies. Power, thus, comes from everywhere and is manifest at multiple sites, having a "capillary existence" (Foucault 1990: 94). Since power can also come from the bottom up, what is important to consider when implementing this chronotope is that individuals do not *have* power, but instead they participate in it (Wilson 1995: 45). Foucault is quite clear in making a distinction between "power" and "domination", insisting that power is changeable and subject to reversal, whereas domination is a particular manifestation of power that has become static and ossified. Thus, domination is effectively an asymmetric form of power relations that continues over a period of time and becomes fixed. Comparatively, "regimes of power" work from within, and while pervasive, may not necessarily be distributed in an equal manner either.

Aim of *Chronotope IV:* "to expose the possibilities and consequences of various discourses, with their attendant ideologies, practices, and preferences" (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2005: 53) and "to disarticulate and rearticulate extant dialogues and the power relations that sustain them" (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2005: 58).

Considering the above chronotopes, locating this study in the overlapping areas of *Reading and Interpretation* & *Power/Knowledge and Defamiliarisation* (Fig 1.2) seems most appropriate. This is because the aim of each of these chronotopes accords with the purposes of this study. That is to say, the goal of this study is not to search for "brute" facts about maids or maid cafés, nor does it view maid cafés as mirrors of the world. Similarly, a

call for social change or to debunk one ideology and replace it with another is not on the agenda of this study. Clearly then, *Chronotope I* and *Chronotope III* are not applicable to this research. Since I aim to investigate the social practices inside maid cafés, by examining the "parts" of the otaku construct vis-à-vis the "whole" of these establishments, *Reading and Interpretation* is an optimum chronotope to be located in. The influence of this chronotope in informing this study becomes clear in Chapter Five, where I analyse the data collected during the field trips taken from May to July 2009 and September 2010. While I deal with the conceptual areas of this chronotope thoroughly in Chapter Five Section 5.0, I fundamentally employ a dramaturgical analysis suggested by Goffman (1959), who implemented the terminology of the theatre to create a metaphor for social life. Under this dramaturgy, I read what parts constitute the theatrical *mise en scène* of maid cafés (e.g. décor, props, movement and performance, costume). This aids in interpreting the activity settings of maid cafés as a whole, in addition to the "parts" of customers. Likewise, since the issue of power is pivotal to the dynamics of the maid café, the position of *Power/Knowledge and Defamiliarisation* is also optimum for the considerations concerning the power relations between customers and maids in the *mise en scène.*

1.4.2 Theoretical Framework

Kamberelis and Dimitriadis note that the ways in which epistemologies and theories align are often left unexplained by researchers (2005: 13). To avoid this shortcoming, in this section while focusing on the theoretical underpinnings of the study, I simultaneously pay particular attention to how these not only connect with the epistemological position outlined above but also how they inform it. The theoretical framework of this study is built around two issues that have an intricate link to power: space and identification. To explore

these the respective works of Lefebvre (1974, 1991) Kitabayashi (2005) and Enomoto (2009) are instrumental.

In recent decades, conceptions of space based around performative practices vis-à-vis capitalist societies (usually with a Marxist view) have proliferated in academia (Völker 2007: 107). Lefebvre was one such academic, introducing the notion that space, although traditionally understood to have a purely geometrical existence, was best thought of as a production of social interactivities. Cultural and political actions had thus not previously been regarded as influential on space, which was not viewed as processual but simply as the platform from which these actions sprang (Wolfel 2008: 66). According to Lefebvre, since space is a social construction it is "not a thing but rather a set of relations between things" (1991: 81), in which power is effectively a medium for its production:

Power is everywhere; it is omnipresent…it is everywhere *in space.* It is in everyday discourse and commonplace notions, as well as in police batons and armoured cars…Power has extended its domain right into the interior of each individual, to the roots of consciousness, to the "topias" hidden in the folds of subjectivity (Lefebvre 1976: 86, cited in Soja 1996: 31).

As Soja points out, few scholars besides Lefebvre, including Foucault himself, ever made explicit links between either power and space or space and knowledge (1996: 32). While this may be so, it is important to note that despite the ostensible espousal of a "capillary existence" of power in the above quote, the epistemological position of Lefebvre (whose primary research concern was space in capitalist societies) was Marxist. This of course is discordant with my own epistemology, since Foucault specifically rejected a Marxist, top-down view of power. Nevertheless, Lefebvre's theory of space is still useful for considering the power relations inside maid cafés, albeit modified to accord with the chronotope of *Power/Knowledge and Defamiliarisation.*

The theory of space developed by Lefebvre (1974) viewed spaces as inseparable fusions of the physical, the mental and the social, though for heuristic purposes he disaggregated these into a conceptual triad: *spatial practice* ("*la practice spatiale*"), *representations of space* ("*les représentations de l'espace*"), and *spaces of representation* ("*les espaces de représentation*"). These trichotomous *spaces* align further to complete what Stanek calls Lefebvre's "double triad" (2011: 128) - *perceived spaces* ("*l'espace perçu*"), *conceived spaces* ("*l'espace conçu*") and *lived spaces* ("*l'espace vécu*"). This part of the triad reflects Lefebvre's "phenomenological account of the experience of space", while the former (i.e. *spatial practice, representations of space* and *spaces of representation*) is indicative of his endeavour to perform a "semiological analysis of various ways of production of meaning" (Stanek 2011: 129). The correspondence between these triads can be seen in Fig 1.3.

Fig 1.3
Correspondence of the conceptual double triad devised by Lefebvre (1974)

Conceptual (Double) Triad			Corresponding aspects
spatial practice	⬅➡	*perceived spaces*	the physical
representations of space	⬅➡	*conceived spaces*	the mental
spaces of representation	⬅➡	*lived spaces*	the social

The first element in this triad, *spatial practice,* concerns the physical and material dimensions in which people perform social interactivities. These actions are evaluated on where they occur, and likewise physical areas are evaluated by the actions that take place there (Modan 2007: 309). Lefebvre insists that over time what is considered appropriate in such dimensions becomes naturalised to members of society, making a distinction between

the *competence* and the *performance* aspects of the practices in these created spaces (1991: 33). *Performance-based spatial practices* are the activities, events and interaction within a given area (e.g. eating in a café), while *competence-based spatial practices* concerns one's ability to judge a geographical area (e.g. knowing what behaviour is appropriate there) [Modan 2007: 309]. *Spatial practice,* in effect, involves production and reproduction actualised through physical dimensions, measurable arrangements and configurations, as well as other tangible features (George 2009: 23). This, no doubt, corresponds to what de Certeau would later define as "a practiced place" (1984: 117). A "place", de Certeau maintains, is a geometric entity with clearly defined borders, whereas "space" comes into existence through acting within certain places, thereby giving it its temporal and performative qualities. Power, in these terms of space, is invariably capillary, since it allows the "the ordinary person to build their space through their quotidian practices in a collective" (Völker 2007: 107). *Perceived space* is constitutive of all social practices and is made up of all things that project themselves on to all fives senses (Schmid 2008: 39). Because of this direct correlation between the physical components of geometric areas and the objects that we can see, smell, taste, hear and touch, Shields states that this part of the triad is often easily (and justifiably) confused with *lived space* (1998: 161).

Spatial practices alone, however, are not the sole constituents of how space is produced, as cultural interpretations, judgements and representations forge these practices (Modan 2007: 311). These relate to the second element of social space developed by Lefebvre - *representations of space,* which are best viewed as conceptual space (George 2009: 25). That is, the ways in which physical entities are planned, ordered and organised for people to interact within them. These spaces mainly exist in written and verbalised forms such as descriptions and definitions, as well as maps, plans, pictorial information,

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diagrams, and signs (Schmid 2008: 37). *Conceived space,* thus, is the precursor of *perceived space* since "space cannot be perceived as such without having been conceived in thought previously" (Schmid 2008: 39), andits formation relies on individual components coming together as a whole. George relates Lefebvre's conception of the *representations of space* to Foucault's discursive fields of knowledge, since they form part of societies' larger systems of power, reflecting professional power over space (e.g. architects, urban planners, engineers), and thus the relations between "people and objects and how those relations are perceived, conceived and therefore controlled" (2009: 26).

The final type of social space developed by Lefebvre, *spaces of representation,* refers to symbolic or metaphorical space (George 2009: 27). "*Les espaces de représentation*" are effectively representations of space in an inverted state, and are "spaces of imagination, embodiment and desire" (Tonkiss 2005: 3). While linked to symbolic and artistic practices, they are simultaneously the spaces of "inhabitants" and "users" (Lefebvre 1991: 39). They are, in effect, "the dominated - and hence passively experienced - space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate" (Lefebvre 1991: 39). *Spaces of representation* stem from the day-to-day experiences of people being in the world, and as *lived spaces* are constantly being modified. *Lived space* is effectively "the fields of projects and projections, of symbols and utopias, of the *imaginaire* and…also of the *désir*" (Schmid 2005: 205, cited in Stanek 2011: 129). As such, *spaces of representation* are also the meanings ascribed to spaces in particular social settings, founded in a society's history and which inevitably come to mean different things to different people. Consequently, there is a tendency for spaces of representation to become oversignified, since objects can be interpreted by people in myriad ways (George 2009: 27).

Finally, in addition to Lefebvre's conceptual triad for considering space as "a product of practice, perception, and imagination" (Tonkiss 2005: 3), I find the notion of "nonspace" developed by Morse (1998) beneficial for reflecting on the virtual landscapes of maid-customer relations. Lefebvre, writing in 1974 long before personal computers and the Internet came into mainstream existence, had no opportunity to reflect on this form of contemporary space. Morse, drawing on the idea of Augé's (1995) "non-place", insists that modern technologies cause a dislocation of space due to a disconnect of bodies and face-to-face interaction. In short, "nonspace" can be understood in relation to online technologies (i.e. chat services, social media networks and blogs) as social locales where participants communicate with each other and forge relations in an intangible, "derealised space" (Morse 1998: 102). This is something I will look at further in Chapter Five with my discussion of blogs created by maid cafés.

I shall now turn to the second, interconnected issue of the theoretical framework of this study concerning the activities and practices associated with the otaku orientation. These activities and practices have an inexorable bond with space and power, since, as Lefebvre's triad demonstrates, they are indeed what aid in the production of certain types of space. For this part of the study's theoretical framework I consider the work of Kitabayashi (2005), conducted for the Nomura Research Institute as part of a study on marketing practices aimed at the otaku-oriented. These findings were subsequently developed by Enomoto (2009), and in particular I shall draw on his concept of "the eight essentials of otakuism" (*otaku to yattsu no yokkyū*),[25] which is based directly on the "the six factors of otakuism" (*muttsu no otaku inshi*) theory devised by Kitabayashi. Kitabayashi details the interrelated activities commonly performed as part of the otaku cultural orientation, and charts them as six fundamental principles (see Fig. 1.3 for the original Japanese & Fig. 1.4

for a translated version), to which Enomoto adds two more essentials (Fig 1.5 & Fig 1.6). I aim to use these to examine what elements of these practices can be applied to the maid café, which will in turn reveal what needs maid cafés fulfil for customers, and to what extent they play a part in the overall construct of otakusim. These works correspond to the overlap of the chronotopes of *Reading and Interpretation* & *Power/Knowledge and Defamiliarisation* as all eight essentials are not only "parts" to a "whole" (i.e. space as a collective), but they are also intricately linked regimes of power. While Enomoto fails to fully elucidate what the arrows in his chart in Fig 1.5 indicate, I suggest they represent the interconnectedness of the regimes of power between essentials. While these regimes will unfold throughout my analysis, I shall make the relationship between power, space and the eight essentials described by Enomoto explicit in Chapter Seven, where I recreate the pictorial chart in Fig 1.7 based on my findings.

Finally, I would like to elaborate on and reiterate my use of the word 'otakuism' from Section 1.3.1 of this chapter. It is abundantly clear that in employing the term 'otaku' both Kitabayashi and Enomoto perceive it as a fixed type of person, and have reflected poorly on how the word might be conceived in other ways (as, for example, a set of practices and activities [Lamarre 2009], or a cultural gestalt grounded in media mixes [Ito 2006]). Since I have rejected the notion of 'otaku' exclusively as a person, to differentiate this usage from the perspective I espouse (i.e. a hybridised form of cultural orientation, occupying a liminal space of person and activity), I prefer to implement the term 'otakuism'. I have borrowed this from Barral (1999) by anglicising his term 'otakuisme', with '-ism' intended to indicate "an action or its result", as defined by the *New Oxford American Dictionary* (2009). Despite the creation of these theories by Kitabayashi and Enomoto in relation to 'otaku' conceived as a type of person, the principles they suggest

can nonetheless be applied to the perspective of 'otaku' as a form of cultural orientation resting on a set of practiced activities (i.e. otakuism). These factors when applied in this manner then should not be thought of as identifying *as* a type of person, but rather identifying *with* certain practices inside the cultural orientation.

Fig 1.4
"Six Factors of Otakuism" created by Kitabayashi (2005: 15)
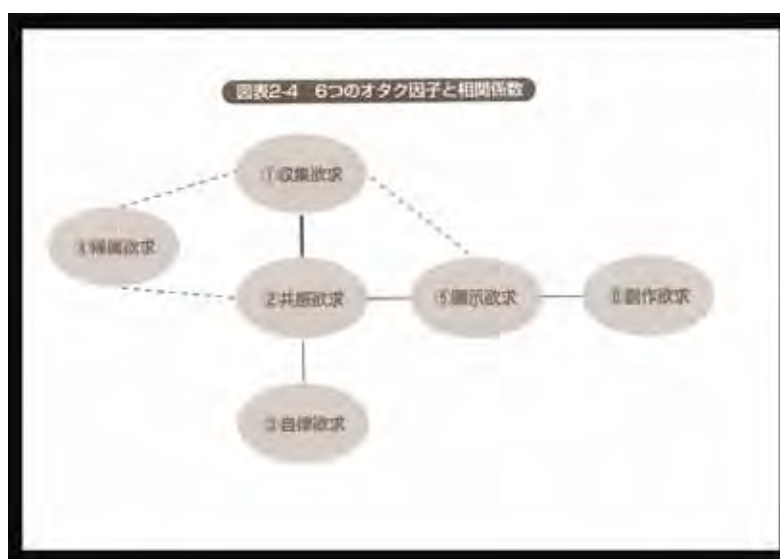
Fig 1.5
Translated version of "Six Factors of Otakuism" created by Kitabayashi (2005: 15)
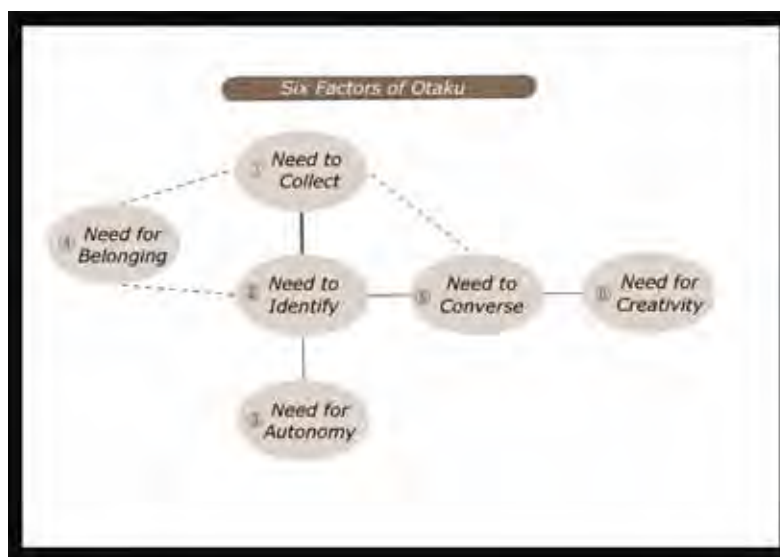
Fig 1.6
"Eight essentials of Otakuism" by Enomoto (2009: 23)
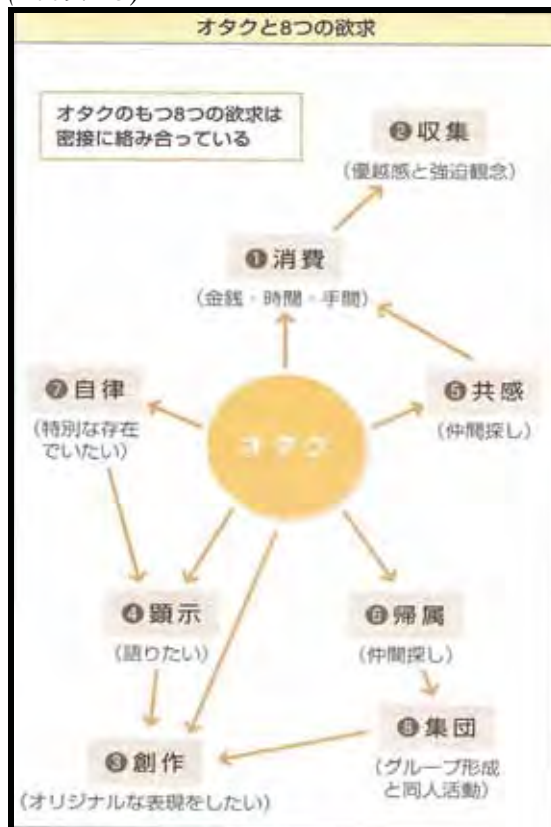
Fig 1.7
Translated version of "Eight essentials of Otakuism" (2009: 23)

The eight essentials of otakuism are:

1) **Expenditure - money, time, effort (*shōhi - kinsen, jikan, tema*)**
   [消費 - 金銭・時間・手間]

Enomoto believes that the foundation of all otaku-oriented actions is expenditure (2009: 21). Examples of this can be fans of manga spending large sums of money on magazines and manga volumes, anime aficionados purchasing DVDs, and idol enthusiasts buying concert tickets. Since the amount spent on these items is often considerably higher than what might be spent on other types of hobbies, Enomoto claims that many fans compensate by minimising the costs of everyday living items (2009: 21). Money, however, is not the only type of expenditure associated with fan practices. Enormous amounts of time

and effort are also spent in the pursuit of fan interests, which Enomoto believes represent the true dedication of the otaku orientation, since (unlike money), these elements are things one can never gain back, and their expenditure in a fast-paced hectic society come at a sacrifice and cost higher than any tangible product (2009: 21). He refers to the number of hours spent engaging in one's hobby as "leisure time" (*tanoshindeiru jikan*) [such as the amount of hours spent watching anime or playing games], but recognises there is also a considerable amount of time used up by fans before their leisure activities actually commence. This could be the time it takes to go to a shop to purchase new goods, the time lost while waiting in a queue to buy concert tickets and while on hold when making a reservation by phone, or the time spent travelling to far-away concert venues. This he calls "the time before leisure time" (*tanoshimu mae no jikan*), and points out that when this is taken into consideration otakuism frequently requires extravagant amounts of time to be used up for engagement in activities from beginning to end (2009: 22). He does note, however, that in relation to anime and manga practices increasingly "the time before leisure time" is being reduced compared to previous years, largely because of piracy on the Internet and through the exchange of unauthorised copies of DVDs and game software (2009: 22).

2) Collecting (*shūshū*) [収集]

According to Enomoto, the essentials of spending and collecting are tightly bound (2009: 22). He lists particular examples of collecting in otakusim, such as owning an entire series of an anime production on DVD, or collecting goods like fan posters and figurines. For certain hobbies, "the very act of collecting itself has meaning",[26] such as collecting all the figurines from a particular anime series to make a complete set of characters. Kitabayashi explains that putting the objects of one's fixation in order evokes "a feeling of

superiority" (*yūetsukan*) [優越感], however there is a possibility for this to be accompanied by "obsessiveness" (*kyōhaku kannen*) [強迫観念] (2005: 15). This sentiment of superiority stems from the initial feelings of satisfaction and fulfilment (*manzokukan*) [満足感] that one attains in otakuism having achieved a complete collection of something, taking pride in an ability to have completed such a task. Obsession, on the other hand, is likely to come from a desire to not want to quit, a feeling experienced when a collection may have reached a certain point, and not continuing may feel like failing.

3) Production (*sōsaku*) [創作]

The third essential in the cultural orientation of otakuism is to create objects that are grounded in specific interests. Kitabayashi explains that this could be an alteration of existing goods (such as the remodelling of a vehicle for car enthusiasts), or something made completely from scratch (such as *dōjinshi* produced manga or an independent itinerary devised by travel buffs) [2005: 15]. Either way the object must express originality (*orijinaruna hyōgen*) [オリジナル表現] and be a reflection of one's own style (*jikoryū no kaishaku*) [自己流の解釈]. Enomoto explains that for many fans of anime and manga, this process usually begins with personal interpretations and impressions of the viewed material being discussed with fellow aficionados by via Internet forums, personal blogs or homepages (2009: 22). Once this process of the exchange of ideas is complete, the final phase is to produce the original product, which might go on to be sold at a *dōjinshi* market.[27] Enomoto notes that independent productions of anime were once quite difficult but in recent years have boomed due to technological advances in software (2009: 22). Because these privately produced manga and anime go on to be disseminated at *dōjinshi* markets, he highlights the fact that fan consumption no longer relies solely on the commercial goods

produced by professionals, but also by amateurs. As such it is not uncommon for these amateur productions to be discovered by major publishing houses and turned into full-scale projects (Enomoto 2009: 24).

4) Conversing (*kenji*) [顕示]

The fourth essential of otakuism is to make conversation (*kataritai*) [語りたい]. Fundamentally this involves communicating with somebody about their specialised interest, and may be to exchange information or to explain and critique a purchased product. Kitabaysahi claims this conversation is often mediated through the Internet, via personal homepages, forums, blogs and chat rooms (2005: 15). This communicative need derives from an underlying desire "to be seen as a great or knowledgeable person by others" and as such otakuism often facilitates an adoration to talk about one's personal hobby (Enomoto 2009: 24).[28] As with the essential of creating, there is one clear detriment associated with the essential of conversing - the "hijacking" (*nottori*) of the ideas and opinions of other people, and claiming them so as to appear original and as possessing expert knowledge.

5) Identify with others with the same interests (*kyōkan*) [共感]

6) Feeling a sense of belonging (*kizoku*) [帰属]

7) Being autonomous (*jiritsu*) [自律]

8) Establishing a group/fraternise (*shūdan*) [集団]

These remaining four essentials of otakuism are tightly intertwined, and all have a cause and effect on each other (indicated by the arrows in Fig 1.5 & Fig 1.6). Enomoto states that while some fans "are generally perceived as introverts, they are in fact the exact opposite and have an inclination towards collectivity" (2009: 24).[29] This most likely derives from the essential of conversing, and consequently it becomes inevitable that a need to find

friends who share a common interest to communicate with evolves. This exchange of ideas and flow of information can happen at school, at events, or over the Internet, and results in the formation of an interest group (*gurūpu keisei*) [グループ形成] and fraternal activities (*dōjin katsudō*) [同人活動]. Within the framework of this kinship, the otaku-oriented develop both a need to identify with each other (*kyōkan*), and a want to feel a sense of belonging (*kizoku*). In effect, a desire to feel like part of a group whose very existence is based on a preceding need to talk freely about interests become manifest. These interest groups and fraternal activities are very similar to the concept of the "affinity group" developed by Gee (2003: 192). Affinity groups, sometimes referred to as "communities of practice", have six characteristics. Firstly, members bond through a "common endeavour", with "affective ties" only influencing this process minimally in initial stages. These ties, however, strengthen over time to further the common endeavour. Secondly, the common endeavour is based on a "whole process", and not on single or decontextualised tasks. Thirdly, members are involved at all stages of the endeavour and can reflect on it as a whole system, displaying their "extensive knowledge". Fourthly (and conversely), members have "intensive knowledge", specialising in one or more parts of the whole. Fifthly, members have "tacit knowledge" (manifested by their physical, mental or social co-ordinations), "distributed knowledge" (shared amongst members), and "dispersed knowledge" (networked across different platforms). Lastly, leaders in affinity groups facilitate turning "tacit knowledge" into "explicit knowledge" (Gee 2003: 192).

Occasionally, the dissemination of information within the cultural orientation transcends a niche community (or particular locale such as a maid café) itself. Examples of this include the popularisation of the Internet forum *2channel* and the retail website *kakaku.com*.[30] Enomoto insists that while wanting to be part of a group, some fans within

the otaku orientation simultaneously demand a degree of autonomy (*jiritsu*) from extraneous communities. This effectively means not wanting to worry about what others may think of them, and "wanting to stick to their own opinions about their own hobbies and their own identities" (Enomoto 2009: 25).[31] Hence, it may seem paradoxical that within otakuism there is simultaneously a search for both autonomy and collectivity, so it is important to stress that any desire for a sense of belonging comes from within their own circles, while autonomy may be understood as freedom to express oneself in a manner best for them without the scrutiny of external entities.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

Maid cafés fall under the umbrella term of cosplay café. As the name suggests, cosplay cafés are establishments where staff members are dressed as some form of cosplay character. The themes are wide-ranging and bountiful - in Akihabara alone there are schoolgirl cafés, butler cafés, nun cafés, policewoman cafés, *miko* (temple girl) cafés, *bishōnen* (pretty boy) cafés, flight attendant cafés, train attendant cafés, cross-play cafés (predominantly male to female transvestite maids), *dansō* cafés (predominantly female to male transvestite butlers) and cosplay-cat cafés (where the waitresses are dressed as cats, to be distinguished from cat cafés where patrons dine with cats of the animal variety). As I have chosen to focus exclusively on the maid persona and maid cafés, these variegated cosplay establishments have not been included in the study, and while their functions may be similar to the maid café, my analysis should not be used to interpret them also.

Researching the personal lives of the young women who play the role of maids in maid cafés is also beyond the scope of this study. There are numerous things to consider for such a study: what piqued their interest in cosplay generally and the circumstances behind

working in a maid establishment, whether such work is a full-time career choice or part-time employment while engaging in studies or additional work, how long they typically stay working for an establishment, what they see as rewarding in such a job, the team dynamics with their co-maids, and their general working conditions. Such questions could not be adequately dealt with in this study, and as such I have narrowed the focus to how maid cafés function from an otaku perspective.

Visiting every maid café in Japan during my research trip was also not a possibility. Instead, I centred on maid cafés situated on the main island of Honshū, which means that large cities like Fukuoka on Kyūshū and Sapporo on Hokkaidō are not included. I discuss the reasons for this location sampling in Chapter 3.

1.6 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. Following this current chapter, Chapter Two reviews the literature that exists on otaku and maids, and establishes an historical trajectory of both Japanese and English language materials. Chapter Three explores the considerations of the study design, discussing the issues concerning ethnography which is the chosen methodology for this project. It also details each phase of the research as it was conducted. Chapter Four provides an historical overview of the maid café, and makes a link with maid cafés to three establishments of the past: geisha teahouses of the Tokugawa Period, the *erotic grotesque nonsense* cafés of the 1930s, and contemporary hostess bars. Chapter Five presents the results from the field in 2009, while Chapter Six presents case analyses of five different types of cafés. In Chapter Six I also reflect on the homogenisation of maid cafés, and suggest a taxonomy. The final chapter, Chapter 7, draws a conclusion by

revisiting the research questions posed in Section 1.3, and makes suggestions for further research.

1.7 Summary

This chapter has introduced the phenomena of maid cafés and the maid persona, the key concepts of otaku and *moe,* and outlined the background of this study. It has highlighted the three purposes of the study (to investigate why maid cafés exist, to explore the links between maid cafés, the maid persona and the concept of *moe,* and to examine where maid cafés fit into the construct of the otaku identity) and has formulated four corresponding research questions. In this chapter I have also discussed the epistemological position the study assumes (locating it in the overlapping areas of Kamberelis and Dimitriadis' chronotopes of *Reading and Interpretation* and *Power/Knowledge and Defamiliarisation*) and its theoretical framework (Lefebvre's triad of space, and the notion of "the eight essentials of otakuism" by Enomoto). I have also defined the terms of otaku and *moe* as will be used in this study, and noted the limitations that exist for this research.

Notes

[1] This is always written in Japanese in the katakana script as 『メイド』

[2] Visual novels, known in Japanese as *bijuaru noberu,* are not printed novels as the name might suggest, but are interactive computer games with narratives.

[3] Please refer to "1.3 Definitions" of this chapter for a full discussion on the meaning of the word "otaku".

[4] Many maps, provided for free and placed at train and subway stations in the Akihabara area, are completely dedicated to listing maid cafés and other shops associated with maid paraphernalia. One such map is the *Boku no Akiba Mappu* (My Akiba Map), which lists all such stores/cafés in the immediate area around JR Akihabara station and the quarter west of *Chūō dōri.* Images of this publication can be seen in Appendix 5.

[5] The seventh edition of the *Tokyo City Guide* by *Lonely Planet* lists the *@home Cafe* in Akihabara under the section "Eating" (Firestone and Hornyak 2008: 160).

[6] It should be noted, however, that some venues in these locations have been more successful than others. For example, while *Royal/T,* a maid café-cum-art gallery based in Culver City, California, opened in 2007 and continues to be lauded as an avant-garde success (Davis 2011), *iMaid* in Toronto, Canada, closed down in November 2007 after only having been in operation since 2006 (*AnimeNewsNetworkAU*).

[7] Shigematsu explains that the "Lolita Complex", transliterated to *rorikon* or *lolicon,* refers to the penchant of older men for the erotica of younger females (1999: 129).

[8] In his book *Japanese Schoolgirl Confidential: How Teenage Girls Made a Nation Cool,* Ashcraft (2010) makes reference to films such as *Battle Royale* and *Blood: The Last Vampire,* and how they formed part of the "Gross National Cool" (Gray 2002: 44) phenomenon in exporting Japanese popular culture. See Footnote 10 for more on the *Cool Japan* policy.

[9] Refer to "1.3 Definitions and Considerations of Key Terms Used" of this chapter for a full discussion on the meaning of the word "*moe*" and "1.4 Research Underpinnings" for discussion on my use of the word "otakuism".

[10] Examples of this include *Meido Kissa Seifuku Korekushon* [メイド喫茶制服コレクション] (A Collection of Maid Café Uniforms) and *Meido Kafe Seifuku Zukan* [メイドカフェ制服図鑑](An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Maid Café Uniforms).

[11] The original reads "le logis, l'endroit où l'on vit".

[12] The original reads "c'est un vouvoiement impersonnel et assez distant que les Japonais utilisent quand ils ont besoin de s'adresser à quelqu'un sans desirer pour autant approfondir la relation ainsi nouée".

[13] The original reads "les otaku repugnant à approfondir les relations personnelles et préfèrent rester enfermés chez eux, dans leur chambre, où ils accumulent de quoi satisfaire leur passion".

[14] Dailot-Bul explains that for many years in Japan media content such as anime, manga, and computer and video games were regarded merely as forms of entertainment and were not considered for their economic value. After the collapse of the economy in the early 1990s, the burgeoning popularity of these media in overseas markets gained attention in Japan and their commercial potential was re-evaluated. This culminated in 2002 when the Japanese government formally introduced a new policy to promote them overseas, branding it as *Cool Japan* (2009: 250).

[15] Tobin also remarks on the similarities between otaku discourse and *nihonjinron* (1998: 110), however, his emphasis is on the technological deterministic theorising of Japanese youth going against the cultural values of *nihonjinron* with their media consumption.

[16] Zanghellini writes that *yaoi* is related to *BL* (*Boys Love*), two manga genres centred on same-sex male relations produced by women for a female audience (2009: 160).

[17] I have borrowed this question from O'Reilly (2003), who, in her article *When is a tourist? The Articulation of Tourism and Migration in Spain's Costa del Sol,* examines the diminishing distinction between tourism and migration using British migrants in Spain as a case study.

[18] This Internet forum was from the website *2channel,* a popular medium for discussion for otaku (Fisch 2009: 131).

[19] The original reads *"otakutachi ga kyōmi no taishō [anime de attari, gēmu de attari, aidoru de attari...] wo mita toki ni "a, suki dana", "gutto kuru na", "kore wa ii!" to omottari, kotoba ni dekizu ni modaeru yōna kaikan wo kanjitari suru yōna furuku kara atta kankaku wo, jippahitokarage ni kukutte shimatta no ga "moe" nanoda"* (オタクたちが興味の対象「アニメであったり、ゲームであったり、アイドルであったり....」を見たときに「あ、好きだな」「グッと来るな」「これはいい！」と思ったり、言葉にできず悶えるような快感を感じたりするような古くからあった感覚を、十把一絡げにくくってしまったのが「萌え」なのだ).

[20] The original reads *"anime ya manga, gēmu no kyarakutā ni taisuru otaku no [ippan no hito ni wa totemo rikai dekinai yōna] netsuretuna kōi ya aijō wo shimesu yōgo toshite teigi shimashita"* (アニメやマンガ、ゲームのキャラクターに対するオタクの「一般の人にはとても理解できないような」熱烈な好意や愛情を示す用語として定義しました).

[21] The original reads *"jissai no renai yori mo nijigen no anime kyara ya sanjigen no aidoru ni moeta hō ga hādoru ga hikui"* (実際の恋愛よりも２次元のアニメキャラや３次元のアイドルに萌えたほうがハードルが低い).

[22] The original reads *"otakuteki na [suki][konomi]no hyōgen da ga, kojin ni yori naiyō wa kotonaru"* (オタク的な『好き』『好み』の表現だが、個人により内容は異なる).

[23] Barral insists that in translating Japanese terms such as this (and 'otaku'), the meanings behind them become lost (1999: 25). Instead he prescribes that adopting the original Japanese word itself into foreign languages, as has been done with terms such as 'karaoke' and 'manga', is a panacea to this type of mistranslation (1999: 25). I have taken up this suggestion, and so rather than using terms such as "pseudo-romance" or "imaginary love" interchangeably with '*moe*', I use it in its original Japanese form throughout this study.

[24] At this point it is important to note that for the third and fourth components, Kamberelis and Dimitriadis use the terms "approaches" for "methodologies" and "strategies" for "methods" (2005: 23). My preference is to use "methodology" and "method" throughout this study, the reasons for which I explain in Chapter Three Section 3.1.

[25] *Yokkyū* (欲求) may be translated as "need" or "desire", however I prefer "essentials" to capture the nuance of the necessity of the particular practices listed by Enomoto.

[26] The original reads *"otaku shumi ni yotte wa atsumeru koto jitai ni imi ga aru mono mo aru"* (オタク趣味によっては集めること自体に意味があるものもある).

[27] Lee defines *dōjinshi* as fans books produced by amateur manga artists, largely based on characters and storylines from existing titles (2010: 157).

[28] These quotes in their original form read *"jibun wo sugoi hito toshite mite hoshii"* (自分をすごい人として見てほしい) and *"hotondo no otaku wa jibun no shumi ni tsuite kataru no ga daisuki da"* (ほとんどのオタクは自分の趣味について語るのが大好きだ) respectively.

[29] The original reads "*otaku wa naikōteki to iu ippan imēji to wa mushiro gyaku de, sekkyokuteki ni [shūdan] ka suru keikō ni aru*" (オタクは内向的という一般イメージとはむしろ逆で、積極的に「集団」化する傾向にある).

[30] Fisch explains that *2channel* is the name of the website that acts a discussion forum for otaku (2009: 131).

[31] The original reads "*jibun no shumi ya dokuji no iken wo tsuranukitai*" (自分の趣味や独自の意見を貫きたい).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

Reflecting (and reiterating) the need for this study that was noted in Chapter One Section 1.1, this review of existing literature on the maid phenomenon is somewhat brief. The reason for this is uncomplicated - academic research exclusively on maid cafés and *meido* is all but nonexistent, with *moe* similarly suffering a lack of scholarly attention. The brevity of this chapter, however, is offset by Chapter Four, which contextualises the *meido* by retracing historical representations of domestic servants in nineteenth century Britain. In this literature review I integrate what little research that does exist on *meido,* maid café and *moe* with the more extensive body of literature on otaku. Since all four of these elements are tightly interwoven, I deal with them in this chapter under the umbrella term "otakuology", an appellation created by Okada (1996).[1]

As in so many other academic fields, discourse within the discipline of otakuology is far from trouble free. To claim that otaku-related studies are in crisis is perhaps an overstatement,[2] but nevertheless it has a number of problems that I wish to address in this chapter. These issues are no doubt linked to the shifting definition of and attitudes towards otaku over the past three decades, the changes of which are reflected with precision particularly in Japanese language otakuology. Academic research on otakuology predominantly suffers from three problems. These are:

1) a failure to recognise the diversity that exists within the cultural orientation of otaku and its extended phenomena (such as maid cafés)

2) the *a priori* assumption that fandom intrinsically forges identities, resulting in a form of "technological exoticism" (Herring 2008: 71) of otaku

3) the pathologisation of the otaku phenomenon

Perhaps the most palpable trouble spot of otakuology is its reduction of otaku culture to a singular model. In Chapter One I remarked on Ortabasi's (2008) claim that otaku had been dealt with in a homogenised fashion by the media, and made a parallel to the *nihonjinron* paradigm. This is something I wish to take up further in this chapter, since this homogenisation of otaku has not only occurred in the mass media, but also in an overwhelming number of academic works. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter (and not a research aim) for a full investigation into *nihonjinron,* I would like to highlight the principles that are common to both it and discourses on otakuology. That is to say, I am less occupied with the process of how *nihonjinron* was historically formed and what agendas were behind it, and more focused on the implications of its tenets and the parallels that may be drawn with these to otakuology. I shall then go on to discuss the issues of identities being linked to media engagement, and the pathologisation of fandom. By highlighting these issues I espouse a multicultural and multi-stratified model (formulated by Sugimoto [2010: 12]) of maid cafés and otaku.[3]

Section 2.1 of this chapter explores these problems in the discourse of otakuology. Section 2.2 deals with the Japanese-language literature on otakuology and has been organised to create an historical trajectory that illustrates its patterns. Section 2.3 outlines the English literature on the subject, while Section 2.4 summarises and attempts to synthesise Sections 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3, reinforcing the multi-stratified model this study has implemented.

2.1 The Problems of Otakuology Discourse

Nihonjinron has varied English translations, including "the theory of the Japanese" (Nozaki 2009: 485), "discussions of the Japanese" (Stevens 1997: 11) and "theories of being Japanese" (Yoder 2011: 182). It refers to the vast body of quasi-academic literature that views Japanese culture as one entity (i.e. in a homogenised fashion, through what Sugimoto (2010) calls a monocultural model), asserting the uniqueness of the Japanese (Yoder 2011: 182). Consequently it presupposes that external social theories cannot be effectively applied to Japan since it exhibits a culture like no other nation on Earth (Stevens 1997: 11). According to Sugimoto, studies conducted under a *nihonjinron* paradigm contain four underlying assumptions (2010: 4). These are:

1) That *all* Japanese share whatever attribute is under discussion, irrespective of elements such as class, gender, occupation, etc.

2) That there is no variation in the degree this attribute is manifest

3) That this attribute exists only minimally in other societies (i.e. it is unique)

4) That this attribute has been manifest for an unspecified amount of time and is independent of historical circumstances

Assumptions 1 and 2 particularly resonate with discourse on otakuology. In many of these bodies of work, 'obsessiveness' appears to be the selected attribute that *all* otaku share, with no consideration of factors such as ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, education, marital status, physical abilities and so on, in how this might be manifest. It is for this reason, as I mentioned in Chapter One, I have yet to encounter analyses that might, for example, examine issues such as what media mixes ethnic minorities in Japan identifying as otaku engage in, how gay, lesbian or transgender people

in Japan integrate otaku-oriented activities into their lives, or how physical impairments might impact the recreational undertakings of fans. The second assumption, which I also commented on in Chapter One, is equally prevalent amongst otakuologists. Very few seem to address the issue of the degree of this 'obsessiveness', and it seems almost naturalised that the level of engagement is extreme. Assumption 3 is effectively what demarcates 'otaku behaviour' and 'obsessiveness' to a subculture (i.e. that in mainstream society these activities do not exist), while Assumption 4 is perhaps the least relevant to otakuology (on the contrary, the birth of otaku seems to have a definitive date with the publication of Nakamori's 1983 article, even if the phenomenon itself existed *avant la lettre*). Since academic literature that deals with the essentialist characterising of the Japanese population has been labelled *nihonjinron,* published material which homogenises otaku could similarly be named *otakuron* to illustrate this parallel. Indeed, sociologist Osawa Masachi did release a book in 1986 with this title where he put the otaku imagination up for psychoanalytic assessment, however, to avoid confusion with this publication I eschew the use of this term to make the analogy. Instead, I suggest that these viewpoints form part of a wider neo-*nihonjinron* renaissance in academic studies of Japan. In short, otaku, when viewed exclusively as a type of person and not as part of a cultural orientation resting on sets of activities, exist in these publications in one form and one form only. This is obviously problematic in the grander scheme of otakuology, and as Nozaki highlights, constructions of homogenised attributes invariably involve the marginalisation of "internal Others" (2009: 488). In following my examples above, the "internal Others" in relation to Assumption 1 could be the ethnic minority otaku, the lesbian otaku, or the disabled otaku, or, in relation to Assumption 2, the casual hobbyist. This monocultural view seems to have been internalised and propagated by scholars who identify as otaku themselves, and as

Lamarre notes, the works of leading Japanese figures like Okada Toshio, Murakami Takashi and Anno Hideaki fuse personal experiences and research, writing that "when they speak *about* otaku, they speak *as* otaku" (italics my emphasis) [Lamarre 2009: 146]. As I noted in Chapter One, processes of self-homogenisation and self-essentialising seem to have spilled over into the non-academic otaku arena, with a labelling process evident in local print media.[4]

While the monocultural view implemented in otakuology is a major issue, there are two further problems related to the literature of otakuology (that are connected to Assumptions 1 and 2). These are the relationship fandom has with the concept of identity, and its resultant pathologisation. Hermes, while critiquing the general discourse of media audiences, writes that most literature on the subject manifests an *a priori* assumption that the formation of identities is directly linked to fan practices (2009: 113). This is incorrect, she claims, since these links are not direct but rather are "part of discursive webs of meaning reaching far outside the individual media texts", a concept that "seems to have been lost" in studies of fandom (Hermes 2009: 113). Applying this to otakuology, academics, it would seem, have made the assumption that anime, manga and gaming texts have an intrinsic connection to and are directly correlated with the construction of otaku identities. However, as Hermes is also quick to follow up, it is not necessarily incorrect to suggest that a shaping of the self through the interactivity of media texts is possible. Rather, media texts as a gestalt, in addition to the other activities and practices in which we are engaged in everyday life, must be considered as part of these discursive webs to paint a more accurate picture of fan identities. This assumption of a direct link to identity can often be seen in media reports on maid cafés that suggest it is necessarily (male) manga and anime fans who frequent these establishments, when this may not always be the case.

Finally, the view that fandom is a form of pathology has impacted otakuology. As Hermes notes, this is not a new phenomenon and is evident in discourse as far back as the 1960s with descriptions of young girls having a "sick fascination" with boy bands (i.e. The Beatles) [2009: 114]. This undoubtedly resulted in a tendency to view fans as the "Other", a position held strongly in Japanese language otakuology and one I discuss below.

2.2 Japanese Language Otakuology

The fluid definition of 'otaku' and perceptions of it/them over the course of the past thirty years is mirrored in Japanese language otakuology. Corresponding to the Miyazaki Tsutomu incident, the earliest works tend to pathologise the phenomenon by adopting a psychosocial viewpoint, dissecting the actions and psyche of those believed to be maniacal fans. The mid to late 1990s witnessed the reclamation of otaku, and studies during this period are heavily concentrated on the otaku relationship to anime and manga simulacra. Literature that comes after the year 2000 places emphasis on the consumption of otaku, a topic of interest that presumably arises from the fact that their spending habits were not curbed during the recession in Japan, and the otaku market was seen as a panacea for ending economic hardship in the country (Macias & Machiyama 2004: 15, see note 10 of Chapter One for more on the *Cool Japan* phenomenon). Recent works blur these lines however, and pathological standpoints on otakuology are still common.

While in recent years academic interest in otakuology has proliferated, the phenomenon on the whole remains largely understudied in Japan. There are no firm reasons why this might be, though the low status of the fan, as Hermes as pointed out, is a likely factor. McLelland's attributes this to the persistent reserve of Japanese academics to approach both sexuality and popular culture in a serious manner (2000: 61). Sexuality

(which imbues some discussions on otaku) is a particularly ungainly subject, with sex being "regarded as *asobi* (play) and not seen as an activity decent people discuss, including in academic contexts". Azuma (2001) provides us with a fuller explanation for this neglect of otaku culture in Japanese academia, and ascribes three primary factors. Firstly, the prevalent stereotype of the 1990s that all otaku were perverted sociopaths like Miyazaki impacted the initiative of Japanese researchers. The subculture came to be rendered an unwholesome topic of study, with the view that otaku were bereft of any communicative ability or social activities, and hence unworthy of research. Secondly, Japanese academics feel a "strong psychoanalytical resistance" (Azuma 2001) to admitting that otaku culture was spawned from the influences of post-war American popular culture, as it affronts their sense of identity and 'Japaneseness'. Lastly, otaku themselves are hostile research subjects who are defensive of and unwilling to share their experiences and activities. This reservedness and aloof nature has prevented non-otaku scholars from advancing deep into the territory of otaku culture. Consequently, critical theory is dominated largely by self-identified otaku (Lamarre 2009: 146). Saitō also recognises this tendency, further noting that approaches to the study of otaku are invariably divided into the two categories of "us" and "them", with the latter often vilifying otaku by positioning them as asocial misanthropes (2000: 51). In his own work, Saitō rejects this divide and claims to implement an "otaku of otaku" (that is, "enthusiast of enthusiasts") approach to his research, but as Gardner highlights in his critique of Saitō he fails to accomplish this:

…his writing wavers uncomfortably between otaku as self and as Other, at times referring to them in the third person and adopting the vague first-person-plural pronoun *wareware* at others (2002: 488).

The earliest discourse on otaku consistently employed the approach of "them". Nakamori is credited as the pioneer of otaku theory, creating the term in 1983 (as it is

understood in its contemporary context), after deciding the existing words of *mania* (buff), *nekyōteki fan* (hardcore fan) and *nekurazoku* (dark-natured group) did not fully capture the essence of the denizens he wanted to explore. He first used 'otaku' in an essay published in a *rorikon* themed manga magazine titled *Manga Burikko* (Kinsella 2005: 549). The content of his regular columns was based on his casual observations of manga aficionados, and was simply titled *Otaku no Kenkyū* (Research about Otaku). These essays were significant for positioning and highlighting the emerging phenomenon, though since he was writing for entertainment purposes to a general audience his facetious stance treated his subjects with patronising contempt. The pinnacle of his "them" approach is perhaps best demonstrated in the first installment of the series, when he describes the participating fans of the *Comiket* manga convention as:

the ones that every class has - the dudes that are no good at sport, who spend lunchtime stuck inside the classroom, who hang in the shade and hesitantly get a kick out of playing chess…..they're either skinny as if malnourished, or fat pigs who look like their foreheads are about to swallow up the rims of their glasses (Nakamori 1983).[5]

In this fashion the idiosyncrasies of the Japanese 'geek' were born, and while Nakamori merely labelled a preexisting phenomenon as 'otaku' with the article itself making minimal impact because of its limited readership (Macias & Machiyama 2004: 14), he nevertheless crystallised an emerging force in Japanese society. Perhaps Nakamori's most overlooked and undervalued point is the mention of female otaku (albeit a disparaging portrait, describing them as "mostly bobbed-hair fatties with tree-trunk legs",[6] who have only recently come to be the focus of otakuology.

Schodt claims the column was cancelled for fear it would affront the readers of the magazine, and there appears to have been no further studies of otaku until several years

later (1996: 44). Machiyama (1989) revived otakuology with *Otaku No Hon* (The Otaku Book), which (according to Machiyama himself), became a bestseller and helped popularise the term (Macias & Machiyama 2004: 14). It details the lives of anime fans and *dōjinshi* artists, examining the motivating forces behind their passions. The Miyazaki Tsutomu incident occurred the same year as the release of the book, and while it aimed to promote otaku culture it had in fact the opposite effect, stigmatising them as misfits with mental aberrations. In the aftermath of the otaku backlash, the approach of "them" appears to have proliferated in academic literature. Nakajima (1991) links otaku to both *yaoi* fandom (a manga genre centring on male homosexual love stories, created and consumed by women) [Suzuki 1999: 243] and eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia, claiming all involved are unable to make proper distinctions between reality and fantasy. The very name 'otaku' (linked to its original meaning of 'home'), she claimed, indicates an identity exceedingly self-interested and self-involved, and the narrow interests of manga and anime that otaku posses actually stem from a desire to be part of a broader social collective. It is their inability to achieve this integration into a circle that ultimately leads to their mental imbalance.

This pathologization of otaku culture continues with Miyadai (1994), who also shares the view that the asocial nature of otaku stems from their extremely narrow selection of interests. His early studies compare otaku to *shinjinrui* (the "new breed" [Herbig & Borstoff 1995: 49] or the "new Homo sapiens" [Azuma 2009: 137]) - a rising phenomenon of the mid-1980s, identified by the media as the children born to baby-boomers growing up in the post-war epoch of an opulent and economically potent Japan. *Shinjinrui* were considered a generation well-educated yet irresolute, overprotected and pampered by their mothers, and happy to relish in the affluence of their booming nation (Herbig & Borstoff

1995: 49). The comparative study of *shinjinrui* and otaku by Miyadai revealed that the former group considered themselves trendy and chic consumers (spending large sums of money on brand-name goods) while the latter did not, as their purchases were predominantly manga and anime. Miyadai concluded this narrow field of interests is what makes otaku asocial, pathologising their fandom like others before him. The later research of Miyadai (1994) also links the phenomenon of *kogyaru* (another term created by the media to describe a street-style fashion of bleached blonde hair, loose socks and big shoes, worn by young women who were often perceived as rebellious and licentious) to otaku, as he determines that both subcultures were born from a feeling that community spirit had been lost in Japanese society.

A hiatus in otakuology saw the development of the "us" approach in the 1990s. Okada (1996, 1997) championed the otaku cause, creating a whole new genre of study with his 1996 publication *Otakugaku Nyūmon* (An Introduction to Otakuology) and *Tōdai Otakugaku Kōza* (Lectures on Otakuology from Tokyo University) which followed a year later. In these he reflects on the mass hysteria surrounding otaku after Miyazaki, but pays particular attention to their relationship to anime and manga. Claiming that otaku are a group of people who have a highly evolved sensitivity toward images, he suggests that otaku have developed an extreme sense of connoisseurship (Okada 1996: 14). Okada links the ideas of contemporary manga and anime being related to the two-dimensional features of Edo era art, and establishes a genealogy (a concept later taken up by Japanese artist Murakami Takashi in his *Superflat* exhibition of 2001). Okada has had numerous publications since *Otakugaku Nyūmon* supporting the otaku cause, and Lamarre (2009) notes that his ultimate aim is to promote both anime and otaku as topics worthy of serious academic attention.

Azuma (2001) is perhaps the most widely recognised otakuologist in Japan after Okada, and is consistent with his "us" approach. In his 2001 postmodernist analysis of otaku he insists that the subculture was born from the affects of the American occupation of Japan after the Second World War. The rebuilding of the nation and its newfound capitalist agenda stood as the dominant "grand narratives" of the era (Azuma 2009: 28). Grand narratives are a series of systems that were implemented (through intellectual thought, politics and economics), with the function of unifying society as a whole. From the 1970s onwards these grand narratives in Japan began to diminish, expedited by rapid economic growth and political events like the Red Army incident (Azuma 2009: 28). This breaking down of the grand narrative spawned otaku culture, whose actions and behaviour were a response to this ultimate loss. As such they became self-directed and "narcissistic", and consumption became a primary motive of their lives. Azuma pays particular attention to *moe*, and how otaku have come to extract certain character attributes (such as maid uniforms, cat ears and green hair) from a metaphorical database (2009: 39). These elements have become the focal points of fan attention and attraction, making the narratives of anime and manga (which had previously been central to the world of otaku) redundant. In fact, a contrary effect has occurred. Narratives now derive from these *moe*-characters and database, and Azuma utilises the figure of Dejiko to illustrate this point (2009: 42). She belongs to no specific manga or anime narrative, but rather her first incarnation was as a mascot for a store specialising in gaming and anime. Because of her salience in commercials, she became so popular that anime and games revolving around this character were created in response.

Like Okada and Azuma, Saitō also examines otaku and their connection to manga/anime simulacra (2000: 53). Focusing specifically on otaku sexuality, he

investigates their use of media through their relationship to *sentō bishōjo* (warrior belles), such as the teenage *Sailor Moon* heroines and nubile combatants like Ayanami Rei from *Neon Genesis Evangelion.* Saitō believes that otaku invariably find sexual gratification from engaging with these manga and anime characters, using the images for onanistic purposes (2000: 53). This, he claims, is a defining characteristic of the otaku personality. The appeal of the warrior belles is their naïveté to and innocence of their own sexuality and lustful appeal, and unlike older anime and manga heroines who fight with clear intentions of revenge and justice, the young female warrior engages in battles merely because fighting is an inherent part of her make up. This analysis of otaku sexuality by Saitō is oversimplified and plagued with sweeping generalisations, and is almost a reversion to the pathological viewpoint expressed in the earliest days of otakuology.

Morikawa (2005) also touches on the sexuality of otaku in his study of the urban landscape of Akihabara, outlining the transition of the district from a family oriented district centred on household electronics to the otaku mecca that it is today. He highlights the personal computer as a catalyst for this change, and the need for stores in Akihabara to become specialised once suburban shopping malls drained the area of household electronics sales in the 1980s. In his study of the Akihabara landscape he remarks on the excess of *shōjo* images that permeate most corners of it. His study concludes that otaku are attracted to objects weaker than themselves (almost to the point of obsession), which ultimately inhibits their integration into the broader spectrum of Japanese society. As with Saitō we once again witness a pathologisation of otaku activities that harks back to the 1980s.

The most recent years of otakuology have been dominated by theories of otaku consumption and economic analyses. Kitabayashi examines the four hundred billion yen per year otaku industry, and divides otaku into five separate categories whose spending

habits are different for each group (2005: 12-24). Hotta (2005) examines the *moe* boom at length, as do Morinaga (2005) and Kawaai (2005) who dissect the economic potential of the phenomenon. In 2006 at the height of the maid café boom Akabori (2006) even devised a manual on how to open and operate such establishments, while Hayakawa (2008) has documented a history of cafés in Akihabara. These discourses are all largely focused on one element - the economic possibilities of the industries frequented by otaku and methods for capitalising on their interests.

These works invariably suffer from the three problems I have discussed in Section 2.1. All work from within a monocultural model, and the naturalisation of a link between an otaku identity and fandom is particularly salient. Additionally, as evidenced by the number of psychosocial analyses, the pathologisation of otaku vis-à-vis their fan practices has been a recurring theme.

2.3 English Language Otakuology

Academic literature on otakuology in the English language is also quite scarce, and follows no particular pattern in the way Japanese discourse has.

Galbraith (2009b) remarks that *moe* "has been reduced to isolated and inconsistent use in academia", while Iles (2009) notes that despite otaku being a term that most people have heard of, "academically critical studies in English seeking to explain, situate and engage the myriad connotations behind it have been remarkably slow to emerge." Most existing literature dealing with the otaku phenomenon is restricted to its relationship exclusively with manga and anime. However, Iles believes that such studies fail to examine how otaku culture, whose influence and spread is enormous, impacts contemporary

Japanese society in a wider sense. According to Iles (2009), this is the reason why English

publications investigating otaku are so scarce:

> simply conceptualising the parameters for such a study is a daunting task, given the potential for the
> term to spill into seemingly boundless critique of contemporary Japan.

Schodt (1996), Poitras (2007) and Brenner (2007) have dedicated studies to manga

and anime images in reference to otaku fandom. Similarly, Lamarre (2009) examines the

process of anime creation, paying particular attention to the concept of the moving image

by deconstructing how otaku read such simulacra. Still in this vein, many English language

works are largely focused on the transnationalism of otaku interests. Kelts (2006) examines

the "invasion" of Japanese popular culture in the United States, McGray (2002) investigates

the "gross national cool" of Japan and how it has become a cultural powerhouse abroad,

while Winge (2006) focuses specifically on the appropriation of cosplay in North America.

Condry (2006) also briefly examines otaku in relation to Japanese hip-hop culture,

questioning what it means to be a fan of this genre of music. As with anime and manga, he

pinpoints consumption as a key factor, but insists that a higher level of engagement with

the culture is necessary for one not to be seen as an otaku within the hip-hop circle. This

might include patronising hip-hop clubs, writing lyrics or practising deejaying and break

dancing. Merely purchasing records and listening to them enthusiastically reduces one to an

otaku. While not the main focus of his work, the discussion of otaku by Condry is

important for re-evaluating what constitutes an otaku.

Few, if any apart from Galbraith (2011), have made comprehensive contributions to

studies exclusively about maid cafés. While a sound attempt at decoding maid cafés,

Galbraith's study does have some problems. Firstly, he subsumes maid cafés with all

cosplay cafés in Akihabara, and includes venues such as *Pash Cafe Nagomi* (an

establishment where the waitresses are dressed as schoolgirls) in his analysis. Secondly, the study contains some methodological inconsistencies including no justification for his sample of cafés, arbitrary and randomly selected visiting times, and no reflection on his role as researcher or foreigner inside the cafés. Thirdly, as has been so common, he works from within a monocultural paradigm, thereby homogenising maid cafés and not recognising the diverse variables amongst individual establishments. This no doubt is linked to his places of study. While he claims to visit five different cafés he continues to state that his "main site" is the @*home cafe* in Akihabara, using the venue as a yardstick to measure and evaluate the structure of other establishments. Lastly, his study is limited by its focus on cafés located solely in Akihabara, with no investigation into the broader range of cafés in other areas of Japan, or for that matter, in other areas of Tokyo.

2.4 Summary

This chapter has highlighted three problems with academic research on otakuology: the homogenisation of otaku and extended phenomena (such as maid cafés), the *a priori* assumption that there is a direct link between formations of identities and fan practices, and the pathologisation of fandom. The monocultural view adopted by an overwhelming number of otakuologists has many parallels to the *nihonjinron* paradigm with their assumptions, a perspective this study eschews by endorsing a multi-stratified model of otakuology and by striving to acknowledge the diverse variables of maid cafés and their patrons.

Japanese-language otakuology, while following an historical trajectory that appears to correspond to public perceptions, has consistently adopted a dichotomised "us" and "them" approach resulting in a pathologisation of fans in Japan. While English language

otakulogy has no similar history, there is still a tacit pathologisation in the existing literature that is mostly centred on the otaku connection to manga and anime simulacra. Many of these studies also adopt a monocultural view, and often fail to address the impact and influence of otaku culture on broader Japanese society. As such there is a wide gap amongst discourses. The study of otaku culture has been approached cautiously and with hesitation in both Japanese and English language academic circles. In Japan it is possible that this is due to the reluctance of scholars to treat popular culture as a serious academic concept, while abroad the appropriate angles from which to approach otakuology have not been fully developed.

Notes

[1] Okada's 1996 publication (Ōta Shuppan, Tokyo) is entitled *Otakugaku Nyūmon* [オタク学入門] which he translates in a subtitle as *Introduction to Otakuology.* My use of the word is different to his since he created it at a time before maids, maid cafés and *moe* existed, so his treatment of otaku does not include these phenomena.

[2] In cultural studies and works on ethnography as a methodology, it has been suggested that there is a crisis of representation.

[3] There is an unfortunate paradox with Sugimoto's own use of a multicultural model when it comes to his treatment of the otaku phenomena. Describing them as "misanthropic youths", he continues to state that "they are obsessed with animation, *manga,* computer games, and other unsocial hobbies, shunning direct human interactions, locking themselves in their rooms, and sharing their interests online with other youngsters under similar conditions" (Sugimoto 2010: 262). This clearly homogenises otaku and places them within a monocultural framework, precisely the approach he endeavours to reject.

[4] An example of this is the way I became subject to this monocultural model myself at times by café patrons and friends I made who identified as otaku. This model relegated me to the margins as an "internal Other" because of my ostensible status as a "mere" causal hobbyist of manga and anime. This was manifest during some café conversations when I did not meet the expectations of fellow customers by failing to know an obscure character of a series or to purchase the very latest edition. One particularly memorable occasion was while having lunch (not at a maid café) with a male the same age as me that I had met and become friends with at a venue in Akihabara two months prior. During our discussion, I was bluntly told by him that a weak point (*yowai ten*) in my study was that I had too little knowledge of the intricacies of the *Evangelion* plot line. Put simply, the fact I might even consider myself as part of the otaku cultural orientation with just a part-time interest in anime and manga, was inconceivable to him.

[5] The original reads *dono kurasu nimo irudesho, undō ga mattaku dame de, yasumi jikan nanikamo kyōshitsu no naka ni tojikomotte, hikage de ujiuji to shōgi nanika ni uchikyōjitetari suru yatsu ga...sore de eiyō no ikitodoitenai yōna garigari ka, ginbuchi megane no tsuru wo ni kuikomasete warau shirobuta katena kanji* (どこのクラスにもいるでしょ、運動が全くだめで、休み時間なんかも教室の中に閉じ込もって、日陰でウジウジと将棋なんかに打ち興じてたりする奴らが…それで栄養のいき届いてないようなガリガリか、銀ブチメガのつるを額に喰い込ませて笑う白ブタかてな感じ).

[6] The original reads *okappa de taigai wa futottete, marutanbō mitaina futoi ashi* (オカッパでたいがいは太ってて、丸太ん棒みたいな太い足).

CHAPTER 3

STUDY DESIGN

3.0 Introduction

This chapter will outline the study design for this research. Ethnography was the methodology chosen to address the purposes of the study, and it has been structured utilising the "key concepts in ethnography" developed by O'Reilly (2009). I have also drawn on the work of Pink (2007; 2009), incorporating elements of what she describes as visual and sensory ethnographies. The fieldwork for this study involved several considerations, such as gaining access, establishing an insider role and gaining an emic perspective, building rapport, retaining an etic perspective and avoiding "going native" (O'Reilly 2009: 3). The methods used were participation, asking questions, observation, document collection and taking photographs. In order to answer the research questions (Chapter One, Section 1.3), a total of three months was spent in the field (i.e. maid cafés in Japan) from May 2009 to July 2009. There was a subsequent twelve-day trip the year after in September 2010, which enabled me to add to the data quantitatively by visiting cafés that had opened over that twelve-month period. Additionally, it became possible to develop the case analyses for the research (see Section 3.8). These lengths of time enabled me to become immersed in maid café culture, without overstaying and running the risk of "going native" (this will be discussed later in this chapter).

Table 3.0 outlines the above considerations, methods and stages of the research. After an initial discussion on treating ethnography as a methodology, I continue to explain these concepts and stages in this chapter in the order they appear in the Table 3.0.

Table 3.0
Stages, Considerations and Methods of the Research (based on the "Key Concepts of Ethnography" [O'Reilly 2009])

Stage (with chapter section indicated)	Activities	Date and Location	Research Phase
FIRST: 3.4 Gaining Access	1) General gathering and compiling of maid café data bank (*Table 3.2 & Table 3.3*) 2) Recognising barriers to access 3) Sampling and demarcating the "maid café" (*Fig 3.0, Fig 3.1 & Fig 3.2*)	March - May 2009 Sydney & Honshū	Pre-fieldwork/ Fieldwork
SECOND: 3.5 Establishing a role	1) Considering the overt-covert continuum 2) Gaining an emic perspective	May 2009 Honshū	Fieldwork
THIRD: 3.6 Entering the field and Employment of methods	1) Observing 2) Participating 3) Collecting documents and artefacts 4) Taking Photographs 5) Making fieldnotes	1 May 2009 - 31 July 2009 Honshū	Fieldwork
FOURTH: 3.7 Getting Out	1) Retaining an etic perspective 2) Avoiding "going native" and over-rapport	July 2009 Honshū	Fieldwork
FIFTH: 3.8 Returning to the field	1) Case analyses	September 2010 Honshū	Fieldwork
SIXTH: 3.9 Coding, Analysing, and considering Reflexivity	1) Preparing for data analysis by organising documents, sorting photographs and tabulating observations. 2) Analysing data	December 2009 - March 2010 Sydney	Post-fieldwork

3.1 Clarification and Consistency of Terms Used

Before proceeding any further, it is imperative that the key terms used throughout this chapter be defined to ensure maximum consistency. As noted in Chapter One, Kamberelis and Dimitriadis suggest there are four dimensions of social inquiry (2005: 13): epistemologies, theories, methodologies and methods. Since I have dealt with the epistemological position and theoretical framework in Chapter One Section 1.4, my attention now turns to the remaining two dimensions of social inquiry, which are, in fact (as I explained in Note 23 of Chapter One) referred to by Kamberelis and Dimitriadis as "approaches" and "strategies" respectively. I prefer, however, to use the term "methodology" rather than "approach", and "method" rather than "strategy", since most literature concerning ethnography also utilises this terminology. For Kamberelis and Dimitriadis this decision would be somewhat controversial, since they are explicit with their dissatisfaction at how negligently and loosely these terms have been thrown around in academia:

we want to mention that we also have problems with how many scholars use the terms *method* and *methodology*. It is simply not useful to indiscriminately refer to all sorts of things, including what we call overarching theories that ground research (e.g. interpretivism, positivism), approaches to conducting research (e.g. ethnographic, life history), and specific research strategies (e.g. interviewing, observation) as methods and methodologies. If all of these things are methods or methodologies, we are at a loss to define in any exact or useful way what a method or methodology is (2005: 23).

The subsumption of all these phenomena under the broad categories of either "methods" or "methodologies" is indeed particularly noticeable in the generic literature that exists on qualitative research practices. It would appear that a number of handbooks and how-to guides on social inquiry often presume readers have a prior understanding of these terms, a surprising fact given their arbitrary nature and that they are likely to mean

something different to each individual (Ellen 1984: 9). This lack of definition and distinction between "method" and "methodology" is, however, less recognisable in discourse dealing specifically with ethnography (influenced, no doubt, by the fact that "ethnography" itself is a contested term [see Section 3.2]), and it is for this reason that I am both comfortable with and justified in using these terms. Nonetheless, I heed the caveat of Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, and shall carefully define these terms as I have used them (and to be consistent with my definitions of "epistemology" and "theory" in Chapter One Section 1.4):

Method - a specific practice or procedure implemented to collect and analyse data (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2005: 18). Qualitative research might include observations, interviewing and audio-recording, but these devices cannot be considered either inherently dependable and fullproof or completely prone to error (Silverman 2010: 110). Thus, methods act as technical rules for guiding how researchers objectively and reliably obtain knowledge (Brewer 2000: 2).

Methodology - a changeable and changing structure for designing and executing research projects (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2005: 18). It is the broader framework into which methods fit, and concerns the nature of knowledge, explanation and science (Brewer 2000: 2). In effect a methodology describes how any phenomenon will be studied, from the choices made about cases to study, to the methods of data collection (Silverman 2010: 110).

3.2 Ethnography: Seeking a Definition

Having explained my use of "method" and "methodology", I now focus on the term "ethnography". In this section I shall consider a working definition of ethnography, an area of serious contention amongst academics over the years (Aktinson and Hammersley 1998:

110). Crucial to this task are the concepts of how "proper ethnography" differs from ethnography as an implement for conducting research, and what its prescribed constituents are (if indeed it should be regarded that there are any at all).

Ethnography dates back to the 1890s and has it roots in anthropology, an historical affinity that prompts many contemporary anthropologists to claim its exclusivity in qualitative research arenas (Delamont 2004: 219). It has an equally long history in sociology, and while it treats ethnography differently to anthropology, the past century has witnessed a convergence of these "traditional" fields with other disciplines (Delamont 2004: 219). The result is that today no single, standardised way of practicing ethnography exists across a global spectrum (Pink 2009: 8).

It is from this disjointedness that the debate surrounding the definition of ethnography has stemmed, with two separate viewpoints having been solidified over the years: there are the true believers of ethnography as a philosophical paradigm grounded in the discipline of anthropology, and there are those that regard it as an intermittent method of data collection (Aktinson and Hammersley 1998: 110). Wolcott espouses clarification of this disparity when conducting any study, urging researchers from the outset to make an explicit distinction between ethnography as *product* and ethnography as *process* (2008: 43). He explicates this dichotomy as the difference between *doing ethnography* and *borrowing (some) ethnographic techniques,* believing the latter phrase is best suited for describing studies that are connected to ethnography only on a methodological level: "in employing it, the fieldworker claims only to be using - or, more likely, to be adapting - some standard fieldwork procedures for gathering data" (2008: 44). *Doing ethnography* then is remaining devoted to a set of principles within the discipline of anthropology, where the self is the primary research instrument (Wolcott 2008: 45). In Delamont's terms this is "proper

ethnography" (2004: 219), which remains faithful to the classic anthropological models of the twentieth century.

Whether ethnography is *process* or *product,* there are features common to any understanding of what it entails. In its broadest sense, ethnography is the study of people in a specific field or setting, and aims to gain an insider's view of their social lives, predominantly through the processes of observing them and participating in their daily practices (Esterberg 2002: 59). While these two acts, known holistically as the technique of participant observation (which will be discussed in Section 3.6.1), form the crux of ethnography, they alone in no way provide the richest and most accurate accounts possible. Fieldwork then has come to incorporate the use of other research methods, including conversations and interviews, analysis of textual materials, and interpreting visual sources such as photography, film and video (Atkinson et al. 2001: 5). It is because these varied methods have spread vastly under the guise of qualitative research strategies, spilling over into disciplines beyond anthropology and sociology, that the settings in which they are employed have also diversified (Atkinson et al. 2001: 5). Clearly then, it is from this diffusion of methods that the *product* versus *process* discord has emerged. In spite of this controversy, however, Adams insists that since this distinction is less important in other disciplines than it is in anthropology and sociology, it is perfectly acceptable to utilise the term "ethnographic research" to describe projects that make use of methods such as participant observation and interviews (2009: 318).

In light of these issues, it is obvious there are no prescriptive specifications for what ethnography is or how ethnographic research is conducted in interdisciplinary studies. It is therefore not possible to neatly classify ethnography for this study as either *product* or *process* in Wolcott's terms. While I have *borrowed (some) ethnographic techniques*, such

as 'participant observation' and 'analysing photos', I have also simultaneously *done ethnography* by interacting with people in their everyday contexts in situ, focused on a single setting and attempted to gain an insider's perspective. Atkinson and Hammersley acknowledge this fluidity of what ethnography is and can be, saying that positions exist between the polar extremes of ethnography for data collection and ethnography as paradigm (1998: 110). Fetterman also insists it can be both, stating that "ethnography is both a research method and product" (2010: 1), while Mason asserts that given the enormous range of perspectives and activities that ethnography involves, "adhering to *an* ethnographic approach as though there were only one is faintly ridiculous" (2002: 55).

In considering a definition for this study, I find the suggestion of Pink, who views ethnography as a methodology, particularly useful:

> Ethnography is a process of creating and representing knowledge (about society, culture and individuals) that is based on ethnographers' own experiences. It does not claim to produce an objective or truthful account of reality, but should aim to offer versions of ethnographers' experiences of reality that are as loyal as possible to the context, negotiations and intersubjectivities through which the knowledge was produced (2007: 22).

She continues by characterising ethnographic research with four features: (i) the use of reflexive, collaborative, or participatory methods (ii) the involvement of informants (iii) the consideration of not only observable and recordable realities but also of objects, visual images and the sensory nature of human experience (iv) the recognition that it is impossible to "know other minds" (Fernandez 1995: 25) and that "an expression of our own consciousness" (Cohen and Rapport 1995: 12) is always present in writing accounts (Pink 2007: 22).

In considering these issues, I define ethnography for this study as a methodology that has employed a variety of methods for data collection, which were implemented in situ while maintaining contact with human agents. These methods are a pastiche of the participatory and the visual, and represent the "iterative-inductive" nature of the project, having evolved in design as the study progressed (discussed in Section 3.5).[1]

3.3 Some Important Considerations for Ethnography

Having framed ethnography as a methodology, I shall now open up a discussion about its challenges, critiques and problematics. As it is far beyond the scope of this project to address every consideration ever raised in relation to ethnography, I restrict myself to three of the most pertinent to this study: the notion of "Japonisme", questioning the centrality of observation, and using visual materials.

3.3.1 Japonisme: From "Fantasy Japan" to "Fantasyscape of Japan"

Developed in the West as a way of studying inhabitants from far-flung corners of the world, the roots of ethnography are firmly entrenched in colonialism. Because of this, Gobo asserts that an important task for any contemporary ethnographer is to contribute to its decolonisation (2008: 2). While Gobo is most likely referring to "proper ethnography" grounded in anthropology (or *ethnography as product*), ethnography as a methodology is also not immune to such scrutiny. Debates about the lingering legacy of Western imperialism abound in postcolonial studies, with a number of scholars paying particular attention to ethnography. Clifford describes it as a type of "culture collecting", where the experiences and facts of one culture are gathered, deconstructed, and then assigned new values by another (1988: 231). Tuhiwai Smith believes it is exactly this misrepresentation of other cultures via the ethnographic "gaze" that has resulted in anthropologists becoming

"the academics popularly perceived by the indigenous world as the epitome of all that is bad with academics" (1999: 67), with Trask (1993) similarly berating anthropologists for exploiting indigenous people. Perhaps no other scholar, however, has had such a resonating influence on postcolonial thought than Said, who, writing in 1978, developed the concept of "Orientalism". Analysing a multitude of texts (including travel guides, linguistic analyses and particularly important to this discussion, ethnographic accounts), Said was concerned with how the Western world represented and forged relations with the Middle East, demonstrating how such discourse fabricated a style of dealing with and thinking about non-Western people (Pickering 2001: 150). His premise was that white people in Europe strived to create a positive self-image by contrasting themselves to the "inferior" Oriental Other, predominantly through gauging their modernity and then juxtaposing this with European values and advancements (Pickering 2001: 150). The consequence of all knowledge claims emanating from the West being constructed around this power imbalance (where the West was superior and the East was inferior) was recurrent and clear to Said: most representations of the Orient were intrinsically racist, essentialist and derogatorily stereotypical (Napier 2007: 7).

Napier, however, who labels Japan-specific Orientalism "Japonisme" (a reference to the nineteenth century art movement), suggests that Japan is a site of resistance to Said's claim. Indeed, it is with caution terms such as "postcolonial" be applied to Japan, since, unlike most places in the world, it resisted formal colonisation by any Western European nation, and in fact itself became an aggressive expansionist with colonial desires (it eventually established an empire that at its peak included the entire Korean peninsula, parts of China, Taiwan and a number of islands in Micronesia) [Befu 2009: 16]. Napier suggests that this reality of Japan having never been colonised by the West could account for the

difference in attitudes held towards it by many Europeans (who showed outright disdain for many of their colonial possessions) [2007: 15]. More so, unlike China or India which were perceived by the West in a somewhat static manner throughout history,[2] Japan in the Western imagination varied wildly over the course of two centuries, which, among others, include it as a country of nature-loving artists instilled with values of abstentionism, an admirably disciplined cohort of warriors, a cruel race of people eager to take over the world, and, most recently, a symbol of technological innovation and a popular culture deemed "cool" (2007: 2). These are all examples of "fantasy Japans" - mere constructions by the West with Japan at the centre as an object of fascination. This, by any understanding, is a form of blatant Japonisme. However, Napier explains that contemporary anime and manga fandom in the United States is challenging this Orientalist view, claiming that fans neither idolise nor show contempt of Japan, but rather have a neutral stance where they "take pleasure" in its products (2007: 10). This forms part of their "fantasyscape",[3] a place where:

play and setting are the two most important elements, creating a plethora of forms of virtual reality…Fantasyscapes are inherently liminal worlds, temporary alternate lifestyles that exists parallel to the mundane, which people enter and exit when they please (Napier 2007: 11).

My attempt to decolonise this study stems from its construction not as a product of yet another "fantasy Japan", but rather by positioning it within a framework of the "fantasyscape of Japan". As I discuss in Chapter Five, the maid café is undeniably a form of fantasy entertainment and a part of the "phenomenology of enjoyment" for its patrons. Placing this study within the fantasyscape then opens up the possibility to explore "the relation between constructions of Japanese culture and ludic activity, [which] seems to be

one worthy of serious consideration" (Napier 2007: 12), rather than as a manifestation of pure "Japonisme".

3.3.2 Visual Materials

Having discussed the importance of decolonising ethnography as a methodology, I shall now examine its use of visual materials, one of its more technical and nascent considerations. Visual materials form part of "visual ethnographies", an ambiguous term to describe both the use of visual media and the application of a "visual lens" to mainstream ethnography (O'Reilly 2009: 220). Images in ethnography have, until only recently, conventionally been used as instruments to support textual descriptions and as evidence to substantiate research claims. However, the emergence of new technologies have challenged this secondary positioning of their importance in the field (O'Reilly 2009: 220). O'Reilly places visual data into the following three categories (2009: 222, original emphasis), with a description of each found in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
O'Reilly's categorisation of visual data with description

Category of Visual Data	Description
Images as *writing*	Can further be divided in two: those that designate the visual as the primary form of data and contain very little text, or those that use the image to support a conveyed message. The former constitute the crux of the ethnographic experience, whereas the latter aid in reinforcing important points raised throughout the study (O'Reilly 2009: 222).

Found images	Productions of the people in the setting under study, including photographs, film, posters, or architectural plans. This is an important distinction from images that the ethnographer him/herself creates. These visual materials are then analysed, interpreted, and challenged in order to uncover their "implicit meanings", "the way cultural norms are inscribed in them", "the way relationships are portrayed" and the manner in which "hidden hierarchies are revealed" (O'Reilly 2009: 223). To uncover these, visual data may be subject to what Plummer (2001) terms "photoanalysis", a technique for examining what the image does and does not portray and how this is achieved.
Creative uses of the visual	Have emerged to counter realist presentations and to challenge the notion that photographs are verifiable interpretations of reality. This may include strategies such as "photo elicitation", where ethnographers sit down with research participants and have them look at images, recording their reactions to and interpretations of the visual materials. Photo elicitation may also involve giving participants themselves cameras to photograph their own lives, which can be used in a way similar to an interview.

My use of visual data in this study is restricted primarily to "found images". These include images such as otaku-oriented maps indicating maid cafés and other stores dedicated to otaku paraphernalia, flyers advertising individual maid establishments, loyalty cards, Polaroid photographs (known as *cheki*) purchased as part of the maid café service, and rewards for customer loyalty such as photographic postcards (known as *buromaido*). However, elements of "images as writing" to illustrate points are also present, such as Fig

1.1 and Fig 1.2 in Chapter One, and the photographs of the interiors and exteriors of select cafés presented in Chapter Five. Because of the research aims of the project, "creative uses of the visual" have not formed any part of the study.

The use of visual material comes with several considerations. One of these includes the validity of visual materials in the belief that 'reality' can be recorded or filmed (Pink 2007: 32). This disjuncture between visibility and reality means the best an ethnographer can expect is that film and video represent *experiences* of visuality, and not a concrete reality itself, with these experiences being assigned different meanings based on the subjective knowledge of the ethnographer (Pink 2007: 32). This leads to a secondary concern of the use of visual materials, the representation of images. Pink offers a suggestion to avoid misrepresentation when doing visual ethnography, by utilising images in an inexplicit fashion so that readers can interact with them and determine their own meanings. O'Reilly, however, is extremely sceptical about this approach:

I feel a little anxious that ethnography then becomes more art than science, and uncomfortable that the outcome might be a powerful presentation of the author's political position disguised as democracy in action (2009: 225).

For these reasons, I have resisted this particular approach to visual data proposed by Pink. In this study I have not used visual materials in an allusive or oblique way, and to align with the definition of ethnography I have provided in Section 3.2, my representation of these found images is "as loyal as possible to the context, negotiations and intersubjectivities" from the experiential situations in which they were produced (Pink 2007: 22).

Lastly, the digital alterability of photographs taken in the field and their subsequent representation is also an issue (O'Reilly 2009: 224). To validate the authenticity of the

visual materials I have used for this study, no "found images" or photographs taken in the field were digitally altered in any way. All maps, flyers, loyalty cards, *cheki,* and *buromaido* (collector postcards) were scanned directly and remain in their original form with no digital enhancements.

Having considered the use of visual materials in ethnography, I will now turn to the third and final consideration of ethnography, decentralising observation and the making of a multisensorial approach.

3.3.3 Sensory Modalities

Giampetro argues that observation has become the most centralised, and by far the most important constituent of ethnographic studies (2008: 32). Pink (2009) on the other hand, while not minimising the significance of sight and hearing in the realm of ethnography, suggests that smell, touch and taste (which are often overlooked while engaged in fieldwork) must also be simultaneously considered. She refers to the awareness of these senses in ethnographic research projects as "sensory ethnography" - a term related to both the style of research conducted and its subsequent representation, and can often involve the multisensorial experiences of the research subjects themselves (Pink 2009: 5). Sensory ethnography should not be thought of as a singular method for data collection. Instead, it is "open to multiple ways of knowing and to the exploration of and reflection on new routes to knowledge" (Pink 2009: 8). Sensory learning is also generally not a planned process in that it can answer a specific research question in the way a survey or interview is able to (Pink 2009: 65). It is the ethnographer's own embodied experiences in unplanned instances that develop this learning. This is one clear example of what O'Reilly highlights as the "iterative-inductive" nature of ethnographic research, signifying that the study design evolves as the research progresses through different stages (2009: 4) [See Footnote 1].

Multisensorial awareness functions in tandem with the method of participation observation. Howes and Classen suggest questions such as "Is there a lot of touching or very little? Is there much concern over body odours? What is the range of tastes in foods and where do the preferences tend to centre?" can be useful while conducting participant observation (1991: 259, cited in Pink 2009: 63). While I have implemented the method of participant observation (which involves sight and hearing) in this study, I have simultaneously been conscious of smell, touch and taste and have considered these elements as part of the observational protocol I devised (see Appendix 1). This extends to both the documents collected as data and the in situ experiences while dining at cafés.

With these considerations of ethnography in mind, I shall now explain the six stages of the research process.

3.4 Stage One: Gaining Access

3.4.1 General gathering and compiling of maid café data bank

O'Reilly notes that the very first step of any ethnographic research is gaining access (2009: 5). In its earliest phase, this involves considering the ways this access will be gained (that is, how one can enter the field and what can be learned about it beforehand) in what is known as the 'general gathering stage' (O'Reilly 2009: 5). Spending a considerable amount of time in this stage is essential before accessing a group or setting to ensure the research has a degree of fluidity (O'Reilly 2005: 38), and expectedly most research projects commence at the library or with searches over the Internet (and may include tasks such as collecting promotional literature).

The general gathering stage for this study began in a similar fashion. It started in Sydney, Australia by collecting background information on maid cafés from the Internet,

using search engines such as *Google* and *Yahoo!* (the results of which came from typing in keywords such as "maid cafe", "maid Japan" and "maid cosplay" in English and their equivalents in Japanese). This progressed to searches for specific establishments to devise a list of eateries that would act as the gateway for accessing the setting and entering the field. Since no such definitive directory existed, my aim was to compile a complete data bank of maid cafés in operation on the island of Honshū. This task was firstly broken up into regions: Akihabara and other areas of Tokyo (with the highest concentration of maid cafés), prefectures in the Kantō region, Osaka, Nagoya, and finally the Chūgoku, Tōhoku, and remaining areas of the Chūbu and Kansai regions (See Appendices 2 & 3 for maps). These searches were conducted and solidified in four ways, in both the pre-fieldwork and fieldwork phases:

1) over the Internet (via search engines and then by visiting the individual website of each café) [pre-fieldwork phase]

2) through the use of guidebooks [fieldwork phase]

3) by acquiring local promotional literature (such as flyers and maps) [fieldwork phase]

4) through a guided tour [fieldwork phase]

No one medium could provide a full list of existent maid cafés, and all had certain limitations which are outlined below. Rather these media worked in unison to produce the final data bank.

Internet

In the earliest stages of compiling the maid café data bank, the Internet was the sole way of locating listings of maid cafés, utilising both Japanese-language and English-

language websites which varied greatly in content (i.e. some were indexing sites, others were websites with reviews or blogs [see Table 3.2]). As with finding general information about maid cafés, the *Google* and *Yahoo!* search engines were also used for this target search (after entering keywords such as "maid café Tokyo" in English and "*meido kafe*" and "*meido kissa*" in Japanese) and were the means of access to the these sites. Some web pages were personal blogs written by regular patrons of maid cafés describing their experiences, but most others were either sites with dedicated spaces to food and restaurant reviews or basic Yellow Pages/Town Pages-style indexing sites. This continued for approximately two and a half weeks in Australia prior to my field trip. Table 3.2 outlines the websites that were consulted, the language they are in and the dates they were accessed.

Table 3.2
Internet Resources Consulted in Stage One: Gaining Access

Website Address	Langua-ge	Type	Date Accessed	Research Phase
http://café.maid.sc/	Japanese	Indexing site	13 April 2009	Pre-fieldwork
http://moeten.info/maidcafe/	Japanese	Indexing site	15 April 2009	Pre-fieldwork
http://d.hatena.ne.jp/	Japanese	Indexing site	15 April 2009	Pre-fieldwork
http://www.hagemaru-site.com/link/maidlink.html	Japanese	Indexing site	17 April 2009	Pre-fieldwork
http://cache001.ranking.goo.ne.jp/crnk/ranking/051ki/ minna_ maidcafe/	Japanese	Indexing site	20 April 2009	Pre-fieldwork
http://www.bokuaki.com/	Japanese	Indexing site	10 May 2009	Fieldwork
http://www.otamap.com/	Japanese	Indexing site	15 May 2009	Fieldwork
http://www.pluto.dti.ne.jp/~rinou/maid/link.html	Japanese	Indexing site	20 May 2009	Fieldwork
http://www.sunnypages.jp/	English	Review	14 April 2009	Pre-fieldwork
http://www.akibanana.com/	English	Review	15 April 2009	Pre-fieldwork

http://dining.in-japan.jp/	English	Review	13 May 2009	Fieldwork
http://www.otaku2.com/	English	Review	13 May 2009	Fieldwork
http://www.angelfire.com/id/cro on/ japan/akihabaramaids.html	English	Blog	16 April 2009	Pre-fieldwork
http://maidrunner.blogspot.com/	English	Blog	16 July 2009	Fieldwork

As I have already described (and as demonstrated by the "Research Phase" column of Table 3.2), this general gathering stage continued well after I had gained access to the setting in Japan (on 1 May 2009), reflecting the iterative-inductive nature of this methodology. This was not only because of the unavailability of some search tools (such as promotional literature) in Australia, but also because the results from this initial phase of Internet searches proved problematic. There were two main reasons for this. Firstly, many other types of maid-themed establishments (such as maid reflexology clinics and maid hairdressing salons) and other kinds of cosplay eateries were all subsumed under the category of "maid café", which was misleading if no other information apart from the store name had been provided in the index. Secondly, many of the Internet listings proved to be unreliable as they were not up-to-date. Presumably this was due to the economic climate of the maid café business in Japan. Many listings had either closed down (including *Tiara,* purportedly the largest maid café in Akihabara and *Maid Cafe Lamm*, which had been listed on almost every website consulted), or were under renovation (such as *Schatzkiste)* by the time I arrived in Japan.

Visiting the website of each individual café became important for addressing these inconsistencies of operational status and ambiguities of genre (as well as for verifying locations and charges involved). At times though this also proved fallible as not every café

operating had a website, and conversely some cafés that had closed down for business still had their web pages in normal working order (particularly those with that had only recently ceased trading). The reasons for this are unknown, though it may simply be that while the business had expired, the website domain had not.

Guidebooks and Photo Collections

The second type of media utilised for compiling the maid café data bank were guidebooks and photo collections. These detail the costumes of various maid cafés, bars and reflexology clinics in Akihabara, and are essentially photo galleries of the waitresses' uniforms. While some of these were accessed in the pre-fieldwork stages in Australia, others were purchased upon entering the field in Japan. Since the year of publication for these books ranged from 2005 to 2008, many of the listings (as with those on the Internet) were outdated. Table 3.3 indicates the resources that were consulted.

Table 3.3
Guidebooks and Photo Collections Consulted in General Gathering Stage

Title	Language	Year of Publication	Total No. of Listings
Cool Japan: Otaku Nippon Guide	Japanese	2008	13
Meido Kissa Seifuku Korekushon	Japanese	2006	26
Meido Kafe Seifuku Zukan: Akihabara Maid Café Costume Collection & Guidebook	Japanese	2008	17
Akiba Days: Akihabara 120% Katsuyō Gaido	Japanese	2008	15
Akiba Maniac Map	Japanese	2005	32
Akiba Musō: Otaku Darake Akihabara 120% Katsuyō Gaido	Japanese	2009	17
The Akiba: A Manga Guide to Akihabara	English	2008	11
Nipponia	English	2009	16

Promotional Literature

Once in Japan, local promotional literature proved a highly valuable resource. Various publications, including flyers, discount booklets and maps, were all available free of charge from select locations around the Akihabara region. These include the *Denki-gai Electric Town* Exit of the JR Akihabara Station, the northern exterior wall of the Don Quijote department store on the main street *Chūō dōri*, and inside maid cafés themselves (see Appendix 5). Some of these promotional documents, such as the flyers, were valuable for their currency, but not so much for their extensiveness since one flyer only represents one café. Flyers are also generally distributed by maids on the streets in close proximity to their cafés, and detail the location of the establishment with a small map, directions on how to get there and contact telephone numbers, as well as offering discounts to first-time patrons and detailing the menu. Appendix 5 provides examples of these flyers distributed while in the field.

Three local publications were particularly useful in creating the data bank. The Spring 2009 edition of the *Boku no Akiba Mappu* (My Akihabara Map) is an A3 sized map listing all stores of interest in Akihabara to anime and manga enthusiasts. The stores are colour coded on the map according to their genre, such as purple for figurine stores, green for Internet and manga cafés, red for games centres and pink for maid cafés. As with the Internet listings, all maid reflexology clinics and other cosplay cafés are listed under this pink category of "maid cafe", and resulted in several futile trips since no distinction between the two types of businesses was indicated. The *Ekusutora Otamappu* (Otaku Map Extra), a thin booklet listing maid-themed establishments in Akihabara and offering coupon discounts to them, was also a significant help. There is also a version of this booklet for maid cafés in Osaka, with an identical layout and front cover, but with separate event

listings and advertisements. Similarly, the *Moe Mappu* (Moe Map) also offers a variety of discounts with its advertisements of 35 Akihabara establishments (ranging from maid cafés to games centres), occupying one side of the A3 sized map while detail fills the other. Refer to Appendix 5 for visuals of these materials.

Guided tour

Lastly, and undisputedly the most reliable source for up-to-dateness, I took a "maid tour" in Akihabara. The guided walking tour, provided by the company *Meido-san Kyūjitsu* (which also organises mini "dates" with maids where customers can go to karaoke venues and gaming centres together), was conducted by a maid in full costume and cost a total of ¥3000 for its 40 minute duration. The starting (and finishing) point of the tour was opposite Club Sega and the fast food restaurant Matsuya on *Chūō dōri*, just west of the JR Akihabara *Denki-gai Electric Town* Exit. It began by following the underpass of the JR Sōbu line and turning right into the quarter southwest of *Chūō dōri*. Here the back streets were explored (passing establishments such as *Popopure, M-Fact Cafe* and *Akiba Ichōme Gekiba)* before crossing the major road *Kanda Meishin dōri* and venturing into the northern quarter. The cafés that line the narrow alleys and laneways of this area were indicated, before turning right at the intersection in front of the Don Quijote Department Store and onto *Chūō dōri,* where the tour terminated.

As I was shown the locations of all the maid cafés that were known to the tour guide in the area, I was given a brief explanation of the history, popularity, and style of each one we passed. The tour was conducted in Japanese and notes were taken in a small notepad as each establishment was introduced to me. Again reflecting the fluid nature of this methodology, I only came to know about the tours after being handed a flyer while walking

along *Chūō dōri.* Appendix 7 shows the flyer for *Meido-san Kyūjitsu,* a photo taken with maid tour guide at the starting point, and a map of the route taken.

To summarise, the processes of general gathering and compiling the maid café data bank were iterative-inductive, and spanned the period of pre-fieldwork to fieldwork. They were conducted utilising four different media: websites (in both Japanese and English), guidebooks and photo collections, promotional materials (such as local maps and flyers) and a guided tour. The complete version of the maid café data bank, listing the address, contact numbers and opening hours of all establishments can be viewed in Appendix 8.

3.4.2 Recognising barriers to access

O'Reilly (2005: 86) identifies two factors that make access a potential problem. These are:

1) the actual setting itself

2) the personal attributes of a researcher

Factor one – the domain in which the setting exists – can be problematic as some locales are simply too private to access. Since maid cafés occupy spaces that are open to any member of the public, accessing them provided no such difficulty.

However, factor two – the gender, age and ethnicity of a researcher – shaped access to the setting significantly. According to O'Reilly (2009: 8), these qualities can prove challenging when gaining access, as the tasks of becoming a member of a group, participating in their activities and blending into the background are difficult when they are what separate a researcher physically from that group. Nevertheless, these attributes can also be advantageous once initial access has been gained, as they enable "the researcher to ask naïve questions that an insider would never consider." (O'Reilly 2009: 8).

My gender and age were of little importance concerning access since the vast majority of cafés are frequented my young males. While at most venues there are differences in the cost of the table charge and number of loyalty points earned per visit for men and women (often ¥500 for men and free for women, or ¥700 for men and ¥500 for women with double points earned - most likely an attempt to attract a larger number of female customers), I never encountered a café which refused entry based on gender alone. This is a disparate practice when juxtaposed with the brother of the maid café - the butler café -which prohibits the entry of males unaccompanied by a female. My ethnicity (a White Australian), however, was more significant, and I observed on several occasions an evident sense of reticence with the maids accosting me at the entrance as I arrived. This was due to their uncertainty of my language competency, and may come from the common assumption in Japan that *gaijin* (foreigners, literally meaning "outside people") are not able to understand the Japanese language. This is a misconception I have experienced numerous times, and while it is a subject that appears to be unexplored academically, it is a popular topic of debate on public Internet forums amongst expatriates living in Japan.[4] *Time* magazine reports that in August 2009 McDonald's was criticised by foreign-born residents for perpetuating the "xenophobic stereotype" of the blundering *gaijin,* as their "Mr. James" mascot, a middle aged Caucasian man with an inherently "dorky" style, was featured in two commercials and a series of print advertisements where he stumbles awkwardly to articulate himself in Japanese (Masters 2010). Quite often I would be asked in Japanese immediately on arrival if I understood the language, and once I confirmed that I did, things proceeded in a seemingly regular manner. This issue of my language proficiency would sometimes arise in subsequent chats with the maids, who would comment how relieved they were that I spoke fluent Japanese since they had no ability themselves to communicate

in English (perhaps based on another common assumption in Japan that all Caucasians are able to speak English - either as native speakers or fluently as a second language - which is also a popular Internet forum debate amongst discontent non-anglophone expatriates). My ethnicity thus became an advantage, as I was able to ask "naïve" questions that an "insider" might not have been able to do so freely.

3.4.3 Demarcating the "maid café"

For this study maid cafés situated in Honshū, the largest island in the Japanese archipelago, were sampled. Honshū was selected as the focal point of the study for reasons of accessibility and mobility, but more significantly it offered the widest range of diverse locations in Japan. Maid cafés do exist on the other main islands of Japan - Fukuoka on Kyūshū has several, there are a handful in Sapporo on Hokkaidō, and the smallest island of Shikoku also has a diminutive number - however these areas are limited in their scope of size and population. Being situated on Honshū enabled me to access not only the largest urban centres and most highly populated cities in the whole of Japan (i.e. Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka and Nagoya), but also those with medium-sized populations (such as Sendai and Hiroshima) and much smaller prefectural capitals such as Okayama, Nagano and Wakayama. In effect it provided the broadest range of geographical localities possible. The issue of sampling maid cafés on Honshū was not relevant, as I successfully visited every one that was in operation there from 1 May 2009 to 31 July 2009 (52 in total).

More problematic was deciding how to demarcate a "maid café", and since there is no existing protocol to prescribe those parameters, this task proved essential for the purposes of this study. One reason for there being no visible boundary, as already mentioned in Section 3.4.1, is that local publications and Internet listings subsume maid cafés not only with other maid-themed establishments such as maid hair salons and maid

reflexology clinics (see Fig 3.0), but also with other cosplay eateries (see Fig 3.1). In addition to maid cafés, there are also a number of venues that market themselves as "maid bars", "maid *izakaya*" (pubs), and "maid *kyabakura*" (hostess clubs), yet all often fall under the umbrella term of "dining" or "food and beverage" in many local print media. Hence, the line between maid café and other establishments (whether they be maid-themed or other cosplay character-oriented) is often obscure due to this lack of explicit compartmentalisation in local publications.

Fig 3.0
Maid-themed businesses commonly miscategorised as "maid cafés"

Fig 3.1
Cosplay businesses commonly miscategorised as "maid cafés" (All establishments in Akihabara)
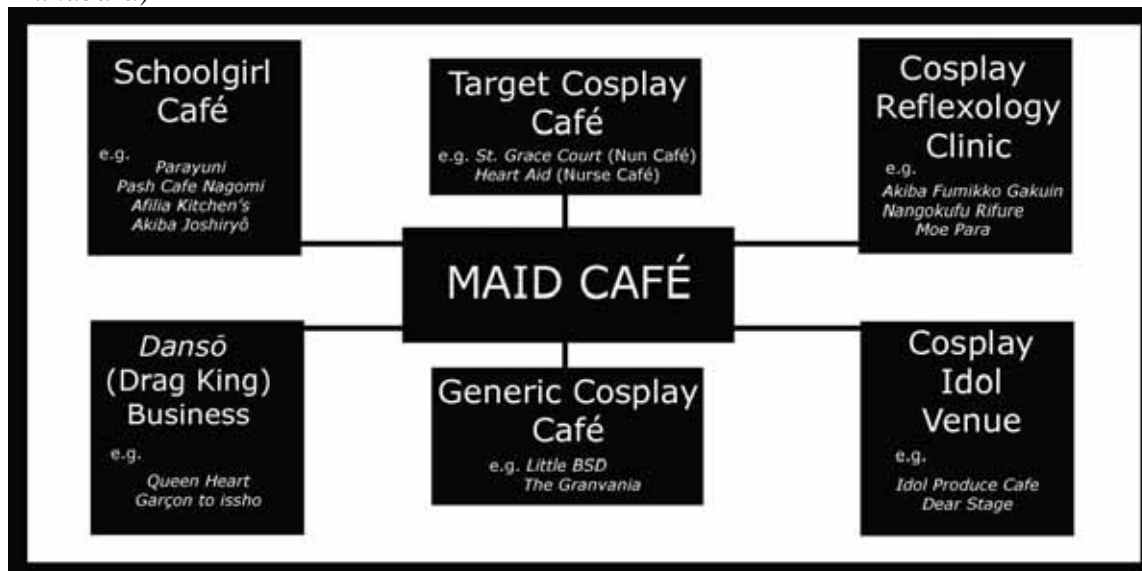
Many cafés make reference to their maid-themed nature by incorporating the word "maid" into the name of the establishment. This can be seen in examples such as *Maid Station Cafe* (Akihabara), *Maidoll* (Shizuoka), *MaiDreamin, E-maid, Maidolce* and *Maid In Cafe* (all in Osaka). Others refer to themselves specifically as "maid cafe" (in original English), "*meido kafe*" [メイドカフェ] (the Japanese equivalent) or "*meido kissa*" [メイド喫茶], which would best be translated as "maid coffee shop". Examples of these include *Maid Cafe Charlotte* (Okayama), *Cure Maid Cafe* (Akihabara), *Meido Kafe Pinafore* (Akihabara), *Meido Kissa Moe & Shandon* (Osaka), and *Meido Kissa Fairytale* (Osaka). Most cafés also have an alternative version of their name, which is different from the logo displayed on the shop front. This alternative name is usually just an abbreviation (such as *MIA Cafe* for *Maid In Angels' Cafe* [Akihabara]), or a transliteration into English (such as Mel Cafe for *Meru Kafe* [Osaka]), and is used on the website of the business, printed on their loyalty cards and promotional flyers, or used in independent local publications.

Some establishments refer to themselves as both a "cafe and bar" or "cafe and *izakaya*" such as *Maid Cafe & Bar Maidreamin* (Akihabara) and *Hiyokoya Maid Cafe Izakaya* (Akihabara). These establishments open mid-morning for lunch, close for a few hours in the afternoon and then open to serve alcohol and food in the evenings.

At the other end of this spectrum (refer to Fig 3.2) are venues that refer to themselves exclusively as "maid bars" and "maid *kyabakura*". The establishments that call themselves bars are generally open from early evening (between 5 and 6pm) and remain serving drinks (with limited food available) for a few hours until 11pm. *Kyabakura* (a portmanteau word from the English "cabaret club") are commonly called hostess clubs in English, and depending on the venue have little to no cabaret style entertainment. Most have expensive cover charges where male customers sit and chat to hostesses, and are generally open to the early hours of the morning. Neither venue is ever open during daytime business hours.

Fig 3.2
Common hours of operation for the maid "cafe", "bar" and "kyabakura"
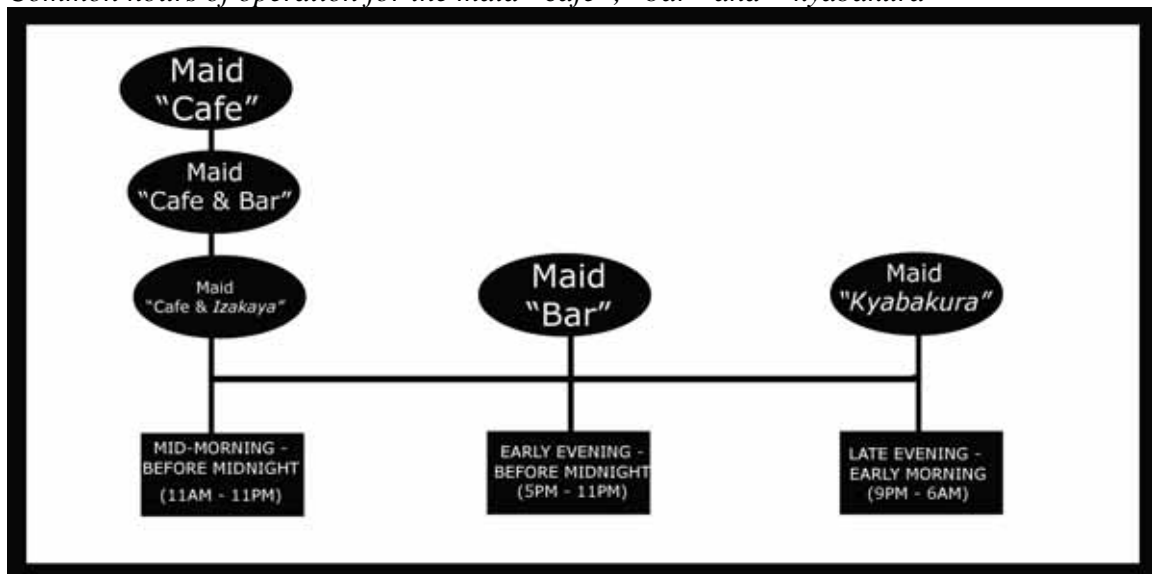
Many similar establishments operate with the same opening hours as these maid bars and maid *kyabakura,* but still refer to themselves as cafés (either on their websites or in their store names), despite never being open to serve food during the day. Some such establishments are *Misty Heaven* and *Yūrei Meido Kissa Eine Burg* (Akihabara), and *Tea Room Alice* (Nakano ward of Tokyo).

In addition to all these venues that have the maid character as their focal point, Akihabara and Nipponbashi (the main hub for anime and manga in Osaka) are home to a multitude of cosplay eateries, many of which are often miscategorised as maid cafés. The aforementioned *Boku no Akiba* Map lists over 15 cosplay establishments that are not maid-themed in any way under the heading of "maid cafe" in their directory. These include *Pash Café Nagomi* (a schoolgirl café), *Little TGV* (a café for train enthusiasts where the waitresses wear the uniforms of bullet train attendants), *Heart Aid* (a nurse café) and *St. Grace Court* (a church-themed café where the waitresses are dressed as nuns).

Adding to these complexities, "event days" *(ibento)* are an extremely common feature of so-called maid cafés, where the usual attire of maid uniforms is replaced by various other costumes, such as school uniforms, Chinese-style dresses or those of famous anime characters. Similarly, some cosplay cafés (such as *Fairy Tale* in Osaka), where the waitresses are usually dressed as specific manga characters, also have events days where they work dressed as maids.

To narrow these complications, two factors were selected to separate a "maid bar" and "maid *kyabakura*" from a "maid café", and a "maid café" from any other type of "cosplay café". These are the hours of operation of an establishment, and the overall mode of dress of the waitresses.

For this study I selected establishments that were open both during the day and in the evening for business (unlike other venues which open exclusively early evening and often operate all night until early morning). Many in the larger cities open from around 10 or 11am on both weekdays and weekends (closing around 10 or 11pm), though it was not uncommon for some businesses in smaller areas to open at around 2pm on weekdays (to serve afternoon tea) and from 10 or 11am only on weekends and public holidays. Any establishment that did not open before or at 2pm more than 3 days a week was not included in this study, as its main business is concentrated in the evenings and may be regarded as either a "maid bar" or "maid *kyabakura*". The individual websites of each café were consulted to ascertain their opening hours, followed by a phone call for verification.

For the mode of dress, it was decided that the maid outfit must be the primary costume worn by the waitresses for the largest percentage of time an establishment is open. This was measured by the number of events days scheduled by a venue - those that have any more than three per week where employees are dressed in non-maid attire have not been considered for this study. This criterion has captured most eateries that self-identify as "maid cafés", since most only have one day out of seven that they dedicate as an event. However, establishments with an assortment of personas (that include maids) such as *Fairy Tale* (Osaka) have not been delimited as maid cafés for this study, since maid attire is not the dominant mode of dress.

3.5 Stage Two: Establishing a Role

3.5.1 Considering the overt-covert continuum

All ethnographic research occurs on an overt-covert continuum, since no study can be entirely overt (O'Reilly 2009: 49). There are three principal reasons for this. Firstly,

since the final focus of the study is often not even known to the researcher (due to its iterative-inductive tendencies), participants may receive only limited information about the objective of the study in which they are taking part. Secondly, while overt about the actual research with participants, some ethnographers may be covert about their real thoughts, feelings and opinions when dealing with them. Thirdly, in public settings being open to everyone in the scene is both a physical and practical impossibility, not to mention it "completely undermining the behaviour one wishes to observe" (O'Reilly 2009: 49).

This study also occurred on the above overt-covert continuum. On every occasion I visited a maid café, I would have my note-pad out in front of me writing down my observations and thoughts about the surroundings. Since the primary job of a maid is to generate a conversation with customers, it was usually only a matter of minutes before I would be asked if I was doing some type of work or study. Here I would always be completely overt, and tell the maids that I was researching the maid café environment as part of my studies at university. Depending on the maid, this topic of conversation would sometimes turn into a lengthy chat. At other times I would simply get the reaction that I must be "smart" (*atama ii*) if I was attending university, and the conversation would immediately head in a different direction.

Since many cafés occupy only small areas, other customers seated nearby would often join in the conversation after overhearing me talking to the maid (a major point I discuss at length in Chapter Five). However, in larger and busier cafés, customers who were not within listening distance would not have been aware that I was observing how the café was functioning for my study. As O'Reilly states, informing everyone in this public setting would have been both "impractical and futile" (2009: 49). The study therefore assumes what Patton (1990: 211) refers to as the intermediary position, since my presence

was known to some in the setting but not to others, and as such was not entirely either overt or covert.

3.5.2 Gaining an emic perspective

Fetterman insists that the emic (insider's) perspective is at the very core of ethnography, and that its objective is to overcome *a priori* assumptions by understanding "why members of the social group do what they do" (2010: 20). Adopting an insider role involves the gradual socialisation of a researcher into a community, while being mindful of the initial outsider perspective and culture shock that eventually become invisible over time (O'Reilly 2009: 110) [see Section 3.7.1]. The experience of gaining an emic perspective is inextricably linked to the method of participant observation, and Patton claims that the very "purpose of participation is to develop an insider's view of what is happening" (1990: 207). As such, "this means that the evaluator not only sees what is happening, but feels what it is like to be part of the setting" (Patton 1990: 207).

The extent one can participate, and consequently gain an emic perspective, is contingent on the nature of the study, and ranges from full immersion in the setting as complete participant to full separation as spectator (Patton 1990: 206). The nature of this study on maid cafés and their pubic backdrop meant that full immersion in the setting was possible, and commenced as soon as I entered the café as a paying customer. Engaging in the activities and events that take place inside the boundaries of the café were the keys to gaining an emic perspective for this study. By adopting the role of participating customer, I was able to gain a semblable experience to those other members of the community - upon entering the café the house rules were explained to me as they were to other customers, I ordered the same food that was available to other patrons, I engaged in the same activities

(such as board games, conversing with the maids, exchanging messages via the notebook system) and abided by the same time restrictions as other diners did. This proved pivotal especially to the first and second purposes of the study, which are to examine what purposes maid cafés serve for customers and how *moe* is manifested. By entering this community and being connected with this space, the emic perspective of being a customer in a maid café became fully crystallised.

3.6 Stage Three: Entering the Field and Employment of Methods

3.6.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation is one of the key methods in this study. According to O'Reilly, "a participant is a member of a group, joining in activities, sharing experiences and emotions, contributing to debates and taking part in the very interactions on which social life is built" (2009: 151). An observer, on the other hand, "is an outsider, watching and listening, not always fully taking part, and rarely being a fully-fledged member of the community" (O'Reilly 2009: 151). Solely being one or the other does not suffice in any ethnographic research, and finding a balance between the two to assume the role of participant observer is crucial. The aim is to participate *in order to* observe, notice and record, which is difficult as one must act like they know nothing yet still have enough knowledge to fit in (O'Reilly 2005: 96).

As highlighted in Section 3.5.2, the extent of participation usually falls into the two extremes of only enough to obtain access and collect data, or complete immersion in the culture of the group. This participant role may come about by adopting an organisational or institutional role recognised in the community, which renders some researchers members when they begin (O'Reilly 2009: 155). Since the setting of my research was the public

domain of the maid café, participation came about by becoming a customer and engaging in available activities. The aim of this participation however, was to observe the surroundings of these confined spaces. So while participating as a customer in the setting, I was also simultaneously an observer recording the events and scenes around me. For this I devised an observational protocol (see Appendix 1) that was constructed after my third visit to a café (highlighting again the iterative-inductive nature of ethnography), and was utilised for all subsequent visits. This included the details of customers and staff, noting the number of waitresses on duty, the total number of male and female customers present, how these customers were grouped (i.e. individually, in pairs or in groups of three and over), and the total number of covers available inside the restaurant. The protocol also observed the entry and exit salutations of the maids, whether they bowed when I exited, how the house rules (if any) were explained, and what services were available, such as instant Polaroids, games, notebook exchange service, and *rakugaki* (literally "graffiti", the practice of drawing on food using condiments such as ketchup).

3.6.2 Collecting documents and artefacts

I have already discussed the use of visual materials in Section 3.3.2, a category that includes documents, artefacts and photographs that are collected or taken during the fieldwork stage. O'Reilly considers these data as equally important as participant observation, since they "enable us to better understand the group of people we are coming to know" (2005: 157). To reiterate, the function of these materials may be to support written text with visual evidence ("images as writing"), or be used independently to develop an argument ("found images"). Visual materials are significant in addressing the second purpose of this study (i.e exploring the links between maid cafés, the maid persona and *moe*). Artefacts of particular significance are *cheki* (instant Polaroid photos of a maid

and customer, taken as a souvenir of a visit), flyers, maps, local guides (such as *Ekusutora Otamappu*), and loyalty (or point) cards. These documents were collected at each café that was visited, and an extensive file was progressively built up.

3.6.3 Taking photographs

Taking photographs on my own digital camera (a 2009 Pentax Optio W60) was also essential to understanding *moe* and the maid café environment as I was able to photograph the *rakugaki* artwork for subsequent examination (which was not possible while inside the café since it had to be eaten). On some occasions permission to photograph the interior of a venue was also granted (but never the maids since that it is paid service, and always at a time when there were few or no customers present), which assisted in illustrating my observations of the interior décor. Photographing the exterior of cafés and the signs outside them posed no problem since all were situated in public thoroughfares.

3.6.4 Making fieldnotes

The system of writing fieldnotes developed by Emerson et al (1995) was implemented during the study. The style is divided first into head notes (notes that were held in my memory from the time I entered a café to the time I was seated and given the opportunity to take out my note-pad), scratch notes (jottings which acted as an aide-mémoire, written in short hand on a note-pad and then in full afterwards) and full notes (complete descriptions of all relevant details of events). In addition to these a research journal was also kept, where I recorded and began to develop initial ideas, noted the links between my observations, and highlighted problematic areas. This was supplemented by a personal diary (in video form, recorded each night on my digital camera) of my own thoughts and feelings, and assisted in retaining "the perspective of the stranger" (O'Reilly 2009: 75).

3.7 Stage Four: Getting Out

3.7.1 Retaining an etic perspective, avoiding "going native" and over-rapport

The term "going native", while considered by some as derogatory because of its associations with colonial ethnography, is still commonly used to describe the propensity of ethnographers to forget they are doing research and become too immersed in the culture (O'Reilly 2009: 87). This results in a loss of objectivity and an etic perspective, as well as creating over-rapport with research participants (O'Reilly 2009: 75).

These were definite risks in my research. My first few visits to a maid café were the most powerful, where my senses were heightened and I was witnessing everything for the first time as a stranger. As Jorgensen notes, "it is extremely important that you record these (largely unfocused initial observations) as immediately as possible and with the greatest possible detail, because never again will you experience the setting as so utterly unfamiliar" (1989: 72). I rigorously wrote down every detail of my first impressions, and consequently my fieldnotes were more voluminous on my first few visits than by my fiftieth. I did, however, manage to avoid the strong lure of acceptance of becoming a maid café habitué and balanced "distance and empathy, insider and stranger" (O'Reilly 2009: 89). O'Reilly notes that failure to do this can lead to "painstaking, retrospective note-taking and writing" (2009: 89), so while my notes waned towards my last few visits I did avoid "going native" altogether. Restricting myself to the island of Honshū undoubtedly assisted in the prevention of this. Incorporating cities and towns on other islands that also have maid cafés (such as Fukuoka, Sapporo, Naha, and Matsuyama) into the study would inevitably have taken longer than three months, thus running a far greater risk of my "going native".

3.8 Stage Five: Returning to the field

3.8.1 Case Analyses

In September 2010 I returned to the field for a period of twelve days. This trip was important as it enabled two things. Firstly, it allowed me to add quantitatively to the maid café data bank by visiting an extra nineteen establishments that had opened for business since July 2009. Secondly, it made possible the development of the case analyses for this study.

Before I continue it is important to clarify my use of the term "case analysis". According to O'Reilly, case analyses "illuminate various themes central to the analysis" and vary greatly to what are known as case studies (2009: 27). This is because "cases are taken from the ethnography and used as focal points for discussion and elaboration, rather than being something that was initially selected as a case" (O'Reilly 2009: 27). That is to say, the case analyses occurred after the initial data collection phase, and were not the focal point of the study.

Five establishments were chosen for the cases analyses: *Fairy Tale* (Sendai), *Ichigo Miruku* (Shibuya)*, Milkcafe* (Osaka)*, Filles* (Akihabara), and *@home Cafe* (Akihabara). These cases were selected as each was from one of the five different types of maid cafés identified in this study (Types A-E, see Chapter 6). In each establishment I made 2-3 visits on non-consecutive days, employing the same observational protocol on each visit. The details of each finding can been seen in Chapter 6.

3.9 Stage Six: Coding, Analysing and Considering Reflexivity

3.9.1 Preparing for data analysis by organising documents, sorting photographs and tabulating observations

Although I have neatly designated "Coding and Analysis" as the final stage of the six stages presented (located in the research phase of "post-fieldwork") this is not entirely correct. As O'Reilly notes, the ethnographer begins making sense of the research progressively while still in the field, and starts to "pull together disparate threads and pursued theoretically informed leads in the pursuit of an answer to the initial puzzle" (2009: 34). Thus, a tentative analysis was already under way while in the field, however, it was not until I returned to Australia that the organising of documents, sorting of photographs and tabulating of observations actually began.

I began by indexing the information collected on the 73 separate observation protocol sheets. While these, along with my fieldnotes, were initially handwritten, I had typed them up while in Japan for ease of access. The results of these were entered into three separate Microsoft Excel spreadsheets based on the number of customers, and the different services that been provided. The number of customers included the number of male patrons and female patrons at the time of my visit, how many seats in total, and how these customers were grouped. For the "establishment services" column, I recorded what exit and entry greetings were used, if the maid had bowed when I exited the café, what payable photo and games services were available, if there was a time limit and cover charge (and how much), notebooks, and how, if any, the house rules of the café were displayed. I then placed each café as a certain type to develop the taxonomy presented in Chapter Six. The coded results can be seen in Appendix 9 and Appendix 10.

3.9.2 Considering Reflexivity

Lastly, I would like to discuss the issue of reflexivity. 'Reflexivity', a contested term (like ethnography), appears to overlap with and be connected to (if not synonymous with, by some researchers' definitions), 'validity', 'legitimation' and 'credibility'. According to Finlay & Gough, at its base level, 'reflexivity' refers to the:

thoughtful, self-aware analysis of the intersubjective dynamics between the researcher and the researched…(it) requires critical self-reflection of the ways in which researchers' social background, assumptions, positioning and behaviour impact on the research. It demands acknowledgment of how researchers (co-) construct their research findings (2009: ix).

The importance of these considerations come from the status of the ethnographer as the central research tool, as concerns over the 'scientific' claims of the ethnographer come to light (Madden 2011: 20). Reflexivity, thus, can have multiple functionalities, as equally diverse and convoluted as the terms it is conflated with: self-criticism, introspection, or as a tool to challenge truth-claims (Finlay & Gouch 2009: ix). According to O'Reilly, the reflexive turn stems from a movement in the 1980s, which began to challenge the contexts in which ethnographic accounts were produced, and to destablise the authoritative voice of ethnographers as if there was only one true account (2009: 187). It was, as Lather called it, "a crisis of representation" (1993: 674). Rossman & Rallis state that the very fact that a researcher is present in a particular setting automatically changes its context, and once out of this context "looking at yourself making sense of how someone else makes sense of their world" becomes a priority (2003: 49).

I explained in Section 3.4.2 that my ethnicity as a Caucausian male in Japan was significant in terms of gaining access. It has been as equally significant in shaping the path this research has followed, not only from how the results of the data were formed (i.e

through my interactions with different people in the setting), but also in how I have interpreted these data as a non-native Japanese speaker, a non-Japanese citizen, and someone who is currently not a long-term resident in Japan. As a male foreigner both the way I interacted with maids and fellow customers and the way I was perceived by them would no doubt have been different if I had possessed different attributes - if I was a woman, Japanese, younger, older, fatter, thinner, spoke Japanese better or worse than I do, and so forth. The way I developed friendships with fellow customers, for example, may also not necessarily be representative of how a Japanese male 'fraternises' with fellow customers, or indeed for that matter, another foreigner. Similarly, the content of conversations between maids and fellow customers may also have differed, while the impetus of some customers to approach me may not have been present due to my being a foreigner. I am aware that these factors have impacted the shape this research has taken and how I have interpreted the results of the data collected, and as such make no "foolish authority claims in order to validate (my) account as an accurate representation of reality" (Brewer 2000: 25). I have stayed as faithful as possible to the definition of ethnography provided in Section 3.2 by recognising my account as partial, and by positioning this study as a "fantasyscape of Japan" and not as a "fantasy Japan".

3.10 Summary

This chapter has detailed ethnography as the methodology for the study. It has reflected on what the terms "methodology" and "method" mean, and sought a working definition for "ethnography". I have unpacked the problematics, critiques, and limitations of ethnographic research, and attempted to decolonise the methodology of my study by shifting from a "fantasy Japan" approach (one that has influenced Japanese studies greatly

in the past) to a "fantasyscape of Japan" model. I have also highlighted two important considerations for ethnography: the utilisation of visual materials, and the use of other sensory modalities to decentralise sight as the primary sense of ethnography that has traditionally dominated ethnographic research. This chapter has explained the six stages of the study (gaining access, establishing a role, entering the field and employment of methods, getting out, returning to the field, coding and analysing), and elucidated the processes involved in each stage. Finally, it has reflected on my role as researcher and considered the validity of my research.

Notes

[1] The "iterative-inductive" nature of ethnography, as O'Reilly calls it (2009: 4), is an important consideration as it signifies that the research design evolves as the study progresses. Since certain stages of the research cannot be fixed, it is imperative that the design must always remain fluid and flexible (O'Reilly 2005: 38). One example of this for my study is the cumulative process of devising a comprehensive maid café data bank, listing every café in business on the island of Honshū (see Appendix 1 for map) to be visited for the study. While the pre-fieldwork stages of this research allowed me to construct a tentative list based on a variety of Internet sources and guidebooks, it was only through the process of snowballing after I had actually entered the field that I was able to formulate an exhaustive list for completion of the data bank. That is, only by visiting maid cafés themselves and collecting flyers, other promotional material, and information from staff members and customers, were constant additions to the data bank made possible until the goal of listing every café on Honshū had been accomplished. This highlights the iterative-inductive nature of such an ethnography, since it was a continual process that started in the preparatory stages of the research and extended well after entry into the field. The procedure of compiling this maid café data bank is explicated in Section 3.5.

[2] Napier explains China was the epitome of the land of Reason and Oriental Despotism in the eyes of the West, while India was a land of "genteel mystique" (2007: 3).

[3] Napier developed this concept based on the five "scapes" conceived by Appadurai (1996) in relation to global media flows and cultural globalisation. These are the *ethnoscape, technoscape, financscape, mediascape* and *ideoscape.*

[4] Examples of these include:

http://www.jref.com/forum/showthread.php?t=19730 (accessed 12 March 2010).

http://www.ideamarketers.com/?Westerners_cant_speak_Japanese&articleid=520888 (accessed 17 March 2010).

http://www.wa-pedia.com/gaijin/misconceptions_prejudices.shtml (accessed 12 March 2010).

http://www.debito.org/?p=4153 (accessed 17 March 2010).

CHAPTER 4

"WHAT IS A MAID?":[1]
AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE MAID
PERSONA AND THE MAID CAFÉ

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part One broadly deals with the functionalities of the maid café as a venue, with its objective being to locate them historically within the wider realm of entertainment venues focused on male-oriented ludic activity in Japan. Specifically, it aims to highlight the points of intersection between maid cafés and three types of establishments that I consider to be significant components in the history of the "eroticism industry"[2] in Japan:

1) the teahouses of the Tokugawa period (1603-1867) pleasure quarters

2) the cafés of the 1930s "erotic grotesque nonsense" movement

3) the hostess bars and clubs of the postwar era.

While a comprehensive treatment of each type of establishment is beyond the scope of this study, my intention is to pinpoint the commonalities these venues have with maid cafés, as well as the shared attributes of maids and the women whose careers revolved around these other establishments - namely the geisha, the *jokyū* (café waitress) and the hostess (dealt with in that order). All of these women historically have, in one form or another, an intricate link to both the commodification of female sexuality and the commercialisation of sex, which shall act as a departure point for this discussion (Section 4.1).

Part Two is concerned with the development of the maid persona historically and as a figure of attraction. I examine the phenomenon of servanthood diachronically, tracing the origins of the contemporary *meido* to the domestic servants of Victorian Britain and investigating why she garnered the popularity that she did. The overall aim of Part Two effectively is to consider the appeal of the maid persona, and to assess why she, as opposed to some other figure (historical or otherwise), achieved such an exhalted status in the imaginary of otakuism and investigate what she has become symbolic of. Since this study is located within the overlap of the chronotope of *Power/Knowledge and Defamiliarisation*, I also do some initial reflection on Foucault's regimes of power as an introduction to Chapter Five.

PART ONE

4.1 Sex (work) and Sexuality: Past and Present

The origins of the Japanese *meido* are firmly planted in eroticism, gender hierarchies, sexual interplay and commerce - the complex combination of which can be seen distinctly in the work practices of the geisha, the *jokyū,* and the hostess. Most investigations into the role of these women in Japanese history invariably lead to discussion of these topics, with the issue of sex being a pivot point. This discussion follows a similar pattern, as in order to analyse how the professions of these women developed and what their contemporary link to the maid persona is, an examination of the history of attitudes and approaches to sex in Japan is essential.

Sex during the Tokugawa period, the era when its trade became sanctioned by the government and when geisha first emerged and then flourished, was viewed as a fundamental human right, a critical natural function of the body (like eating and sleeping)

and a form of mental hygiene (Gnojewski & Bromwell 2004: 1). This perception came from the influences of Shintoism (the indigenous religion of Japan) and its creation myths, primarily that of the proto-gods Izanami and Izanagi. The *Kojiki* (*Book of Ancient Things*), documented around AD 712, highlights the attempts of the brother-sister couple to make love, and, despite an initial failure, their second sexual union resulted in the birth of the Japanese archipelago (Roberts 2010: 24). These Shinto myths are founded in the agrarian ideologies of fertility rituals and phallic symbols, and as celebrations of creation and growth they contrast overwhelmingly to the beginnings of Judeo-Christianity that are shrouded in shame, guilt and sin (Faglioli 2002: 8). From the outset then, there was an attitude towards and acceptance of both sex and sexuality (however tacit) that was vastly different to the one that prevailed in the Western world (Warner 2010: 73). The doctrines of other faiths that subsequently entered Japan (i.e. Buddhism) impacted minimally on this conception (Mundinger-Klow 2009: 243), and while Confucianism unequivocally affected the status of women negatively (Henshall 1999: 15), on the whole sex continued to be viewed without taboo.

With sex considered an essential function of the human body, it is little wonder that the sale of it and notions about the commercialisation of sexual activities also developed along an entirely different trajectory to the West. As Tonomura (2009: 362), Lindsey (2007: 4) and Segawa Seigle (1993: xii) remind us, the trading of sex was never viewed in Japan as an exceptionally undignified practice, and many Japanese feminists to this day regard it as neither innately debasing nor evil like many of their counterparts influenced by Euro-American ideologies do (Bornoff 2002: 51). Seward believes that the very word to signify commercial sex in Japanese, *baishun* (売春), which is composed of two characters that literally mean the "selling of spring", is in itself already indicative of the attitudes held

towards it (1992: 136) - it is euphemistic ("spring" representing sex [De Mente 2006: 170] or the female body [Okura 1996: 113]), minimally severe, and possesses fewer negative connotations when compared to English terms such as "whoring" or the denotative "street-walking". This, along with the vast array of associated derogatory terms imposed on women engaging in sex work, manifests the disdain the Western world has shown towards such a practice (Seward 1992: 136). Sinclair, in her photographic study of the sex industry in contemporary Japan, is aware of the intrinsic qualities commercial sex has in the popular mind in the West, and makes an appeal to her (presumably largely Anglophone) audience (2006: 184):

All I ask is that viewers not assume that this profession is inherently degrading…these women are not powerless, they are not on drugs. They have made conscious choices: they have their own dignity.

Put simply, as understood through the exhortation of Sinclair, it is inconceivable to many people in sectors of Euro-American societies that educated and intelligent women, often with university degrees (as is the case with many Japanese women in the business [Farrer 2006: 16]) would *want* to capitalise on their sexual prowess with the sale of their bodies. According to Nussbaum, this stigmatisation of commercial sex has two sources (2008: 379). The first stems from the idea that recreational sex is unwholesome, and as enablers of nonreproductive carnality, the females who engaged in this for work were historically considered lustful and dangerous. The legacy of this religious ideology still lingers today, though the uneven application of moralising female sexuality is exemplified by the widespread acceptance of premarital sex in many contemporary societies. The second source involves gender hierarchy, with concerns that the sexuality of women requires both male domination and control. Often wrapped in an activist agenda, this accounts for a sizeable portion of feminist discourse vis-à-vis sex work (Agustín 2007: 7),

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with the issues of consent, coercion and objectification the primary concerns. Agustín believes the discussions in this feminist arena do little more than criticise each other, shaped by back-and-forth arguments on whether sex is inherently violent or exploitative towards women (2007: 7). Within the framework of these debates, she regards both the homogenisation of females and the essentialising of them as victim (and male as perpetrator) as forms of "fundamentalist feminism" (Agustín 2007: 162).

It is not an aim of this chapter to refute the claims that sex work is either demeaning or exploitative towards women in contemporary Japan. There is no doubt that in the past coercive measures to recruit women for commercial sex were commonplace, and as Tonomura writes in relation to the Tokugawa Period, "it would be a mistake to imagine that female sexuality in general went unscathed" (2009: 362). Rather, this section acts an acknowledgement that sex is foregrounded in the origins of the Japanese maid persona, and that a different set of values concerning its commercialisation (as well as that of female sexuality) developed in Japan than in Western societies.

Up to this point in the discussion I have resisted using the word "prostitution". This reflects the problems I see utilising it vis-à-vis geisha, *jokyū,* and hostesses, because of the complexities involved with their work. According to Phoenix (1995), the misuse of the term "prostitution" in academia is a significant issue, and defining it is a task frequently overlooked by researchers of commercial sex. "Prostitution", she claims, has typically been regarded by academics as a singular activity (namely the sale of sex) based around limited relationships of worker/punter and worker/pimp (1995: 66). Surprisingly, in cases when no definition of "prostitution" is provided, many scholars simply rest on common-sense notions of what it is. Hence, these two factors are problematic, as they delimit "the activities involved in prostitution to the actual exchange of money for sexual activity"

(1995: 66). As I now turn my attention to geisha and *jokyū,* (and then to hostesses), this becomes a significant factor to consider since it raises questions of what exactly they were (if not prostitutes as commonly perceived), and what they actually sold (if not sex).

4.2 Geisha, *Jokyū,* and hostesses

4.2.1 Geisha

The geisha, a major cliché of traditional Japan in the West, is grossly misunderstood because of the complicated nature of her work (Cybriwsky 2011: 61). Indeed, as Sosnoski points outs, in the Western imaginary geisha were, and continue to be, mostly regarded as little more than exotic prostitutes (1996: 40). However, as Ditmore explains, their core duties did not involve the exchange of sexual services, and those that did occur were merely peripheral to her vocation (2006: 183). Thus, as mentioned above, what "prostitution" is and what it entails can arbitrarily be reduced to a model of singular activity, which is problematic when considering geisha. Ditmore claims geisha were responsible primarily for three things: to generate an amiable ambience at parties, to regulate intimacy between individual patrons, and to perform in the arts (2006: 183). Collectively these things involved adeptness at repartee, etiquette, and games. Indeed, these skills took years to master, and typically there was rigorous training in singing, storytelling, dancing and playing musical instruments (particularly the *shamisen* [Wiesner-Hanks 2001: 188]), as well as in calligraphy, tea ceremony, writing poetry, flower arrangement and playing Go (Ditmore 2006: 183). While these forms of entertainment, performative flirtation and conversation created the main duties of the geisha, sexual exchanges did also occur. The complexity of these interactivities is why, according to Dunbar, the concept of the geisha escapes the Western imagination simply because no semblable multilayered profession

existed (2010: 71). While her job title might have been "coversationalist" or "entertainer" (Stevens and Iwamoto Wada 1996: 24), in effect her work involved a complicated pastiche of companionship, badinage, dramatic performance, (often) sexual liaisons and "pretending to love many men while loving none" (Lindsey 2007: 4) - all of which, while singular activities, were sold in one package.

The duties of the geisha can thus be disaggregated, a fact that mostly led to them being regarded differently to sex professionals (*yūjo*), literally the "women of pleasure" (Dalby 2008: 55), at least in the eyes of the law. Henshall believes this status, and that geisha provided both physical and emotional comfort to male patrons, gives an insight into the wider roles of women in Tokugawa Japan, some of which, he suggests, are still evident today (1999: 17). Their function, in contrast to wives, was to lavish praise on men by being "flirtatious and witty and fun-loving", while the wife was relegated to providing support and being earnest (Henshall 1999: 17). Lindsey echoes this view, insisting that the wife and courtesan (whose duties intersected with the geishas) were dichotomised into reproductive-pleasure terms (2007: 4). This separation of roles among women, combined with other social settings of the era, enabled the geisha to flourish. Edo (present day Tokyo), according to Uhlenbeck, was a city founded on the erotic fantasies of men, enabling a world "of escapism and voyeurism constructed to free oneself from the dreariness of everyday and a strictly stratified social order" (2005: 6). Flaws in the caste system also fuelled business in the pleasure quarters. Downer explains that disenfranchised merchants, who were outcastes and exempt from paying taxes, became extremely wealthy through money lending to the samurai (2002: 40). With inevitable raids by the shogunate in which their fortunes were seized, they spent a large amount of time squandering their riches by pleasuring themselves with the company of women. This epitomises the very premise of

the *ukiyo* in which the geisha formed an enormous part, a so-called "floating world" characterised by transient pleasures and the self-indulgence of society (Hibbett 2001: 3).

The Tokugawa Period marked the first time in Japanese history that not only the sale of sex but also the commodification of conversation, companionship, and a unique form of eroticism provided by women for male entertainment became officially licensed. While geisha enjoyed a lengthy reign as idolised heroines in the popular imagination throughout the era and into subsequent epochs, romanticised by the fictional works written at the time (Mostow 2003: 48), they were eventually ousted from this position by *jokyū*. From the 1930s onwards this competition for business with the *jokyū* saw the number of geisha decline rapidly, which continued to decrease constantly down to the handful of them that exist today (Dalby 2008: 80).

4.2.2 Jokyū

Jokyū, the café waitresses of 1930s Japan, are inextricably linked to the social and cultural phenomenon of "erotic grotesque nonsense". *Ero Guro Nansensu*, as it was known in Japanese (a compound phrase constructed directly from English [Stanlaw 2004: 76]), was a movement during the late 1920s and early 1930s dedicated to exploring themes of truth, logics, madness and sex (Marran 2007: 196). While it featured heavily in discourses of anthropology, psychiatry and sexology, it dominated several media platforms including music, novels, dance, art, tabloid newspapers, and magazines (Driscoll 2005: 34). According to Marran, both the periodisation and terminology of *Ero Guro Nansensu* are ill-defined, leading to the arbitrary treatment of the era by cultural historians and consequent lacunae in academic writings (2007: 196). Driscoll likens facets of the epoch to the cabaret culture of Weimar Germany[3] and the American jazz age, and believes it is viewed predominantly in two ways: as either a manifestation of the liberal cosmopolitanism that

permeated Japanese society post-WWI, or as a symbol of wanton decadence that conservatives discountenanced for being outside national interests (2010: 170). The cultural artefacts produced under the *Ero Guro Nansensu* movement rejected moral and aesthetic norms, enticing the mondial inquisitiveness of young urbanites who identified with such paraphernalia as a part of "modern life" (Tansman 2009: 356). Indeed, "erotic grotesque nonsense" eventually came to epitomise the very concept of "modernism" itself for these sophisticates, who had not only the time but the money to indulge in leisure activities through mass entertainment - dance halls, cafés, cinemas and popular music all became everyday pursuits of pleasure (Atkins 2001: 101). This notion of "modernism" contrasted to that of "modernisation" - while the latter suggested innovations in science and capitalistic rationalism, the former elicited both the novel and the frivolous (Atkins 2001:101).

Against the backdrop of this phenomenon that "devoted itself to explorations of the deviant, the bizarre, and the ridiculous" (Reichert 2001: 114), the urban café emerged. With it came three important shifts: the development of a mass consumer society based around the service industry, the arrival of visually oriented social spaces, and the mass commodification of female sexuality (Soh 2008: 12). According to Harada, the cafés that existed in Japan prior to the 1920s cafés in Japan were founded on French models, mirroring Parisian prototypes not only physically but also socially, since they functioned as meeting places for poets, painters and intellectuals to discuss ideas (2006: 84). In fact, the very first café that opened in Japan in 1911 (called Café Printemps) was the business venture of Matsuyama Shōzō, a painter specialising in Western art who was a returnee from Paris himself (Harada 2006: 84). Tipton states that after the great Kantō earthquake of 1923, the number of newly opened cafés surged, insisting it is no overstatement to refer to the decade after the disaster as "the café era" (2001: 138). In total approximately 30,000 bars

and cafés were in operation across Japan by 1932, with 7000 of these alone in Tokyo (Marran 2007: 196), peaking two years later at 37, 065 before a steady decline into the 1940s (Tipton 2002: 109). These establishments are the predecessors of contemporary cafés in Japan, with a distinction between venues being concretised during this time - *kissaten* (coffeshops) were places where meals were eaten, *bā* (bars) where alcoholic beverages were predominantly served, and *kafe* (cafés) where both could be enjoyed (Fukui 2006: 23). Importantly, middle-class salarymen and university students, rather than artists and intellectuals, became the main clientele of cafés. While the reasons for this and the proliferation of cafés are disputed within the "erotic grotesque nonsense" framework, Tipton argues they represented the self-indulgent tendencies of the emergent bourgeoisie, who sought cultural commodities and entertainment as forms of escapism from the bleak, soul-destroying nature of their lives that were weighed down by the burden of the depression (2002: 109).

At the centre of the "café era" were the *jokyū*. Robed in elegant kimonos and aprons, their primary duties were to serve food, poor drinks and engage in conversation with customers (while joining in the drinking themselves). The last activity is especially significant, since it was this social interaction rather than the dining experience per se that attracted customers to the café (Silverberg 1998: 213). While *jokyū* were not employed with the intention of selling their bodies for sexual intercourse, there were occasions where they undoubtedly slept with their customers. Rather, the aim of the café waitress was to simulate an "atmosphere of love (*ren'ai*)" or a "love feeling (*ren'ai kibun*)" for the young men who patronised them, in order to placate their platonic interests and romantic desires (Tipton 2001: 140). This involved coquetry and prompting a sense of closeness, actions Silverberg refers to collectively as "eroticised social intercourse" and "selling erotic contact" (2007:

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80). In the context of the café, *ren'ai kibun*, I am going to suggest, is the likely predecessor of *moe*. While the outcomes of this simulation of "imaginary love" (Galbraith 2009b) vary and it is manifested in different ways (explained in Chapter Seven), both *ren'ai kibun* and *moe* are emotional responses elicited by a sense of eroticised familiarity.

For Tipton, the system of remuneration for the *jokyū* contributed greatly to the forging of both her eroticisation and exploitation (2001: 142). Unlike geisha, café waitresses were not bound by a contract and nor were they paid a wage. Instead they relied on tips from their customers, and how much that was depended entirely on their abilities to behave flirtatiously and seduce patrons with their charm. Indeed, café owners themselves encouraged this, allowing the *jokyū* to abandon their aprons in an attempt to be viewed by customers more as women and less as workers, beseeching them to chat to customers as if they were their girlfriends (Tipton 2001: 142). While *jokyū* were commodified as erotic objects, they concomitantly gained a sense of independence and liberation as women (it was the first time many females, as uneducated commoners from rural areas migrating to big cities, were able to obtain employment without needing any particular expertise or formal training). They were thus able to steer how they were constructed as sexual objects to a large degree, and, not being rendered as mere passive servants, they "acknowledged that they were eroticised as impoverished sexual commodities, but at the same time, they celebrated their own sexual desires" (Silverberg 2007: 74).

Café waitresses were spectacularised and sensationalised greatly in the media during the 1930s and 1940s, with some achieving celebrity status (Silverberg 1998: 213). However, in a similar fashion to the way she usurped the throne of the geisha, the *jokyū* herself became displaced after WWII by the rising number of hostesses.

4.2.3 Hostesses

Hostessing establishments form a significant part of the contemporary entertainment industry in Japan known as the "water trade" (*mizu shōbai*), a broad term associated with employment in bars, clubs and sex work (Mackie 2008: 421). While there is a scarcity in research regarding the comprehensive history of hostessing in Japan (Cybriwsky 2011: 61), the literature that does exist (in English at least) indicates that the origins of such venues stem from postwar economic growth and the burgeoning of corporate Japan in the 1960s and 70s - a period when entertainment constituted the largest industry in the whole country (De Mente 2005: 31). Hostessing establishments today are fragmented into several specific venues: snack bars (*sunakku*), pubs (*pabu*), cabarets (*kyabarē*) and clubs (*kurabu*), all of which vary in price and services provided, though none explicitly offer sexual exchanges as establishments like pink salons (*pinku saron*) and soaplands (*sōpurando*) do (Faier 2009: 42). In a similar vein to that of the geisha and the *jokyū,* the primary function of the hostess (*hosutesu*) is communicative:

> The job of the hostess is to make the (male) customer feel relaxed and happy, thereby encouraging him to consume food and drink, patronise the establishment regularly, and advertise that establishment to other potential customers. The usual means of effecting this task is through flirtation, flattery, laughter, and "mothering" (Mock 1996: 180).

Unlike geisha and *jokyū,* however, they also have an important role in mediating relationships and conversation *between* male customers (Allison 1994: 15). According to Allison, these customers are usually work colleagues who socialise at the clubs after work hours, with expenses paid for by their companies. They patronise these venues as part of a workplace bonding process, where hierarchical relations are diminished and other boundaries between them break down. Conversation (rarely about work, family or the

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home) is mediated by hostesses (Allison 1994: 47), and the function of female talk is to "accept, reflect and augment" the man (Allison 1994: 177) - not at all dissimilar to the geisha function of "flattering the male ego" (Henshall 1999: 17). "Breast talk" (where male customers comment on the breasts, or other bodily attributes of the serving hostess) is also a common feature, and forms part of the clubs acting as sites of homosociality - the hostess functions as the topic of conversation amongst male customers who bond with each based on this subject matter (Cameron & Kulick: 64).

Clubs continue to remain an important part of the entertainment industry in Japan, and while maid cafés enjoy popularity, due to the differences in function the hostess is in no danger of being toppled in the same fashion as the geisha and the *jokyū*.

4.3 The Common Denominator: Links between geisha, *jokyū*, hostesses and maids

In light of the issues concerning the functionalities of venues described above, there are clear and undeniable links between the roles of maids, geisha, *jokyū*, and hostesses, and the spaces that are constructed inside their respective establishments. Maid cafés, however, are rarely linked to the taxonomies of the *mizu shōbai* in the way these other venues are, despite there being several common features. Chaplin claims that while *mizu shōbai* itself derives from the physical locations of entertainment venues during the Tokugawa period (situated by riverbanks, at the base of bridges or on boats), it is reflective more of the "floating world" ideals of transience and the fragmentation of daily reality (2007: 32). Screech also identifies water as being potently symbolic of sex during this era, as evidenced in the erotic woodblock prints (*shunga*) where flowing water is a dominant theme (1999: 130). So while maids cafés are not regarded as *mizu shōbai* type venues (I suggest one possibility is because of their daytime hours of operation, whereas "water trade"

occupations typically involve night work), there are commonalities that could render them as such, including this emphasis on the erotic and as a juncture of ludic space dislocated from reality like the "floating world". While it is possible that maid cafés thus form part of a "floating world" renaissance in contemporary Japan, they also have a more than tenuous link with the world of *fūzoku* - "sex-related businesses" (Macias & Machiyama 2004: 138) that explicitly offer sexual services (though the term itself, when not a euphemism for the trading of sex, simply means "customs" [Howell 2005: 15]). This comes in the dual forms of "fashion health" and "image clubs", known in Japanese as *fashon herusu* (ファション·ヘルス) and *imekura* (イメクラ) respectively. The two venues essentially offer sexual services by women dressed in cosplay ("fashion" refers to the various costumes they wear [Sinclair 2006: 86]), with the difference being that in *imekura* the sex act is conducted in a room decorated to replicate a specific setting. This role play fantasy could involve maids, policewomen or schoolgirls (Ditmore 2006b: 484), with simulated environments as diverse as commuter trains, classrooms and aircraft cabins (Munro 2009: 14). Indeed, in his description of what an image club is, Loui states that they are places where:

women dress in costumes and role play, acting out the fantasies of their customers, and typically providing oral sex (think maid cafés but with a sex component) [2008: 43].

However, while maid cafés are not commonly seen as parts of either the *mizu shōbai* or *fūzoku* worlds, there are elements that do fit comfortably into what Silverberg refers to as establishments based around "male coded pleasures" (2007: 83). These venues are concerned with "the serving up of conversation and play (encompassing various forms of performance) by women for hire interacting intimately with customers" (Silverberg 2007: 81). There are only certain components of the maid café that correspond to this description however, and considering it holistically is problematic primarily for two reasons.

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The first is that the relatively large percentage of female customers patronising maid cafés challenge the premise that services there are male-coded pleasures. The second is the arbitrary and somewhat discretionary definition of "intimacy" that ethnographers and anthropologists could (and have) potentially avail themselves to.

In the vast literature on geisha (and the smaller discourse on *jokyū*), there are few mentions of female customers forming any part of their clientele. Presumably, because of the social status of women during the respective eras, they did not, which would explain the lack of commentary on their presence. The patronising of hostess clubs by female customers however, has been (minimally) explored, such as the investigation by Nemoto (2010) into women at Japanese firms who accompany male colleagues to hostess venues for the purposes of work. This suggests though that the reasons for visiting are not initiated by the female herself, but that they are merely related to obligatory work duties. In contrast, I observed that maid cafés are patronised not only by females dining alone, but also in pairs and in groups of up to four (in addition to male-female couples and mixed groups). Consequently, this casts doubt on whether maid cafés are exclusively male coded pleasures, questioning what it means for eroticised labour conducted by females to be consumed by females themselves.

The second matter in question, that of "intimacy", is multilayered and equally complex. In a similar manner to the way Kamberelis and Dimitriadis take issue with the way the term "methodology" has been misemployed in academia (2005: 23), the approach of scholars to "intimacy" vis-à-vis the establishments concerned is equally problematic. Very few define what "intimacy" is or delimit it any way, and seem to rely on (in the same fashion that Phoenix highlights regarding "prostitution") intuition or common sense notions of what it entails. Since it is a personal emotional response to someone (or something) and

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is culturally constructed (influenced by gender and sexuality among other things), it is a phenomenon incredibly difficult to gauge when not demarcated because of this highly subjective nature. Sugiyama Lebra disaggregates "intimacy" and "familiarity", adducing that intimacy involves "emotional investment and attachment" while familiarity results from a "shared experience and togetherness over time" (204: 66). Constable views "intimate relations" in very broad terms as "social relationships that are - or give the impression of being - physically and/or emotionally close, personal, sexually intimate, private, caring, or loving" (2009: 50). Kualis, on the other hand, sees utilising "intimacy" as a heuristic for interpreting Japanese culture as accordant with feminist epistemologies for understanding constructions of gender in the West (2002: 137). These, he claims, are grounded in intuition and have no empirical basis, tending to view binaries as overlapping rather than polarised, and placing affect in relation to knowing (2002: 137). It is for these reasons I am hesitant to engage in the theorising of "intimacy" in maid cafés. "Intimacy", as discussed in relation to the venues of geisha teahouse, *ero guro nansensu* café and hostess bar, seems to be implicit of a mutual understanding of sincerity and unfeigned emotion between female worker and male customer. While arguably this may also exist in maid cafés, the prevailing sense that was projected on me (echoed by the self-identifying otaku patrons I became friends with) is that both parties are fully aware that this "intimacy" is disgenuous, imagined, and part of the role-play of the setting. I find more value in analysing the "formulaic flirtation", as Dunbar describes it (2010: 71), that was a dominant feature of my conversations with maids. In an almost scripted manner I was told multiple times at numerous venues how handsome (*otakumae*) I was, how stylish my clothes were (*kakkō ii*), and how I could speak Japanese so well that I would no doubt be mistaken for a native speaker. For venue specific examples, at *Royal Milk* (Akihabara) on my departure I

was asked by one maid who had been occupied with another customer for a foot massage service to return as soon as possible, since she was disappointed at having had no opportunity to chat with me. At *Filles* (Akihabara) the maid who had looked after me for the longest amount of time obstructed the doorway as I went to leave, jokingly saying that she was not willing to let me go home yet as she had not finished being with me. And at *Pondicherry Floreal* (Akihabara), a maid who had been on a school exchange to Australia remarked how sad it was that we had not met while she was over there so that I might have become her boyfriend. All of these are clear examples of "flattering the male ego", and as Allison insists, not paying for "the woman" but "for the eroticisation of the man, for his projection as a powerful and desirable male", making the male patron feel "special, at ease, and indulged…..like a man" (1994: 190, cited in Faier 2009: 42).

As such, I find that maid cafés do not fit so comfortably into this mould of the commodification of "intimacy". Rather than intimate relations, I suggest that it is safer to assert that in maid cafés a combined form of stylised eroticism (explained in Section 4.4), fabricated rapport (mutually comprehensible), and temporal amity is sold and commercialised. Consequently, it is a gendered space of rapport that is commodified and not "intimacy" per se. This notion of the sale of space, centred on gender and power, is an idea I develop fully in Chapter 5.

Finally, there is the issue of commercial sex in relation to maid cafés. As to whether maids sell sex, like the geisha, *jokyū* and hostesses before them, I certainly do not discount this as a possibility. What is certain, however, is that like their female predecessors in the eroticism industry, the exchange of sexual services is most definitely *not* a part of their core duties. Among the circle of male otaku friends I made during my research trips, there was talk (on the occasions when we met outside of the café) of "after hour services" provided

by maids who had developed special bonds with regular clientele. An investigation into these claims is not only beyond the scope of this study but also not the focus, though if true would certainly correspond to the arbitrary practice of exchanging sexual favours with clients that was a recognised custom amongst geisha and *jokyū,* and still is amongst hostesses. It is worth noting that some maid cafés (such as *Cafe Doll Tokyo* [Akihabara]) operate as *kyabakura* (hostess cabaret clubs) at night after regular operating hours (from 11pm onwards), a fact that is not advertised on their website or in other promotional literature, and it known only to regular patrons.

Hayes insists that "sex…has always been a central feature not only of mainstream Japanese commerce but of mainstream Japanese culture as well" (2005: 78). I would argue that not only sex, but also the acts of conversing and establishing rapport have also long been a part of mainstream Japanese commerce, an issue that geisha, *jokyū,* hostesses and maids would seem to illustrate well. Having discussed the issues behind the practices of the maid café as a venue, I now turn my attention to the maid persona per se, and by considering her appeal attempt to synthesise why maids in particular, and not some other figure, have garnered such popularity.

PART TWO

This part examines the properties of servitude and the historical intricacies of master-servant relationships. These two points are important when considering not only the attraction of the maid character to an otaku audience, but also the dynamics of the maid café that are discussed in Chapter 5. Based on these factors I offer some suggestions as to what makes the persona so alluring through a Foucauldian perspective. Finally, this chapter creates a direct link between the maids of Victorian-era Britain and the contemporary

cosplay maids of Japan, who are often given the misnomer of "French maids" in English-language media.

4.4 Victorian-Era Maids: Setting the Scene for the Contemporary *meido*

To understand the development of the Japanese maid persona and her construction within the framework of otaku simulacra, a brief look at an important period in British history is essential. As will be explained in Section 4.6, the origins of the *meido* lie in a series of video games with exoticised European maids as the central characters. The depictions of maids in the media formulaically rest on notions of feminine passivity, diminished social status and youthful vulnerability - all elements manifest in the history of the British maid.

Domestic servants have a long history in Britain dating back to Anglo-Saxon times, however it was only in the nineteenth century that their presence intensified (McIsaac Copper 2004: 277). The word "servant" in English has historically been (and continues to be) an exceedingly broad term, one that at certain times was synonymous with the word "slave" (Horn 2004: 1). Prior to the Victorian Era, "servant" was used neutrally to refer to apprentices and agricultural workers (including the sons of aristocrats who waited on noblemen as an important part of their education and training), however, by the early nineteenth century it had come to mean "domestic servant" and connoted dependence, subservience and servility (Burnett 1994: 160).

Despite this disdain in later epochs, employment as a servant in the households of the nobility was highly coveted throughout British history. This was because conditions inside the manor of an elite family were very favourable compared to the abject lifestyles most commoners endured, with comfortable and hygienic sleeping quarters and an

abundance of food (Horn 2004: 2). Positions of this sort, however, were scarce, as until the nineteenth century it was only the wealthiest members of society that employed servants (May 1999: 4), with wives and daughters carrying out the domestic chores in the households of the bourgeoisie. As Britain industrialised and standards of living increased in the nineteenth century, employment of domestic servants by a burgeoning middle class saw a dramatic rise of female workers (Holloway 2005: 16). This was mainly because young women from rural areas migrated to cities (Henshall Momsen 1999: 3), but also because females were preferred based on perceptions that they accepted the authority of their master more readily than males and were not as expensive to employ (Horn 2004: 3). The wider roles of women in upper class societies also necessitated domestic work. Gleadle writes that women in nineteenth century Britain were seen as emotionally, financially and intellectually dependent on men, whose job was to nurture the family (2001: 51). Women who worked were thus not considered ladylike, which perpetuated the image of plutocratic indulgence in leisure. These situations culminated in the massive numbers of servants Britain produced, making domestic service the largest industry in the entire country with England especially having more servants than other major European nation (Hoppen 1998: 35). According to Simonton, the overwhelming numbers of women in particular employed in domestic service concretised it as a feminised profession, and an ideology across Europe that domesticity and the private world of the home were synonymous with females came to be axiomatic (1998: 87). It is no understatement then to suggest that maids, who constituted a huge part of this domestic service industry, are one of the most compelling symbols of the entire Victorian era.

Yet to view maids (and all domestic servants) in Victorian Britain homogeneously is misleading. While censuses suggest their numbers swelled from one to two million over

the course of fifty years from 1850 to 1900, the arbitrary definition of "domestic service" included in these surveys requires careful consideration in relation to working conditions (Burnette 2008: 57). The range of experiences for domestic servants was vast, stretching from the marginally respected housekeeper of aristocratic households to the lowest rung of the domestic service ladder - the overburdened maid-of-all-work who was often employed solitarily in private homes (Holloway 2005: 18).

A hierarchy of servants existed only in the homes of the aristocracy. According to Mitchell, at the top were the butler, the cook and the housekeeper (often an elderly widow) [1996: 51]. The housekeeper managed parlourmaids, nurserymaids, housemaids, and laundrymaids (among others), while the cook took charge of the kitchenmaid, the scullery-maid and still-room maid (Mitchell 1996: 51). This hierarchy, spectacularised in British TV dramas such as *Upstairs, Downstairs*, was not a common reality however (Simonton 1998: 102). Most female servants were employed alongside only two or three others as maids-of-all-work. These young girls, often as young as twelve or thirteen, performed all cleaning and other household duties, attended to child care needs, and worked for up to eighteen hours a day (Mitchell 1996: 51). As evidenced by this overwork, the life of the Victorian-era maid was invariably tough. Although she performed essential work, the maid was expected to be a physical non-entity in the larger households, and it was expected that she not speak or be seen unless spoken to (Danahay 2005: 79). Failure to comply with this could also result in corporal punishment, though this type of harshness was discountenanced by the late nineteenth century (Burnett 1994: 162). Sexual assault and harassment were also common, phenomena that had been brought from master-servant relationships of the eighteenth century. Hill believes there were several reasons why maids were so sexually vulnerable (1996: 44). Firstly, most of them were very young and single,

and since many had come to urban areas from the countryside they were far removed from their only source of protection - their family and friends. Secondly, their cramped sleeping quarters usually had doors that could not be locked, or simply had no doors at all, and this dearth of privacy enabled their masters to easily spy on them when undressing, or enter their room freely at any time. Thirdly, their every move was known to all in the household. Maids followed rigid daily schedules, and this allowed their masters to make sexual advances at any given time of the day when she was alone cleaning a distant room of the house. This last point made the female domestic servant not only vulnerable to her master, but also to his sons and other male servants in the house (Hill 1996: 46).

Indeed, this sexual element of master-maid relations was by no means unique to Britain. Fairchilds, writing of maids in France during the *Ancien Regime,* notes that maids were also forced into sex, and were threatened with dismissal or a wage decrease if they refused to oblige (1984: 167). While consensual relationships also existed (in these instances maids sought affection due to their lonely lifestyles and their sexual frustration from living in all-female households), Fairchilds claims these are overshadowed by "the belief that a master had the right to exploit his servants sexually, [which] is as old as domestic service itself" (1984: 167).

A note on the strong sartorial link between the contemporary Japanese maid character and her Victorian counterparts should also be mentioned. While the costumes of *meido* vary tremendously, modified black dresses (usually shortened) with white-frilled aprons are a dominant motif, and this particular costume is modelled directly on the uniform of female domestic servants in Victorian Britain. This shortened version is often referred to as a "French Maid" costume in English, possibly since its display of more flesh is perceived as more erotic. This would correspond with what Chew remarks about the

adjective "French" historically being implemented to English nouns to describe elements of a sexual nature, as seen in the examples French kiss, "French letter" (condom) and "French prints" (pornographic pictures) [1999: 81]. French maids, however, in the sense of being a female immigrant from France in employment as a domestic servant, did exist in relative numbers in modern England (Macisaac ?: 280). Part of the Huguenot diaspora, they served not only other French expatriates but also larger British households, where French ladies' maids had become a fashionable accessory (Macisaac ?: 280).

Prior to the early nineteenth century, maids in Britain had not been required to wear any distinguishing attire (Horn 2004: 14). They had had the freedom to dress as they pleased and ardently followed the latest fashions, often acquiring the hand-me-downs of their mistresses (Valenze 1995: 163). However, since this often led to confusion as to who was who when both maid and mistress were together in public, a movement to make uniforms compulsory attire was soon taken up.[4] Valenze claims that this was "a frank avowal of the stigma attached to service for women of the lower classes" (1995: 164), noting that maids donned the ostentatious cast-offs of their mistresses to escape their own identities and harsh realities, momentarily becoming somebody they were not. According to Burnett, by the 1860s a formal uniform had been adopted by all female domestics, a practice that continued into the next century (1994: 13).

4.5 From Servanthood to Servant Character: Enter the *Meido*

The origins of the maid character in Japan are obscure, and remain largely unexplored academically. While Azuma claims the very first maid-like costume was witnessed in the pornographic animation *Cream Lemon: Black Cat Mansion* (2009: 42),

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many Japanese fan websites insist it was neither a comic book publication nor an *anime* series that vivified the maid, but rather the highly popular video and gaming industry.

More specifically, it was pornographic computer games and so-called visual novels that produced the first incarnation.[5] These come in a variety of forms in Japan, reflected by their categorization and the names they are commonly known by, such as *erogē* (erotic games), *bishōjo gēmu* (pretty girl games), and *ren'ai gēmu* (dating-simulation games). An *otaku* staple that developed in the 1980s, these games are almost unheard of in Western gaming markets but flourish in Japan, where new release titles retail between ¥8000 - ¥10000, and where sales can exceed one million copies (Taylor 2007: 193). The most probable cause of these games failing to garner any popularity in North America or Europe is their explicit sexual content, which often features motifs such as the rape and molestation of young women.[6] *Bishōjo* games characteristically allow the player to act as the male protagonist of an elaborate story, whose primary aim is to establish relationships with female characters while interacting to a small degree with ancillary characters such as family members and neighbors (Taylor 2007: 194). While dialogue is spoken by female voice actors, the voice, thoughts and actions of the central male character are always represented by on-screen text only (Taylor 2007: 194). Dating-simulation games cannot be likened to arcade video games, as they demand minimal interaction from players with large portions of the game requiring the player to do nothing more than watch. This passiveness renders them more like mildly interactive pornographic *manga* and *anime*, as players on occasion do select certain options and choose endings (Taylor 2007: 197).

In 1995 the Cs ware company released the erotic game *Kindan no ketsuzoku* ("Forbidden Kinship"). The gamer takes the place of the central character Osato Kenya, who, shortly after the sudden death of his parents in a car accident, is adopted by a wealthy

widow and goes to live in her mansion (Getchu.com). Once there, the sordid nature of the family is revealed, and while "pursuing lust in this world of obscene pleasures",[7] the objective of the player is to uncover the family secret. Of particular significance to this narrative is the maid of the mansion, a young girl named Sayori. Known for her willingness to submit to any sexual act (*Galge* 2009), Sayori is possibly the earliest maid character to appear in any *bishōjo* game and is the potential initiator of a wave of popularity with the maid persona in the video gaming world.

While the attire of Sayori as a maid was distinctly Victorian (a full length black gown and white pinafore), there were no direct references to her background or to the period of the setting. This lack of definition would not be repeated however, when the first all-maid cast appeared a year later in the erotic game *Kara no naka no kotori* ("Little Bird Inside the Shell") and its sequel *Hinadori no Saezuri* ("Song of the Baby Bird"). Set in Victorian Britain during the industrial revolution, the games were significant in positioning the origins of the *meido*, and directly linked her to the female domestic servants of nineteenth-century England. Both have since become pornographic *anime* productions, a common cross-media transformation for both erotic games and *manga*.

As more of these games were produced and subsequently made into erotic comic books and X-rated animations, the maid persona firmly became associated with sexual submission. The corporeal representations of the maid in these media are quite formulaic, with oversized (and often bare) breasts, accentuated by plunging necklines and complemented by short skirts that expose most of the legs. When compared to the uniforms of true Victorian maids, the bodies of these newly incarnated *meido* are effectively eroticised by revealing excess flesh in the areas of the legs, chest and also the arms with sleeveless uniforms. While the body of the maid in these genres is invariably a vessel for

subjugation, she is eroticised not only in a corporeal manner, but also by way of her inherently subservient disposition, a point which, as explored in Section 4.4, is not entirely historically inaccurate. The erotic storylines of these media consistently delineate the maid protagonist as a naïve ingénue, vulnerable and at the total mercy of her master (the central male characters of the narrative). This point has obvious appeal to such genres preoccupied with sexual exploits, and erotic *manga* like *Maid in Japan*, *Rental Maid, 100% Maid* and *Meido Wo Nerae* ("Target Maids") epitomise the submissiveness in such relationships, with all four narratives formulaically centring on the obeisant and innocent qualities of the maid, subdual at the hands of her master, and the ravishing of her body. These storylines of these maid-themed media are very formulaic, with the sex act always following one of two trajectories: (i) the woman is coerced into submitting, or (ii) she does so of her own volition. However, even in the narratives where she resists unwanted advances at first, she always finds pleasure in them once the act is in progress and comments positively once it is over.

Yet not everything about the maid and her hybrid incarnation had overtly sexual dimensions. Along with the boom of maid characters in the gamut of erotic productions, the intense interest in the persona was also solidified in a literary manner devoid of explicit sexual connotation or innuendo. According to Hayakawa, this fascination with the maid identity and costume culminated in 1999 with the immense popularity of the *manga* series *Mahoromatic* (2008: 28). The eponymous heroine introduced fans of the maid genre to a different side of the maid persona, since she was "a tough and noble young girl" (*tsuyoku kedakai onna no ko*) and was the precursor to numerous other maid-themed productions. These include the love story *Emma* (about a maid in Victorian England who falls in love with a wealthy upper class man) by author Mori Kaoru, and the 2005 television drama

series *Densha Otoko* ("Train Man"), which depicted the male protagonist as an ardent habitué of maid cafés (Hayakawa 2008: 32).

By the start of the year 2000 the maid character had a large repertoire of productions to her name, and was well on her way to becoming a permanent icon of Japanese popular culture by traversing both sexual and non-sexual genres to enter the mainstream.

4.6 The Birth of the Maid Café

Hayakawa believes that the precursor of the maid café is the American establishment known as *Anna Miller's*, a family restaurant chain that first opened in both Hawaii and Japan in 1973 (2008: 26). The waitresses in Japan are renowned for their uniforms, which consist of a white blouse and a short orange apron dress that sits just below the bust, heavily accentuating the breasts (Hayakawa 2008: 26). The popularity of the restaurant in the 1990s inspired artists to make cafés the setting for various games and visual novels, most of which were aimed at the otaku audience (Hayakawa 2008: 26).

One such game was *Pia kyarotto e yôkoso!* ("Welcome to Pia Carrot"), released in 1997 and set in the fictional chain restaurant Pia Carrot. The main male character is a waiter in the restaurant, and the aim of the player is to establish relationships with his female co-workers, who are all dressed in various costumes, of which the maid character is a prominent figure. The games were a huge success, and in August 1998 at the Tokyo Character Show (held at the Makubari Messe Convention Center in Chiba Prefecture), the Japanese media company *Broccoli* created an exhibition dedicated to the *Pia Carrot* games. Part of this display included a reconstruction of the interior of the *Pia Carrot* restaurant, and food and drinks where sold to fans by female waitresses dressed as the characters from

the game.[8] The simulation was immensely popular, and is the very first incarnation of the maid and cosplay café. Its enormous success prompted organisers to search for a more permanent location for the real-life *Pia Carrot* café, and a year later in July 1999 they found a suitable venue.[9] The sixth floor of the *Broccoli* owned *Gamer's Square* store provided an event space large enough for the café, and the Pia Carrot Restaurant (Piaキャロ レストラン) was officially opened, remaining on site for a few months.[10] In the following year of 2000 the event was repeated at the same location, once again for only a couple of months, and in 2001 the concept snowballed into the first ever all maid café in Tokyo. *Cure Maid Cafe* opened in March 2001, paving the way for the debut of several other maid cafés (Hayakawa 2008: 28), and leading to the eventual Mecca of cosplay establishments that Akihabara has become today.

4.7 The History of Maids & Maid Cafés: Some Important Considerations

To answer the question posed in the title of the chapter of *What is a maid?,* she is, among other things, a symbol of dependence, servility, feminine passiveness, naïveté, (sexual) vulnerability, youthfulness, diminished social status and domesticity. It is impossible to know if these attributes accurately reflect the situation of domestic servants in Victorian Britain, but this is certainly how they have been represented and their histories reconstructed by academics (and in British media such as television dramas and movies). Whether these traits and the alleged abject conditions surrounding the lifestyles of these servants became the initiatives for Japanese artists in the 1990s to depict maid characters in the fashion of Sayori is not a part of this research project; all I suggest is there are points of intersection with the depiction of these maids in the video games and how their histories have been constructed culturally. These media have also no doubt concretised certain

perceptions of the formations on power vis-à-vis the maid character - that is, a model of domination where the male figure is consistently superior and the female inferior. However, Foucault's regimes of power inside maid cafés challenge this model. While the projected image of the maid is indeed one of servility, passiveness, the workings of the maid café enable her considerable authority through the way the setting is governed by rules. I suggest it is this contradiction that becomes the allure of the maid character in the construction of the maid café as a site of performance, and is represented by the word *gyappu* ("gap", meaning there is a rift or divide in how something ostensibly appears to be and how it is actualised). My aim here is to introduce this concept in light of my discussion of how the maid had been represented historically, and is something I shall analyse extensively in the next chapter.

4.8 Summary

This chapter has provided an historical overview of maids and maid cafés in Japan. It began by considering the backdrop against which commercial sex in Japan developed, drawing parallels to establishments of the past staffed by geisha and *jokyū,* and to contemporary hostess clubs. Links were highlighted between facets of the maid café culture, tenets of the "floating world" from the Tokugawa Period, and the hedonism of the "erotic grotesque nonsense" era, foregrounding the maid café as a site where the commodification of conversation and an eroticised form of rapport take place. The chapter continued by examining the historical elements of servanthood and considered the appeal of the maid persona, before finally retracing the events that led up to the first full-time maid café in Tokyo.

Notes

[1] So that this historical overview may also be placed in the chronotope of *Power/Knowledge and Defamiliarisation,* I have based this question on Foucault's (1977b) similar inquiry into *What is an Author?,* where he challenges naturalised assumptions about authorship and the power yielded by it.

[2] I borrow this term from Silverberg (2007).

[3] Gordon states that "the very first thing foreigners noticed in Berlin were whores, thousands of tarted-up females on the streets, in hotel lobbies, and seated at cafés and clubs (2006: 27).

[4] These situations, according to Valenze, are exemplified by the writings of Daniel Defoe (writer of the famous novel *Robinson Crusoe*) in the 1740s (1995: 163). While at the manor of a friend he suffered a humiliating faux pas by kissing the hand of a chambermaid (who he had mistaken for the mistress of the house), later complaining what a farce it was that maidservants did not wear liveries (Valenze 1995: 163).

[5] Visual novels, known in Japanese as *bijuaru noberu,* are not printed novels as the name might suggest, but are interactive computer games with narratives.

[6] This is exemplified by an incident in February 2009, when the American Internet retailer Amazon.com was criticised for permitting the sale of the pornographic videogame *RapeLay* on its websites outside of Japan. The *Agence France Presse* reported that while the computer game manufacturer would not comment at length, it did insist the game was intended for the Japanese market only and had been authorized by a domestic ethics committee (*France24.com)*. Fennelly (2009) reported that British politician Keith Vaz was so concerned about the conduct of *Amazon* that he even announced his intention to raise the issue of the availability of such games in Parliament.

[7] Summary on the back cover of the game. Original text: *Yokubō wo tsuikyūshita, inbina kairaku no sekai* (欲望を追求した、淫靡な快楽の世界) [*Galge* 2009].

[8] http://sotokanda.net/his_cafe.html (accessed 16 March 2009).

[9] *ibid.*

[10] *ibid.*

CHAPTER 5

MAPPING THE MAID CAFÉ:
SPACE, POWER AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE
MISE EN SCÈNE

5.0 Introduction

This chapter commences the analysis of the data collected during the field trips of May-July 2009 and September 2010. It will identify and map the individual elements present in the various settings of the maid café (including the physical properties of venues and the wide range of services offered), and aims to synthesise these findings vis-à-vis space and power relations. In order to do this I have adopted the perspective of the maid café as a site of theatrical production, since, as was highlighted in Chapter One Section 1.5, the social construction of space is temporal and performative. I have drawn on aspects of the work of Goffman (1959) to assist in the development of this structure.

Elaborating on the "dramatist" method devised by Burke (1945) in which human actions are partitioned into five categories (act, scene, agent, agency and purpose), Goffman (1959) broadened the concept that social encounters, particularly those in confined areas, can be viewed as theatrical performances. He labelled this perspective in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* as "dramaturgy" and "dramaturgical analysis" (Germov & Poole 2007: 45), and in effect used the terminology of the theatre to create a metaphor for social life. Through the creation of six principles of the stage (the performance, the team, the region, discrepant roles, communication of out character, and impression management), he proposed a dramaturgical model that he explicitly stated be implemented metaphorically to avoid criticism of any positivist claims (Burns 1992: 109). Mirroring the way he viewed

social institutions, Goffman saw individual conduct as having its own structure, values and interests, suggesting we "perform" in front of others to project ourselves to them in the ways that we desire (Adams & Sydie 2002: 168). Consequently, the "self" is not developed internally but is rather manifested as a product of the interaction between the actor on the stage and the audience, referring to the sensitivity of this awareness as "impression management" (Ritzer & Goodman 2004: 224).

With an emphasis on these analyses of 'self' present in a large body of sociological literature, Cavanagh believes the main point of Goffman is frequently overlooked: that his dramaturgical model is an "heuristic for analysis, a way of observing rather than as a statement of being" (2007: 128). This echoes Burns, who states that *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* is "best thought of as an heuristic device rather than a 'conceptual framework' or 'theory'" (1992: 122), and Goffman himself who refers to the publication as both a "handbook" and "report" (Manning 1992: 40).

It is precisely this dramaturgical model as a heuristic that shapes the current chapter (this study is not concerned with issues of the 'self' as being), and I have chosen this perspective of the maid café as a site of performance primarily for two reasons. The first is that the very origins of the maid persona (as we have seen in the previous chapter) stem from the fictitious settings of video games and narratives of manga. To position the maid character outside the spheres of performance and theatricality would thus deny these origins of make-believe, play-acting and multiple worlds of pretend. Additionally, the application of a dramaturgical lens stemming from this history corresponds to the study being situated within the realm of the "fantasyscape" proposed by Napier (2007: 3), which also ensures methodological consistency. The second reason is that, as I have already mentioned, it is important that my analysis aligns with Lefebvre's theory that the constructions of space and

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power rest on the performative. However, unlike Goffman who never seems to completely delimit the locale of the "theatre", I would like to demarcate this analysis to one compositional element of theatrical performance: the *mise en scène*. Crucially, this accords with the chronotope of *Reading and Interpretation* (in which the overlap with the chronotope of *Power/Knowledge and Defamiliarisation* epistemologically situates this study), as the process of interpreting the "parts" of the meanings and practices of a setting (i.e. the components of the theatrical *mise en scène* of maid cafés) is essential in understanding their "whole" (i.e. *meido* and the functionalities of maid cafés).

The *mise en scène* as a metaphor is often found in the academic discourse dealing with fantasy. Indeed, a definition of the very term "fantasy" frequently cited in texts (and one made reference to by Napier herself) is that of French psychoanalysts Laplanche and Pontalis, who specify its primary function as the "*mise en scène* of desire" (1967: 156).[1] For Napier this explanation is significant, as the link to the term "*mise en scène*" with the world of theatre concretises not only the "constructed quality of fantasy" but also its "interactive nature" (2007: 3). Only in recent times, she explains, has fantasy come to be regarded as an active pursuit for the formulation of new identities and worlds, and not merely as a passive escape from reality (Napier 2007: 3). In light of these considerations, my use of the term "*mise en scène*" refers to how the constructed and performative components of the maid café are situated in relation to space and power. My application of the word "*mise en scène*" in designing this chapter requires a closer look, and for a working definition Nelmes is useful (1999: 493):

a theatrical term usually translated as "staging" or "what has been put into the scene". In film, *mise en scène* refers not only to sets, costumes, props and position of actors, but also to how the scene is organised, lit, and framed...*Mise en scène* is one way of *producing meaning* (my emphasis) in films which can be both

straightforward and extremely complex, depending upon the intentions and skill of the director (the *metteur en scène*).

The term, as Nelmes notes, is used in both the theatre and cinema with a fine distinction. There is an overlap of the two, though it seems unmistakeable that both Burke and Goffman, writing in the 1940s and 1950s before colour film became a dominant and widespread medium, chose the metaphor of theatrical performance rather than cinematic. While there are vast differences in the production of theatre and the presentation of film (perhaps most obvious is that film, unlike theatre, is prerecorded and subject to a rigorous editing process where digital effects can be applied), there are simultaneously many experiential parallels that can be made between both phenomena from the position of the spectator. Rowe highlights three important aspects concerning the watching of a film at a cinema (1996: 92), to which a theatrical juxtaposition is possible:

1)   while participants sit separated from each other, they belong to a concurrent shared experience.

2)   what happens in front of participants requires them to respond in a particular way.

3)   a sense of familiarity is created amongst participants through the communal engagement of their surroundings.

Importantly, these are also all considerations germane to the experience of dining in a maid café (which I shall explore throughout this chapter). Moreover, the use of Goffman's theatrical metaphor, rather than the cinematic, offers a sturdier framework from which to explore space and power amongst the participants in the *mise en scène.* This is because the theatre enables analyses of what Pearson calls "performance relationships" in *real time -* "performer to performer, performer to spectator (and vice versa), and spectator

to spectator" (1998: 35, cited in Wiles 2003: 3) - something that is not possible with film since it is prerecorded.

Consideration of the power relations between and placement of maids and customers in the setting can be further explored through the origin of the word "*mise en scène*" and its link to *auteurism* (which, despite having its roots in cinema, can comfortably be applied to theatre in the same manner as Rowe's (1996) abovementioned aspects of cinematic viewing experiences). Hayward claims the term "*mise en scène*" came to prominence with the *Cahiers du cinéma* group (a French film magazine centring on critical theory) when questions of authorship came to light regarding Hollywood films (2006: 223). This involved the specific creative input of filmmakers in relation to commissioned scriptwriters, and the *mise en scène* consequently became an authorial mark since it was one tool which filmakers did have expressive control over (Hayward 2006: 223). To what extent then the customer of the maid café is the *auteur* of the *mise en scène* is closely related to the issues of space and power, and is a point I consider later in this chapter. Likewise, who may be regarded as the *metteur en scène* in the maid café also merits consideration.

Lastly, I have structured this chapter under headings that Gibbs (2006), Rowe (1999) and Lacey (1998) maintain are elements of the *mise en scène* in cinema. These are: setting, décor, action, movement and performance, props, costume, and 'putting into the scene'. While this model serves a pragmatic purpose in keeping the chapter tidy, it also enables me to highlight the interaction between these particular elements, which, Gibbs states, is of fundamental significance in deciphering the *mise en scène* rather than considering each one individually (2006: 26). Additionally, this also corresponds to the chronotope of *Reading and Interpretation* in deciphering the "parts" (i.e. setting, décor,

action, movement and performance, props, costume, and 'putting into the scene') in relation

to the "whole" (i.e. the development of the *meido* and what purposes maid cafés serve). As

with chronotopes however, there is some overlap with these "parts" which I shall explain in

the relevant sections.

SETTING

5.1 Promotion and Awareness

Since maid cafés have a niche market (i.e. those with an interest in anime, manga

and video games), generating business from outside this demographic is important for

establishments, in addition to competing for a portion of the otaku share. With a myriad of

promotional drives existing across Japan (and to a lesser degree media directed towards

foreigners) that aim to create awareness of maid café culture, the experience for potential

customers can often begin before even stepping inside of one.

Mainstream variety shows in Japan are known to have featured segments about

maid cafés,[2] as have documentaries or exposés about Japan that have been produced

abroad.[3] The travel genre in particular has made several contributions in drawing maid

cafés to the attention of foreigners, with major international guidebooks on Tokyo and

Japan (such as *Lonely Planet* [2008], *Fodor's* [2009], *Michelin* [2009], *Frommer's* [2010]),

and travel television series (such as Channel Four's *Globe Trekker* in the United Kingdom,

France 3's *Faut Pas Rêver* in France, and the Nine Network's *Getaway* in Australia), all

featuring pieces on maid cafés and the otaku phenomenon.[4] For their part, some maid cafés

seem content to attract media attention by offering to do television and print interviews

(known collectively as *shuzai* [取材]), making this known to interested parties on their

websites.[5] Local events also play an important role in building broader awareness, such as

the annual *Uchimizu* festival, a summer ritual where maids from around 20 cafés in Akihabara cool the ground with water around a local shrine and the JR railway station (Williams 2009). While these media efforts seem to target the maid café genre in a holistic manner to draw attention from a wider audience and potential clientele, café-specific promotion happens in different forms.

Pocket tissue advertising (where small packets of tissues containing a business card on the inside of the package are distributed to members of the public on the street or inside train stations) is the preferred medium for most companies in Japan on promotional drives (Gordenker 2007). This is based on the belief that tissues are an object people will utilise and retain (unlike flyers which are prone to being immediately discarded), with the additional advantage of people seeing the card several times before the product is completely used up (Gordenker 2007). However, despite the prevalence of this form of advertising for other businesses, there was not a single occasion where I received pocket tissues from any maid on the street in any city. Instead, flyers (known as *chirashi* [チラシ]) are the dominant form of promotion for maid cafés.[6]

As outlined in Chapter Three Section 3.4.1, flyers, complimentary maps, brochures and other promotional materials (e.g. guide booklets such as *Otamappu*) placed at local train stations play an important role in attracting patronage to establishments. When circulated in this manner however, these media have severe limitations in that they passively rely on potential customers themselves for collection. It is for this reason that many cafés implement a more direct and aggressive style of promotion, in the form of maids actively distributing *chirashi* on the streets close to the location of the establishment. *Chirashi* sent by small businesses in the post are also extremely common in Japan (Daniels

2004: 172), however, as with pocket tissues, there was not a single instance during my stay when I received any flyers via mail.

Chirashi for maid cafés serve a very instantaneous purpose (the reason, perhaps, that pocket tissue advertising is not the preferred medium or that they are not sent by post), and so in order to avoid instant disposal on receipt, many offer attractive discounts upon their presentation in the café. This concession could be a reduction in the cover charge, the price of the total bill, or the fee for other services. Fig 5.0 demonstrates the first of these, with *Filles* (Akihabara) offering a ¥400 discount on the ¥1900 entrance fee to first time customers, women and couples. The bottom right of Fig 5.1 shows that *Maidolce* (Osaka) offer 10% off to individuals and 30% off to groups of women, while the bottom right of Fig 5.2 shows *MIA Cafe* (Akihabara) offering a discount of ¥1500 for any item on their reflexology menu in their sister venue, *MIA Rifure*.

Fig 5.0
Bottom portion of *Filles* offering discount

Fig 5.1
Bottom right of *Maidolce* flyer offering discount

Fig 5.2
Bottom right of *MIA Cafe* flyer offering ¥1500 discount

The contents of specific *chirashi* varies: 17 of the 21 received (81%) contain text and graphics on both sides, while those that do not are either slightly larger in size or simply contain the same information within the reduced space. Of all *chirashi* collected, 100% presented three pieces of essential information about the café (see Figs 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5). These were sketches of its location, its address and the hours of operation. A large portion (85%) also contained an image of a maid, a contact telephone number and featured sample items from the menu. While some contain pictures of the food available (Fig 5.6), others simply provide a categorised list (Fig 5.7). The size of *chirashi* does not vary greatly. Two collected were the size of half an A4 sheet of paper, while all others were one quarter. Most are printed on glossy, thick, high quality paper, although one (*Cafe de R* [Saitama]) was printed on regular non glossy paper. There is no uniform smell. Some have a faint odour of food (suggesting they have been stored inside cafés), others smell like cigarette smoke, while some are completely odourless.

Fig 5.3
Front and back of the *chirashi* for *Maid Cafe Pinafore 1*

Fig 5.4
Front and back of the *chirashi* for *Maidreamin*

Fig 5.5
The front and back of the *chirashi* for *CCOcha*

 Fig 5.6
Chirashi for *Honey Honey* (Yokohama)
with images of food shown (top left)

Fig 5.7
Chirashi for *Moeshandon* (Osaka)
with list of food menu items

Chirashi exemplify Lefebvre's *representations of spaces.* The flyers for *Filles* (Fig 5.0), *MIA Cafe* (Fig 5.2), *MaiDreamin* (Fig 5.4) and *Honey Honey* (Fig 5.6) all contain pictures of the interior landscape, giving the recipient a predetermined image of what the café looks like. The inclusion of maps, photographs of the external properties of cafés (*CCcha* [Fig 5.5]), and indeed the activities that take place inside (*Moeshandon* [Fig 5.7] shows a picture of a maid with a microphone in her hand while another is making a *moe* heart shape with her hands) are also *representations of spaces.* These *representations of spaces* are fluid and changeable to accord with any physical alterations of interiors, and flyers that I received in 2009 and 2010 from the same establishment varied slightly. Since *chirashi* do not contain the name of an author or a photographer, these *representations of spaces* are also a type of anonymous *conceived space.* The written descriptions, images of maids and interiors/exteriors, and other pictorial information are presented namelessly and with no justification for their inclusion. In this sense the creators of *chirashi* exert a subtle form of power over customers through *conceived space* in that their depictions often go unchallenged - such representations may not necessarily be accurate reflections of how the physical areas of the café appear, what the maids on duty look like, or how the food is served, despite being exhibited to potential patrons in a static manner. One example of this is the photographs of the interior of cafés on *chirashi* (such as those in *Filles* in Fig 5.0) that are taken when no customers are present. As such, those areas of the café look larger and more tranquil than when they are actually at their full (or even semi-full) seating capacity.

While these dimensions form part of *representations of spaces,* the manner in which *chirashi* are distributed on the street reflect Lefebvre's *performance-based spatial practices.* This is not dissimilar to some forms of street theatre in that maids become a spectacle, like

street performers, for ordinary passers-by to observe. In this sense, the *mise en scène* of the maid café goes beyond the four walls of a café's interior, and its construction begins before some customers even enter the premises. Maids distribute *chirashi* on the streets in the close vicinity of their cafés (Figs 5.8 & 5.9), often at the intersections of major roads where pedestrian traffic is heaviest. They use the standard expression *yoroshiku onegaishimasu* while waiting for passers-by to collect them, freely answering questions about location and services provided. On several occasions after making enquiries and stating that I would like to visit the venue, I was accompanied personally by the maid to where the café was located. This appears to happen for groups of potentially interested customers also, as numerous times I observed pairs of people (or more) being escorted into cafés by maids from off the street. With the exception of one flyer I collected which contained the English expression "Welcome Home Master" (Fig 5.21), all were solely in Japanese. Reflecting the possible *lived space* of the maids distributing the flyers (where it had been perceived that as a foreigner I would be unable to read them), I was never handed one directly - rather the onus was on me to go and ask. This distribution of *chirashi* on the street has the distinct advantage of enabling customers to establish contact with actual maid staff before even entering the café. The practice, however, is confined exclusively to the areas of Akihabara (Tokyo) and Nipponbashi (Osaka), where the largest concentration of maid cafés in these cities can be found (in Akihabara it is the main thoroughfare, *Chūō dōri,* that acts as the most prominent locale, while in Nipponbashi it is *Otarōdo* and *Sakaisuji*). Consequently, it would seem that the initiative of customers in other areas of Japan to visit maid cafés comes internally, since there is no possibility of them receiving a *chirashi* by chance from a maid in the street to randomly pique their interest.

Fig 5.8
Maid distributing flyers in front of Tokyo
Radio Department in Akihabara
(café unknown)

Fig 5.9
Maid distributing flyers at the intersection of
Chūō dōri and the Don Quixote Store in
Akihabra (café unknown)

5.2 External Elements

The need for the distribution of flyers is without doubt linked to the physical properties of the cafés themselves, since many would go unnoticed due to their obscure locations. It is important to highlight the external elements of the venues in relation to the overall *mise en scène* of the maid café, as well as positioning them within a wider array of regional differences between establishments.

There are discernible contrasts between the outer structures of maid cafés depending on their geographic locations. In Tokyo, only seven of the 36 cafés (19.4%) visited (*Wonder Parlour* [Ikebukuro], *Cafe Doll, Pinafore 1, Hiyokoya, Akiba Ichōme Gekiba, Shatzkiste, Gentōkan* [all in Akihabara]) had entrances directly at street level, while all others were located inside multistoried buildings where access was via elevators or stairs (a feature common in densely populated cities of Japan where space is a precious commodity). This is fewer than in Osaka, where six of the 24 cafés (25%) visited (*Sweet Tease, E-maid, Honey Channel, e★twinkle-Zwei, Frontier, Poco☆Lv.1, Maidolce, Ccocha, Mel Cafe, Cafe*

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Andante, Afilia Kitchen's, Cafe de Porte, Candy Magic) were at ground level and accessible from off the street. The higher percentage of cafés in Osaka with street level entrances is of little concern, simply because Akihabara is a district more compact and concentrated than Osaka's Nipponbashi, therefore necessitating the use of areas inside buildings off ground level. Of more significance are the differences in how the façades of these venues are configured, with stark differences between the two cities. While five of the abovementioned seven establishments in Tokyo (71.4%) have implemented measures to block the view of the café's interior to those outside on the street, only two of the six in Osaka (33.3%) have taken such action. This obstruction may be in the form of tinted glass, wooden partitions, curtains and blinds, or large posters covering the length of the windowpanes (see Fig 5.10). The reasons for this are unclear and inconclusive. While the privacy of diners may be an issue (this, however, would infer there was a stigma attached to patronising such a venue), there may also be an element of exclusivity involved. This exclusivity probably does not relate to being able to see the actual maids themselves, since they can readily be viewed in public when distributing *chirashi,* and in all cases accompany customers to the door on departure (see Section 5.4). In the case of *Wonder Parlour* (Ikebukuro), maids in fact walk onto the street to bid farewell to patrons by bowing to them, remaining with their heads lowered until the customer is some distance away. Thus, the act of obstructing the view of the café's interior concerns barring passers-by from visually experiencing the activities that customers are engaged in on the inside. These obstructions function as one type of Lefebvre's *spaces of representations*. They are a metaphorical space for exclusivity, dividing 'outsiders' (i.e. pedestrians) and 'insiders' (i.e. dining customers). In this fashion, the external properties of maid cafés at street level in Tokyo yield a set of power relations, since, according to Kilian, "publicity is the power of access" while

"privacy is the power of exclusion" (1998: 125). While I explore this notion in relation to the phenomenon of *gyappu* in Section 5.5, it is also applicable here in acknowledging that these two components function simultaneously in one space. Pedestrians are denied the power of accessing the visualities of maid café interactivities, however, once entering the premises as a 'customer' they attain the power of exclusivity through the services of the establishment.

The tinted glass, wooden partitions, posters and curtains that obstruct views are all part of the *perceived space* of maid café customers in Tokyo. The suggestion that these obstructions are a metaphorical space for exclusivity seems to be supported by the fact that the two exceptions in Tokyo (*Hiyokoya* and *Gentōkan*) are situated in places with an exceedingly light pedestrian flow (the former is located in the ward of Taitō-ku on the periphery of Akihabara and is some distance from *Chūō dōri*, while the latter is found down a narrow lane off a street which itself is not particularly busy).

Fig 5.10
Pinafore 1, situated on a small yet busy square adjacent to the *Shōwa dōri* exit of the JR Akihabara station, obstructs the view of passers-by into the interior of the café with long white curtains and posters on the window panes.

In contrast, the result of a spatial divide being absent at establishments in Osaka is that a sense of receptiveness and conviviality is created. Fig 5.11 & Fig 5.12 demonstrate the open nature of these venues, with transparent windowpanes that permit views of the interior from street level.

Fig 5.11
Exterior View of *Afilia Kitchen's* (Osaka)

Fig 5.12
Exterior View of *e★twinkle-Zwei* (Osaka)

Outside of Tokyo and Osaka, *Manzokuya* (Kanagawa) is the only café to be located at ground level. It has not taken any noticeable measures to obstruct the view of the interior of the café, though as with *Gentōkan* in Tokyo, this may not have been viewed as necessary since it is situated in a cul-de-sac off an only mildly busy street.

All cafés located in multistoried buildings throughout the country have boards placed outside the main entrance of the structure, indicating the venue. These boards always include the Japanese text for "maid café" (*meido kissa* [メイド喫茶] or *meido kafe* [メイドカフェ]), even if those words are not actually part of the official name of the establishment. Additionally, the boards also often include an image of a maid (Figs 5.13 & 5.14), the recommendations of the café, specials of the day, and in most cases a menu that prospective diners can view before entering.

These boards can be conceptualised as *spaces of representation.* They are part of the *perceived space* of customers since they may engage with them before entering the premises (even regulars to view what specials may be on offer). However, similar to *chirashi,* these boards also form part of the *representations of spaces* of maid cafés. They are *conceived spaces* since the limited physical accessibility of cafés in mulitstoried buildings warrants their placement at street level, with the express purpose of interaction with pedestrians. The written descriptions and other types of pictorial information on them create *representations of spaces,* which customers decode and subsequently transform into a *lived space* by engaging with these representations on the interior of the café.

DÉCOR

5.3 Internal Elements

While maid cafés are often thought of as homogenised entities, they are in fact as diverse and varied as any other type of themed restaurant when it comes to their internal elements. I shall explore this issue of the homogenisation of maid cafés in more depth in

Chapter Six with the case analyses, however, the focus there is on the differences in services provided and the extent to which conversation is commodified. These factors, at most, have only a tacit link to the décor of cafés. It is for this reason I examine the implications of the differences in décor vis-à-vis space separately in this section, so as to avoid confusion in Chapter Six.

The internal elements of maid cafés are sites of *spatial practice* in the *mise en scène.* They also straddle the conceptual area between *spaces of representation* and *representations of spaces.* How the internal elements of cafés are planned, ordered and organised to facilitate the interaction of people among them is a *conceived space,* however, the contiuum of *spaces of representation* (see Fig 5.15), which allows the internal elements to be spaces of imagination and embodiment, also acts as a *lived space.* The continuum of *spaces of representation* has three identifiable motifs. The opposite ends are the *Victorian-influenced* and the *kawaii-influenced*, with the *contemporary other* denoting the tremendous variation in between, influenced by both extremes. I shall now explore each motif.

Fig 5.15
The continuum of *spaces of representation*

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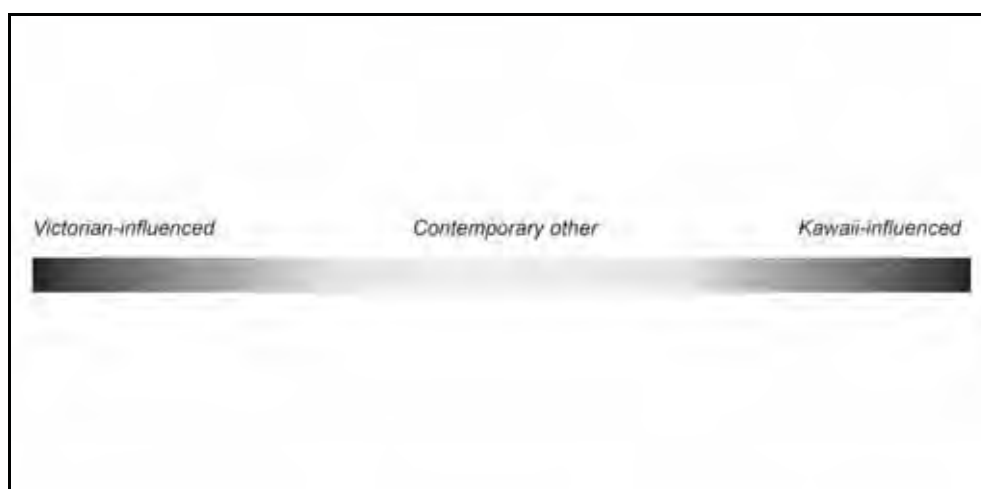
This motif constitutes the lowest number of maid cafés with only nine of the 73 visited (*Cure Maid Cafe* [Akihabara], *Shatzkiste* [Akihabara], *Wonder Parlour Cafe* [Ikebukuro], *E-maid* [Osaka], *Cafe Andante* [Osaka], *M's Melody* [Nagoya], *Mai Pretty 1 & 2* [Hiroshima], *Fairy Tale* [Sendai]) or 12.3% falling into the category. Victorian-influenced cafés are not concentrated in one particular region of Honshū, rather they are found throughout the island from Hiroshima to Sendai. At their core these cafés strive vigorously to recreate an 'authentic' Victorian-era ambience, and while some only allude to this (the website of *Fairy Tale* states that they are aiming for a "classical image" (*kurashikkuna imēji*), others are explicit with their intended motif (*Wonder Parlour Cafe* [Ikebukuro] refers to itself in English as a "Victorian fashioned" café). This ambience is generally attained through the emulation of a perceived rustic (and somewhat affluent) Victorian manor - wooden floors, cabinets full of fine china, grandfather clocks, Union Jack flags and wall-paper plastered walls imitating brick and stone are all common elements. Each café also has its own unique features - *Cure Maid Cafe,* for example, has attempted to create an alfresco atmosphere (despite being located on the sixth floor of the Gee Store building, a gaming centre) by constructing latticed-partitions between booths and adding greenery to simulate a backyard garden (Fig 5.16). They also frequently hold live concerts where the maids play classical music (according to their website the instruments mainly used are the violin, the harp and the flute) and their drinks menu has several unique blends of English-inspired tea. Similarly, *Wonder Parlour Cafe* has its own unique elements - antique telephones, a sizeable chandelier that hangs from the ceiling, and black and white photographs of Victorian maids that line the walls. The table and chairs also hint at a sense of antique elegance with gold coloured seat covers, lacy tablecloths and embroidered white

doilies as place mats. In all of these *Victorian-influenced* venues music (usually classical) plays softly over speakers, achieving an atmosphere of tranquillity that seems to correspond with the air of relaxation they strive for. The internal elements of *Victorian-influenced* cafés are *spaces of representation* as they aim to recreate the imagined ambience of an historical era. Although a *conceived space* through the physical arrangement of the décor (which reflects the origins of the maid persona with antique ornaments), they are also a *lived space* in which customers deconstruct and interpret the meaning of at an individual level.

5.3.2 Kawaii-influenced

At the opposite end of the continuum are those cafés with an interior motif categorised as *kawaii-influenced.* These account for slightly over a quarter of all venues, with 27.3% of establishments aiming for this motif. In complete contrast to the *Victorian-influenced* settings, these cafés are preoccupied with a *kawaii* aesthetic and intend to evoke a sense of brightness that often borders on garish. I shall now discuss the meanings behind this motif.

Kawaii, most commonly translated into English as "cute," is a loaded and complex term that carries a large number of nuances, subtleties and connotations. Consequently, there is no standard opinion that exists as to what exactly constitutes the aesthetic. According to Kinsella, the word *kawaii* can be equated with childlike attributes and "celebrates sweet, adorable, innocent, pure, simple, genuine, gentle, vulnerable, weak, and inexperienced social behaviour and physical appearances" (1995: 220). For Hasegawa:

> the concept of *kawaii* includes elements such as "cute," "pretty," and "lovely," but it is not
>
> restricted to these. It also implies something precious: something that we are drawn towards and

which stimulates one's feeling of wanting to protect something that is pure and innocent (2002: 128)

McVeigh agrees that *kawaii* inevitably evokes feelings of pity or compassion, as it "arouses the protective instinct in others," and is "a desire…to be liked by expressing weakness" (2000: 139). Yano also insists this sense of solicitousness is crucial to understanding *kawaii*, explaining that it "suggests positioning within interpersonal relationships through the verb *kawaigaru* (to give loving care). To be *kawaii* is to elicit a response from beholders that asks for that care…*kawaii* thus reflects fundamental relationalities of the helpless and helper, the kept and the keeper, the dependent and the dependable" (2004: 58). *Kawaii* can encompass an entire sensibility. While it can be a type of fashion, it is also "a way of thinking, of being, of speaking, of writing, and of gesticulating" (Gomarasca 2001: 29).[7] More specifically, the term *kawaii* itself "represents everything that is small, infantile, asexual, gentle, defenceless, or what one can cajole" (Gomarasca 2001: 29).[8] Masubuchi (1994) believes one fundamental element of *kawaii* is having animal-like characteristics (qtd. in Yano 2004: 57), a quality Yano links to protectiveness since animals require looking after and training. She also claims that *kawaii* has elements of a sexual nature attached to it, which are often mediated by the *shōjo* and consumer culture.

The visceral impact of cafés with a *kawaii-influenced* motif is striking, and entering the premises the first thing generally noticeable to customers is the abundance of pink - the tables, the chairs, the paint on the walls, the counter space and the curtains among other things. Other paraphernalia commonly associated with the *kawaii* aesthetic are also present, such as teddy bears and other stuffed toy animals, figurines, heart-shaped cushions and seats, and posters decorating the walls of *shōjo* anime characters. At the polar opposite of

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classical music played softly in the cafés mentioned above, these establishments blast J-pop over their speakers (schoolgirl idols such as *Akb48* and *Morning Musume* are particularly popular), almost to the point where conversation between customers and maids becomes a challenge. The *kawaii-influenced* motif also forms part of the *spaces of representation* of maid cafés. Considering the connotations of *kawaii* described above, the motif, through a space of desire and imagination, plays on the innocent and pure aspects of the maid persona with its links to *shōjo* culture, femininity and youth. As with the *Victorian-influenced* motif, this *lived space* of cuteness is open to change and appropriation through the imaginary of individual patrons.

5.3.3 Contemporary Other

In the middle area of the *spaces of representations* continuum (i.e. between *Victorian-influenced* and *kawaii-influenced*) are the highest portion of cafés that have their own distinct ambience. Constituting 60.2% of cafés, these establishments strive for neither cuteness nor British historicism, and have no identifiable elements common to each other. They are as diverse as the slight S & M theme found in *Meipa* (Osaka) with its large metal cages suspended from the ceiling and leather-clad mannequins (Fig 5.17), to the doll maker/tailor motif found at *Cirque de la Lune* (Akihabara) with its antique sewing machine, seamstress dummy, and collection of dolls (Fig 5.18). *Maid Station Cafe,* completely decked out in no other colour but white, has an air of modern elegance and plushness to it with leather sofas and its dedication to anime with large television screens around the venue (Fig 5.19), while *Hiyokoya* combines a manga theme with a feel of rusticity (Fig 5.20). In short, the motifs of these cafés are completely unique and do not relate to each other by any means of décor, though some may be closer to the ends of the continuum than others.

Fig 5.16
Interior of *Cure Maid Cafe* (Akihabara)

Fig 5.17
Interior of *Meipa* (Osaka)

Fig 5.18
Interior of *Cirque de la Lune* (Akihabara)

Fig 5.19
Interior of *Maid Station Cafe* (Akihabara)

5.3.4 Notable internal elements

Despite these differences in the interior décor of cafés, there are a small number of identifiable internal elements common to all. The first, and perhaps most significant, is size. While it was not possible to ascertain the precise measurements of the interior of cafés on a metre-squared basis, the number of customers they can accommodate via their seating arrangements was attainable, and reflects these physical properties. Of the 73 cafés visited, the highest number of seats available was 40 and the lowest was 15, with the average being 22. Because of these confined areas, the private domains of customers become minimised,

shaping the interactivities not only between them and the maids but also between other patrons. This is an issue that will be discussed in Section 5.5, however the point I wish to highlight here is that the vast majority of maid cafés occupy limited physical areas.

Finally, another notable element common to the dimensions of many cafés is an area where reading materials are made available. This is usually a bookshelf within the corners of, or to one side of the café (Figs 5.20 & 5.21). Some have extensive collections of manga while others have just a handful, and local guides and photographic collections are also usually available. Customers are able to read this material at any time they like, and no permission is required to do so.

Fig 5.20
Interior of *Hiyokoya* (Akihabara)

Fig 5.21
Bookshelf at *Cirque de la Lune* (Akihabara)

ACTION, MOVEMENT & PERFORMANCE

5.4 Salutations and their dynamics

Given the significance of social etiquette in Japan, salutations are an extremely important discursive element to consider in the construction of the maid café *mise en scène.* They contribute to a wider role-play acted out in a number of venues, and are the preliminary medium for establishing the relationship between maids and customers.

Salutations are the first link in the chain of *performance-based spatial practices* in the *mise en scène,* and also form part of its *spaces of representations.*

In any serviced restaurant in Japan, customers are greeted by waitstaff the moment they enter the premises and wait to be seated (Satterwhite 1998: 29). Maid cafés are no different, though the manner in which this greeting is executed (e.g. how many waitstaff welcome the customer, whether bowing is involved) varies from venue to venue. However, of the 73 establishments visited only two spoken expressions serving as salutations were identified: *irasshaimase* (いらっしゃいませ) and *okaerinasaimase goshujin-sama* (お帰りなさいませ、ご主人様).

The first of these, *irasshaimase,* is customarily used by all businesses throughout the country to greet patrons at their point of entry into a venue.[9] As Imaeda highlights with her description of a typical dining experience in Japan, the very moment a customer steps foot inside a restaurant, the norm is for this expression to be called out loudly by every staff member in succession from all areas of the venue (2004: 13). She elaborates by stating that no reply is required by the customer, and that it is an expression also frequently used by hosts to greet invited guests arriving at their home. While *irasshaimase* is an expression that arguably has no translatable equivalent in English, Imaeda suggests "Hello and Welcome!" or "Come in!" (2004: 13). At a functional level, the greeting acknowledges the presence of the customer immediately, and is the initial point of contact between them and the waitstaff. The expression *irasshaimase,* while not unique to maid cafés, is heard with a relative degree of frequency, being the salutation used in 36% of establishments.

On the contrary the second expression, *okaerinasaimase goshujin-sama,* is wholly unique to maid cafés and was used in 64% of venues. The term *okaerinasai* has a conventional partnership with the word *tadaima* - often translated as "I am back", *tadaima*

is a standard greeting utilised when one returns to their residence after being out (Martin 2003: 95). The response to this from whoever is already at home is *okaerinasai* ("welcome back"), which again acts as an acknowledgment of the returnee's presence (Imaeda 2003: 6). The remainder of the expression consists predominantly of addressee honorifics: the use of *-mase* is indicative of an extreme level of formality (Okamoto 1997: 803), as is the prefix *go-* to express respect towards a superior (Tsujimura 2007: 436), and *-sama* (the polite form of *-san*) after *shujin* ("master"), which, except for a few cases, is usually only used for addressing royalty (Jandt 2010: 9).[10] The premise of addressee honorifics is to convey respect from the speaker to the recipient, differing from referent honorifics which are contingent on the matter that is being spoken about (Ammon et al 2006: 608). While both forms of honorifics act as markers of social distance, indicating a lack of familiarity between communicators and cementing hierarchical relationships, they are also influenced by factors such as the ceremonial nature of the situation, the topic of conversation and gender (it is claimed females use more polite expressions than males) [Okamoto 1997: 798]. Considering the issues above, *okaerinasaimase goshujin-sama* could be translated as "I humbly welcome you home, master" to best capture the essence of the exaltation, though in its English form it usually appears (on posters, promotional flyers and café websites) simply as "Welcome back home, Master" (Saitō et al 2008: 70), "Welcome home, my Master", or "Welcome back home, my Master" (see Fig 5.21).[11] It is important to note that there is a female variant of this expression that exists for women customers: *okaerinasaimase ojō-sama* (お帰りなさいませ、お嬢様). Implementing the same addressee honorifics, possible translations could be "Welcome back home, Your Ladyship" and "Welcome home, My Lady".[12]

These *okaerinasaimase* phrases appear to have a degree of marketability to them for maid cafés, acting as a gimmick that establishments strive to make part of the quintessential maid experience. With the intention of attracting new customers, the phrase can frequently be seen on promotional material such as *chirashi* (Figs 5.6 & 5.22), websites (Figs 5.23 & 5.24), and on the boards placed outside of cafés themselves (Fig 5.25), as well as heard on café-made videos posted on Internet sites like *YouTube* and in television appearances. *Okaerinasaimase* phrases thus constitute a significant element of the *spaces of representation* of many maid cafés. They form part of an imaginative space, since they embody certain behavioural aspects of maids and a mimesis of the vernacular used in maid-themed anime and manga. Because these expressions concretise the first point of contact between customers and maids, they forge the preliminary *lived space* between the "inhabitants" (i.e. the maids) and the "users" (i.e. customers) of maid cafés. It is from this space that the role-play develops individually for customers, the space "which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate" (Lefebvre 1991: 39).

Fig 5.22
Top half of the *chirashi* for *Ichigomiruku* (Shibuya) with the
"welcome home" phrase in both Japanese and English

Fig 5.23
"Welcome home" phrase on *Akiba Ichome Gekiba* (Akihabara) website

Fig 5.24
"Welcome home" phrase on *Maidream* (Osaka) website

Fig 5.25
 "Welcome home" phrase on the board placed outside *Meipa* (Osaka)

In most cases *okaerinasaimase goshujin-sama* is announced by only one maid who approaches the door, accompanying the salutation with a slight bow or nod of the head. However, as in the fashion of *irasshaimase* explained by Imaeda, there are occasions (@*home cafe, Pinky Cafe, Filles, MaiDreamin* [all Akihabara]) where it is called out loudly by several maids in succession from all quarters of the café. Despite customers never announcing *tadaima* upon entering cafés to initiate the natural *okaerinasai* response (this is a *competence-based spatial practice* on the customers' part concerning the judgement of

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what actions are appropriate), as would occur in a regular domestic setting, the ultimate aim of this greeting is to simulate the arrival of a "master" at his home where his personal maid awaits. The role-play constructed via this *space of representation* and by this type of language surfaces again with the departure of the customer, demonstrated by the salutations utilised as they exit through the doors.

It is important to highlight that *irasshaimase,* being the standard greeting utilised for businesses in Japan, does not have the function of simulating this domestic setting. For this reason, in the venues that were identified as having used this as the entry greeting, the exit salutation of *arigatō gozaimashita* (ありがとうございました) ["Thank You"] was utilised in all correspondingly (i.e. 36%).[13] Likewise, the remaining 64% used the expression *oki wo tsukete itterashaimase* (お気をつけて行ってらっしゃいませ) respectively, and in no cases did the partnership of these entry and exit salutations converge (see Fig. 5.26).

Fig. 5.26
Fixed relationship between entry and exit salutations

Entry Salutation		Exit Salutation	%
Irasshaimase	⬌	*Arigatō gozaimashita*	36
Okaerinasaimase goshujin-sama/ Okaerinasaimase ojō-sama	⬌	*Oki wo tsukete itterashaimase*	64

The phrase *oki wo tsukete itterashaimase* can be divided into two parts. The first (*oki wo tsukete*) derives from the verb *ki wo tsukeru* meaning "to take care", while the second (*itterasshaimase*) stems from *itterasshai* and is yet another phrase not directly translatable into English. According to Lammers, it is a customary expression spoken by someone staying behind in the house to someone leaving to go to work or school for the

day, with the expectation they will return (2005: 70). With this situation in mind, he suggests the English equivalent to be "have a nice day" or "see you later". The use of the addressee honorific *-mase* once again (and the prefix *o-* for *oki wo tsukete*) renders this expression formal, and is perhaps best translated as "Please take care and I'll see you later". The partnership of the expression *itterasshai* with the word *ittekimasu* (similar to the binding relationship of *tadaima-okaerinasai*) offers a more literal translation. Trombley and Takenaka translate *ittekimasu* as "I'm going and I will come back" (2006: 202), to which Barke similarly suggests the response of *itterasshai* be literally translated in English as "go and come back" (2011: 118). In any event, the situation intended to be elicited from this role-play is that the master, who is leaving, will return home soon (i.e. to the café) to the awaiting maid.

In many of the venues where *oki wo tsukete itterashaimase* is used, a series of *performance-based spatial practices* unfold. Once the customer has organised payment the maid returns to the table and announces that she "would like to see off" the Master/Lady with the expression *omiokuri shitai to omoimasu* (お見送りしたいと思います). In venues where maids call out the greeting from all areas of the café, there is a loud announcement that "the master is leaving" (*goshujin-sama no odekake desu* [ご主人様のお出かけです]) by one of them, alerting colleagues that the moment to call out the greeting has arrived. In order for this role-play to operate smoothly, customers are usually instructed (either verbally or via a card on the table) that settlement of the bill must take place from their seat, and not at the cash register.

The final movement in the *performance-based spatial practices* of the *mise en scène* comes with the maid bowing to the master. According to Lundmark, the vocabulary of bowing in Japan involves twelve basic types - nine of which are done sitting or kneeling,

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three of which are done standing (2009: 8). These three are known as *eshaku, gasshō,* and *saikeirei,* and are performed at a 15-degree angle, a 30-degree angle, and a greater than 30-degree angle respectively (Armstrong & Wagner 2003: 5). Perkins refers to these as the informal, semiformal and formal bows in that order (1994: 3). The *gasshō* bow is the norm for dealing with people of a higher status, and is the one experienced in 31% of maid cafés. In cafés that are located in multi-storied buildings accessed by elevators, the maids accompany the customer outside and press the button. After the customer enters the elevator, the maid bows in *saikeirei* style, remaining with her head lowered until the doors have closed and she is no longer visible. In one exceptional case (*Wonder Parlour Café* [Ikebukuro]), the maid exits onto the laneway where the café is situated and remains with her head lowered in the fashion of *saikeirei* until the customer has walked far enough away to be out of sight. In none of these instances is the customer expected to return bows, as is the normal practice in all restaurants and departments stores across Japan (Trombley & Takenaka 2006: 9).

Bowing, thus, encompasses *spaces of representation* since different styles communicate varying emotions, which include, but are not restricted to "respect, gratitude, deference, remorse, sincerity, humility and other feelings" (Lundmark 2009: 10). The meanings ascribed to this *lived space* are symbolic and metaphorical and can result in disjunctures of embodiment among customers. For example, while Engel & Murakami assert that bowing is a metaphor for humility and not for subservience (2003: 63), Andreatta & Ferraro insist that the practice of lowering the body through bowing is a dramatic symbol of non-verbal submissiveness (2010: 138). *Lived space* is thus created through the changeability and appropriability of the imagined experience of the maid café "user".

5.5 Conversation and Features of Language

As was discussed in Chapter Four in relation to the history of the commodification of conversation, communication founded on modes of chat are the mainstay of the maid café *mise en scène.* While interactivities such as the taking of *cheki* and *rakugaki* (which will be explained in Sections 5.7.2 & 5.8 respectively) act as the pivot points for conversation, it is also generated on occasions independent of these events. At these junctures the development of conversation and its effects are contingent mainly on two phenomena:

(i)   the internal properties of the café itself and the physical limitations of its dimensions (i.e. in de Certeau's terms, the "place")

(ii)   the allure of *gyappu*

In this section I will address these two issues. While it is difficult to map the exact course the topic of conversation took in each establishment since it varied slightly from café to café, in many cases it was extremely formulaic. This was, undoubtedly (as I highlighted in Chapter Three), a result of my status as a foreigner, and accordingly the manner in which these conversations developed rested on this particularity. As also explained in Chapter Three, on entering a café I would invariably be asked if I understood Japanese, and responding that I did there appeared to be a level of comfort amongst the maids, with the statement "I'm glad you speak Japanese because I don't speak English" (*eigo dekinai kara, nihongo wo shabette yokattane*) being heard frequently.[14] I was also routinely asked on entry if I had ever been to a maid café before (most likely to ensure I was aware of what conduct is appropriate inside). Language and *competence-based spatial practices,* thus, seem to be the building blocks for conversational content in maid cafés.[15]

The first noticeable feature of conversations between maids and customers in the *mise en scène* is the rapid decline of preliminary formalities. In Section 5.4 I referred to the use of Japanese honorifics in maid cafés vis-à-vis salutations. I would like to build on this by exploring the ways in which honorific expressions are utilised in maid cafés through extended chat, framed by the trichotomy mapped by Coulmas (2005) and elucidated by Mayes (2003).

Fig 5.27
Trichotomy of Japanese honorifics mapped by Coulmas (2005: 313).
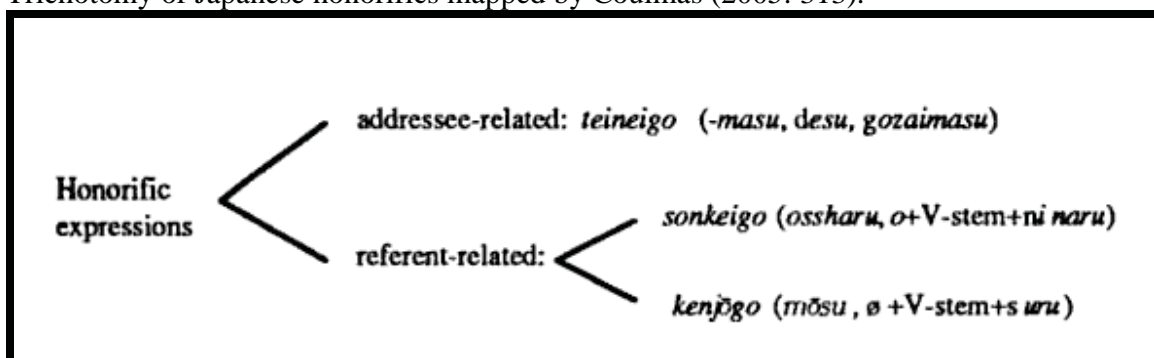
As Mayes highlights, *teineigo* refers to language that is formal and polite (compared to informal and casual) with its main function being to index the relationship between interlocutors through a display of respect or consideration to the addressee (hence the appellation "addressee honorifics" in English) [2003: 73]. It is mostly used between those with a non-intimate relationship, and unlike *sonkeigo* and *kenjōgo* is not contingent on the subject matter of conversations. *Teineigo* is characterised by *desu/-masu* endings (it is also referred to as the "-*masu* form") and is typically used in conversations with one's superiors or in a formal setting (such as a public speech or funeral), with factors such as age, sex, power and social position all playing a role in when and how it is implemented (Nakamura 1996: 238). The referent-related *sonkeigo*, or subject honorifics, is utilised by a speaker to signify respect when describing the actions of another person whose social status is higher

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than their own (Nakamura 1996: 237). The speaker thus acknowledges this difference in position, raising the status of the person being spoken to by creating an imaginary vertical distance (i.e. its function is to exalt). Similarly, *kenjōgo,* or object honorifics, has the same purpose but works in an opposing manner by lowering the status of the speaker to create this distance (Nakamura 1996: 237).

Outside of this trichotomy of honorifics is *futsūgo*. According to Shulman, *futsūgo* completes the four definitive levels of expression that indicate politeness in Japanese (i.e. *futsūgo, teineigo, sonkeigo* and *kenjōgo*) [2004: 201]. Known in linguistic circles as the "plain form", *futsūgo* is informal and used amongst friends and family members (much like casual expressions used in English between colleagues, or within husband and wife or parent-child relationships) [Motwani & Nasukawa 1998: 44]. While *futsūgo* can be regarded as "informal language" in English, the differences in Coulmas' triad of honorification are best conceptualised as "polite language" (*teineigo*), "respectful language" (*sonkeigo*), and "humble language" (*kenjōgo*) [Mayes 2003: 72]. While honorifics have several important functions, one of their most palpable impacts is the verbal concretisation of dominant-subordinate relationships (Mayes 2003: 90).

As I discussed in Section 5.4, the formal *okaerinasaimase goshujin sama* salutation was found in 64% of establishments and *irrashaimase* in 36%. In venues where the former salutation was present, a shift in the degree of honorifics was present in the language of the conversations that followed between maids and customers. This took the form of a change from *sonkeigo* to *teneigo*. However, at most cafés this continued to an even lesser level of formality with *futsūgo* becoming the medium of conversation. There is no standard rate at which these shifts occurred. In some cafés it was almost immediate, in other cafés it took several minutes or even longer for the conversational topic to develop before any change

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transpired. This is obviously dependent on several factors, including the personal preference of the maid.[16] Initially I suspected this use of plain language was due to my being a foreigner, and it was the maids' attempt to simplify the language which they may have believed was easier for me as a non-native Japanese speaker to comprehend (that is to say, using the simple structure of the "plain form" rather than complex *sonkeigo* or *kenjōgo*).[17] Coulmas explains that in the case of honorifics, they are often omitted with what he terms "foreigner talk" (2005: 302). However, it soon became apparent that this was the case with Japanese customers also, especially men. This was not always the situation with female customers, as I observed there was a tendency for women conversing with maids to continue using *teneigo*. This could be due to the gendered nature of polite expressions in Japanese, which are used by women more frequently than men (Nakamura 1996: 239).

Male customers in particular utilising informal language when speaking to maids is, I suggest, one manifestation of the phenomenon of *gyappu*. The term "*gyappu*" (ギャップ), a loanword from English meaning "gap" or "rift", is an expression I encountered with a high degree of frequency in my interactions with male customers when discussing the attraction of the maid persona. At its heart, *gyappu* is a conception that concerns a grand paradox. This usually involves some kind of disparity between the representation of a person/object and their/its actualisation (or how they/it are commonly perceived). This contradiction is exemplified by depictions of women in erotic manga who have voluptuous bodies (i.e. fully developed breasts and wide hips) but retain adolescent or child-like faces (this was described to me on many occasions as a "baby face, dynamic body" type element). Hence, it is paradoxical that the naïveté and innocence of a child could be exhibited through the curvaceousness and allusive sexual prowess of an adult woman. *Gyappu,* in this instance then, is the response to or fetishisation of the rift between adult seduction and

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adolescent ingenuousness. Framed in this manner, the phenomenon in effect is the attraction of an object or person that belies a particular (and usually fixed) image and breaks the mould of how it *should* be. I suggest then, that vis-à-vis the maid café, *gyappu* is manifested in one way by the maids' semblance of complete subjugation (*jūjunsha*), influenced largely by historical representations (as highlighted in Chapter Four, maids were synonymous with dependence, servility, feminine passiveness, naïveté, sexual vulnerability, youthfulness and domesticity), and the casual language that is implemented in conversations. Maids do not use *sonkeigo, kenjōgo,* or *teineigo* consistently - the paradox, and by extension one dimension of their allure, is that although they project an image of subservience and obedience in the initial stages of contact with customers, the transition to the utilisation of *futsūgo* (and consequently a sense of familiarity) becomes a point of fetishisation.

Apart from the use of *futsūgo*, the content of conversations per se in cafés also reflects the development of *gyappu* since a paradoxical sense of closeness arises between maid and customer. In many cases the path of the conversation followed a predictable trajectory, and being a foreigner, discussions would invariably begin with where I was from. Telling the maid(s) that I was Australian would usually lead to discussions of what were perceived as associated elements with this region of the world from a Japanese perspective, namely beaches, surfing, man-eating sharks, venomous snakes, year-round warm weather, marsupials (such as kangaroos and koalas) and other phenomena that seemed to be quintessentially linked to Australia from an 'outside' imaginary. As discussions of this developed, other related topics would consistently arise, such as how far Australia was from Japan by plane, where to and if the maid had been there or travelled overseas to other countries, whether she wanted to go there, and what types of places she wanted to go to *ad*

infinitum. These discussions would then eventually move on to a different topic, invariably manga and anime (e.g. what series we watch/read, the characters we like from these series).

The content of these conversations (and to a lesser degree the manner in which *gyappu* further developed) was heavily influenced by the physical dimensions of the café (i.e. the "place" of the maid café in de Certeau's terms). To be specific, at an average of only 22 seats in a café, it was the limited confines of this material space that impacted how cross-customer conversations developed, since one-on-one discussions between a maid and patron would always be overheard by fellow clients seated nearby. This transparency of conversational content would then enable the invitation of other patrons to comment on or laugh along at the topic in progress, which in turn would generate further discussions amongst patrons themselves independently of the maid. In effect any dialogue between one customer and one maid would ultimately become a discussion between multiple customers and maid(s), and then often between each other. Ostensibly, the "private" conversation between maid and customer becomes a "public" spectacle for other patrons, and this publicity becomes a vehicle for forging social relations. However, the construction of these spaces is more complex, and to further explore this I draw on the work of Kilian (1998).

While rejecting the suggestion that the terms "public" and "private" be merged or eschewed altogether in academic discourse, Kilian develops the notion that elements of publicity and privacy exist in every space through an expression of power relations (1998: 115). This challenges the naturalised assumptions that the "private" and the "public" are categories at opposite ends of a continuum, and that both are characteristics of space rather than indexes of power within it. This suggestion echoes Tétrault (1998), who also argues that the dichotomised terms of "public" and "private" in discussions of space legitimate social and political orders and oversimplify human relationships. Instead she argues that a

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meta-space, where both the public and private exist in simultaneity, is a more effective way of framing how "civil life" operates. Tétrault claims that women in particular have been disenfranchised because of the private/public binary, as the axiom that the "private" equals the "domestic" (with which women continue to be associated), has been historically cemented (1999: 88). The dismissal of the "public" and "private" continuum and the reiteration of their existence in every space is demonstrated by Kilian in the diagram below (Fig 5.28), where publicity expresses the "power of access" and privacy expresses "the power of exclusion" (Kilian 1998: 115).

Fig 5.28
Graphic representation of the power relations created by the "private" and the "public" devised by Kilian (1998: 125)

Publicity is the power of access. Privacy is the power of exclusion. Both forces operate in tension within the same space.
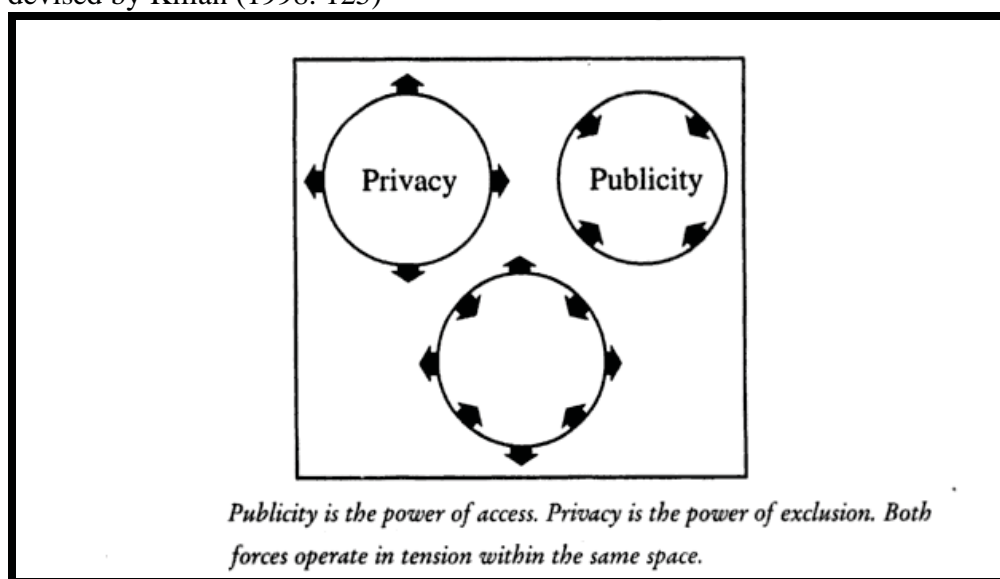
The transparency of conversational content is not the only way that Kilian's access/exclusion power dynamics occur and that Tetrault's *meta-spaces* are created. Indeed, in establishments with extremely limited physical dimensions (e.g. *Pondicherry Floreal, M-Fact, Cafe La vie en rose* [all in Akihabara]), *all* interactions, whether they be *rakugaki,* taking *cheki* or playing games, that are made between a single maid and customer become known to every participant in the *mise en scène.* They become performative *meta-spaces*

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acted out by masters/ladies in front of fellow cast members. In the initial stages of my research, the publicity of these performances was somewhat confronting to me for two related reasons. The first of these was that I was discomfited by having certain personal details of my life (e.g. my hobbies and other interests, my profession, my nationality, my place of residence in Japan) made known to each stranger seated around me. The second reason was that such an activity (i.e. talking loudly and openly) directly challenged at least one notion of urban space in Japan (especially in Tokyo) that I had become accustomed to - quiet and unobtrusive behaviour on public transport induced by the prohibition of mobile phones. Ito explains that violation of this directive on trains and buses prompts "subtle sanctioning by other passengers in the form of quick glances or even sustained glares" (2005: 118).[18] Conscious of this, on my initial visits to maid cafés I was concerned that conversing openly and loudly with maids might be disruptive to other diners (especially in establishments where few customers were present). However, I soon came to the realisation that maid café "places" (i.e. the accessible-to-all geometric dimensions) are a contrast to the silence and inconspicuousness of urban trains and buses in that they are *meta-spaces* for forging relations with fellow customers. It is precisely the amenability to (and not the resistance of) this interpenetration of the public and private inside maid cafés that enables them as sites of homosociality. Since the publicity of conversations and other services (such as taking *cheki*) between an individual customer and a maid is a causative factor in generating cross-customer interactions, there are some parallels to one of Allison's (1994) findings in hostess bars that hostesses mediate masculinities by becoming the topic of conversation. While maids rarely become the topic of conversation in the same fashion (Allison maintains that the bodies of hostesses, in what she terms "breast talk", are objectified through clients' banter [1994: 48]), their initiation of chat with customers on an

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individual level is the departure point for establishing subsequent homosocial relations. Hence, power within maid café *meta-spaces* simultaneously involves both maid-master *and* cross-customer relations, with a resulting overlap of the *power of access*.

The tension (as Kilian describes it in Fig 5.28) that exists in the *meta-space* between maid and customer is molded by the house rules of the establishment (see Section 5.6). In this case, the *power of exclusion* entails proscribing customers from enquiring about the personal details of maids, including, but not restricted to, their real names, how they can be contacted outside the café, and also their work schedules. The *power of access* in the maid-customer *meta-space* then is not only the simple element of the maid's availability to communicate (either verbally or through other forms such as the notebook exchange [see Section 5.11]), but also the transparency of conversational content that affords fellow customers the opportunity to initiate conversations with each other. This overlaps with the *power of access* in the *meta-space* of cross-customer relations (see Fig 5.29), which consequently impacts the formation of three of Enomoto's essentials of otakuism - *identifying* (searching for friends), *sense of belonging,* and *collectivity* (fraternising and forming a group). On the contrary, the *power of exclusion* in the *meta-space* of cross-customer relations can be linked to the *yūetsukan* (feeling of superiority) phenomenon that Kitabayashi discusses (2005: 15) [See Chapter One Section 1.4.2]. Apart from the obvious point that when and which fellow customer(s) a patron chooses to initiate a conversation with is an exclusive process (that easily ostracises others), the conversations that are generated enable *yūetsukan* to develop. This is because there is competition between participants in the discussion to exhibit their knowledge of the topic at hand, and those who are less au fait risk exclusion.

Fig 5.29
Venn diagram indicating the *Meta-spaces* of maid-customer and cross-customer relations
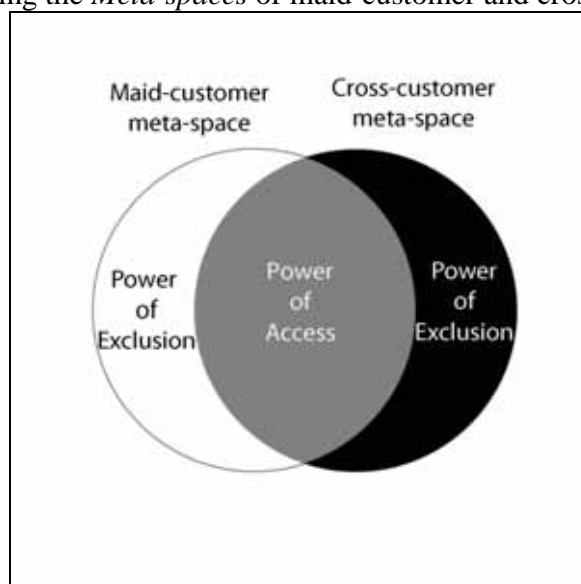
5.6 House Rules

In Section 5.5 I outlined how the development of conversation and its effects rested on both *gyappu* via language and the maid café "place". In this section I will examine how its development is advanced by the power dynamics between maid and customer enabled by the house rules of the establishment. As I will explain in Section 5.7.1, a 'no photography' directive (*satsuei kinshi* [撮影禁止]) is enforced in almost 100% of cafés (there was one exception). This order is but one of several directives strictly enforced by maid café management under what is generally referred to as *kinshi jikō* (禁止事項). These are effectively a set of house rules that form a part of the *mise en scène* of the maid café, but in fact have a much larger significance - indeed, they are the agents that govern the entire politics of the *mise en scène* by controlling how customers behave and what they say (effectively placing boundaries around conversational content). Unlike the *satsuei kinshi* directive (which rarely stipulates what can and cannot be photographed), these *jikō* are not open for ambiguity and are very explicit. Because of the extensiveness of their details,

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rather than being displayed on simple posters around the café like the 'no photography' order, these *jikō* are almost exclusively explained inside the menu (usually on the first page) or on the tables in laminated cards. They are also frequently posted on the websites of individual venues, usually at the bottom of the homepage or under the 'information' (*oshirase*) tab. In some establishments that are geared towards a (foreign) tourist clientele, such as the *@home Cafe* branches (Akihabara), these rules are explained verbally before entering and a card detailing the house rules is shown to the customer. In no other establishment except the *@home Cafe* venues was this in English. On some occasions I would be asked on entry if it was my first visit to a maid café (*meido kafe wa hajimete desuka?*), to which responding "no" elicited no further inquiry. It is most likely that my appearance as a foreigner prompted this question.

While the exact wording of each directive varies from café to café, there are identifiable rules common to all venues. The first five of the following directives form part of the house rules in 100% of all cafés. Rules 6-12 were not present in all venues but were widespread.

1) Never touch the maids in any way (*meido no shintai ni fureru koto*)

2) Never ask for the maids' contact details (such as their cell phone number or email address) (*meido no renrakusaki [denwa bangō ya mēru adoresu nado] wo kiku koto*)

3) Never ask for the hours of the shifts maids work (*meido no shifuto, shukkin jikan wo kiku koto*)

4) Never try to flirt or pick up maids (*meido no shitsukoi nanpa*)

5) Never wait outside for the maids as they arrive or leave for work (*meido no deirimachi sutōkā kōi*)

6)   Never give the maids personal gifts (*meidotachi ni, kojintekina purezento*)

7)   Never try to recruit maids for work (*sukauto, hikinuki kōi*)

8)   Never invade the maids' privacy by asking personal details (such as their real name, or places they have worked before) [*meido no puraibashī ni fureru koto*]

9)   Never make any gesture or action, or say anything that a maid deem offensive, inappropriate, or find uncomfortable (*meido no iyagaru kōi, hatsugen, sekuhara kōi*)

10)   Do not do anything that will disturb other customers (*hoka no okyakusama no meiwaku ni naru kōi*)

11)   Never bring in food and drink from outside the café (*tennai ni inshokubutsu no mochikomi*)

12)   Never change seats without asking permission (*mudan de seki idō*)

The *Cool Japan Otaku Nippon Guide* (Fig 5.30)*, a guidebook with listings of maid cafés and other cosplay-related activities and establishments, highlights only four taboos (*tabū*) [2008: 23]. These are: touching the maids' body (*meido san ni te wo fureru*), asking for the maids' contact details (*meido san no renrakusaki wo kiku*), taking photos without permission (*mudan de satsueisuru*) and bringing food in from outside (*inshokubutsu wo mochikomu*). While Miller insists a list of this sort is a reflection of otaku needing special training in decorum since they are "inept at social interaction" (2011: 240), I would suggest rather two things beyond this oversimplification.

Firstly, the implementation of the rules is a form of demarcation of maid cafés' services. In highlighting these directives, maid cafés are making an explicit distinction between themselves and other venues that commodify communicative exchanges, but where the

lines between offers of sexual services can often be vague (e.g. hostess bars). The rules effectively inform customers that no services of the sort are available for purchase, short of making an official statement that the function of the café is not to provide sex (which indeed some venues allude to, such as *Milkcafe* [Osaka] and *Maidreamin* [Akihabara], by declaring "we are not a cabaret club" [*tōten wa kyabakura de wa arimasen*] on their websites and menus). Since these rules aid in demarcating the services provided by venues, it is likely that it is the management of these establishments, and the maids themselves, that have devised them.

Fig 5.30 Cool Japan Otaku Nippon Guide's maid café taboos (2008: 23)

Secondly, house rules in maid cafés are *competence-based spatial practices* forming a complex regime of power. Consequently, this is one manifestation of *gyappu.* While the

projected image of the maid, as I explored extensively in Chapter Four and in Section 5.5, is one of passivity and servility, the implementation of these house rules in the *lived space* of the café asserts a type of authority for maids. The role-play of submission ceases to exist temporarily while the attention of the customer is drawn to the rules through whatever medium (i.e. verbal instruction, laminated cards, wall posters), and distinct boundaries are delimited between them and the maid. Power in the *mise en scène* during this situation becomes subject to a reversal. Ostensibly with the subservient image of the maid persona, the male customer exercises a form of "domination" (in Foucault's terms) over the female staff members by having them enact this role-play in a *lived space* where the imagination changes and appropriates meanings. However, this type of power does not become ossified and remains dynamic, through the implementation of the house rules via an outwardly submissive appearance of the maid. *Gyappu* in this sense may or may not then be an allure, as whether customers *want* to be controlled in this manner depends on each individual, and is undoubtedly a part of their *spaces of representation.*

House rules effectively concretise Lefèbvre's *competence-based spatial practices* for the maid café, as they highlight the ability of the "user" to "read" a place by judging how safe it is or what types of activities are appropriate there (Modan 2005: 310). On one occasion, while at *Cafe de R* (Saitama), there was a lapse in my own *competence-based spatial practices* when I was asked by a maid if I had ever visited a maid café in Akihabara. Responding I had, I proceeded to ask her if she was familiar with any, to which her reply was that she knew most of them since she had once worked in the area. When I asked her which ones, a casual and direct (but not impolite) "sorry I can't tell you" (*sore wa ienaine*) was given. This breached the fundamentals of *competence-based spatial practices* inside

maid cafés, and consequently I became more conscious of these in my future dealings at different establishments.

5.7 Photography

Photography, in its varying forms, is a dominant element of the maid café *mise en scène* and is a *performance-based spatial practice.* It involves "production" (of tangible objects such as the photographs themselves) and "reproduction" (mimesis of gestures) through physical dimensions, and this *perceived space* is frequently touted in promotional material, special offers, and as a reward when redeeming accumulated points on loyalty cards. Of all cafés visited, 97% have one or more types of photographic service available where photographs of (or with) the maids are possible. These come in three forms: *cheki* (Polaroid shots), *satsueikai* (photo sessions), and as a standard menu item that can be ordered à la carte. Because of this commercial interest in photography, customers are forbidden to take photos of maids with their own personal devices under a general "no photography" directive (*satsuei kinshi* [撮影禁止]). The details of this ban on photography and the three available services vis-à-vis *spatial practice* are outlined in the following sections.

5.7.1 No Photography Directive

While it may appear on the surface that photography of any sort by customers with their own devices (i.e. digital cameras or mobile phones) inside maid cafés is subject to complete prohibition, it is, in actuality, an activity that comes with a mixed bag of arbitrary directives. In 98.6% of cafés visited (there was only one exception), a general "no photography" order is imposed. This is either displayed as a written directive inside the café or communicated verbally by the maids to customers upon entering the premises, or in

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some cases both (the exception, *Hiyokoya* [Akihabara]*,* had neither, and is the only café of the 73 visited that explicitly encourages customers to take photos of the maids).[19] The written directives are primarily in three forms: large signs posted around the café, a description on the menu (most often on the first page), or a laminated instructions card placed on the tables. Framed in this manner, the 'no photography' directive clearly forms part of the *representations of spaces* of maid cafés. The physical entities of these posters, menu descriptions and laminated cards order and organise one set of interactivities between maids and customers. However, through this *conceived space* power remains dynamic and changeable. This is because under this directive what may not be photographed is ambiguous, and as I discovered in most cafés I was able to freely snap the food and drinks that I ordered with my own digital camera after gaining permission from the maids. On three occasions (at *Pinafore 1, Café la vie en rose,* & *M-Fact café* [all Akihabara]) I was in fact encouraged by the maids to do this as my meal was being served to me, before I even had the opportunity to ask. *Royal Milk* (Akihabara) is the only establishment that explicitly states what may or may not be photographed, with two large posters on opposite walls announcing that "photography of maids is prohibited but photographs of food are permitted" (though patrons are requested to inform the maids before they do this).[20] However, while the food and drinks are photographable in many venues, in others this is also strictly prohibited (*Akiba Itchōme Gekiba* [Akihabara], all branches of *MaiDreamin* [Akihabara, Ikebukuro]) and my requests were denied. Photographing the interiors of cafés also proved possible (as the images in Section 5.3 demonstrate), though in a similar fashion to *Royal Milk* and its photographable food policy, *Cure Maid Cafe* (Akihabara) is the only establishment to be explicit that this practice is permissible by explaining the procedure on an information card placed on the tables. This privilege of *tennai satusei* (店内撮影)

[photography of the interior] is on the proviso that no maids are captured in the shot, and it is at a time when the café is not busy.[21] Fig 5.16 (see Section 5.3) was captured when only one other customer (seated out of the general area) was present, and the image was verified by a maid after it had been taken, who informed me she would have to erase the image if it had not been taken in accordance with these conditions. While not prompting customers in the same manner as *Cure Maid Cafe,* other establishments granted me permission to photograph their interiors while no other customers were present (see Figs 5.16 - 5.21 in Section 5.3).

The reasons for this prohibition of photography are not made explicit in most cases: some cafés refer to it as a "disturbance" (*meiwaku*) to dining patrons in their directives, though most do not elaborate beyond the simple order of *satsuei kinshi.* While this may be a legitimate justification, the most likely motive for establishments prohibiting the photography of maids is the commercial interest they have in it for themselves. If this is the case then curbing *tōsatsu* [盗撮] (literally "stolen shot", referring to photographs taken clandestinely and without permission) of maids would undoubtedly be a issue, since this practice could potentially result in a decrease of revenue.

5.7.2 Cheki

This commercial interest in photography exists in three forms and contributes to the *performance-based spatial practices* of maid cafés. The first is the single instant Polaroid shot, or *cheki* (チェキ) as it is known, and is a highly standardised element of maid cafés with 84% of them incorporating this element into their services. In most cases *cheki* are an item listed on the à la carte menu, but are also included in set meals sold as "souvenir" sets (*kinen* [記念] or *omiyage setto* [お土産セット]). There are, however, several instances (*Pinafore 1, Pinafore 2, Pinafore 3, Granvania, MIA cafe, Royal Milk* (all Akihabara),

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Afilia Kitchen's [Osaka]) of *cheki* not being a directly payable service - only when a certain number of points have been accumulated on the café's loyalty card system is this element made available to customers. This arrangement is clearly intended to benefit and appeal to regular clientele of the café, as one-time visitors effectively become ineligible for the service. There is no standard price for *cheki* among cafés, with the cost per shot ranging from ¥300 (*Cafe de Porte, Cafe Doll, Maidolce* [all Osaka]) to as high as ¥1000 (*Filles* and *Cos-Cha* [both Akihabara], *Maidream* [Osaka]). In Akihabara and smaller prefectural locations the average price is ¥500, with maid cafés in Osaka less expensive at an average of ¥350. Many establishments also offer discounted rates for the purchase of two or more *cheki,* while some have prices based on the composition of the actual picture. For example, *Moekon@ Cafe* (Akihabara) charges a higher price for customers to be photographed with the maid than for a single shot of her alone, and *Meipa* (Osaka) charges extra for a personal message to be inscribed on it.

Cheki in essence are colourful pieces of mini-artwork, somewhat reminiscent of manga title pages (particularly the *shōjo* manga genre). As the picture is taken with an instant Polaroid camera, the image quality is considerably lower than photographs captured with digital devices, though the convenience of its instantaneity and lack of need for a printer or computer outweighs this concern for most venues. If *cheki* are part of a set menu or ordered à la carte at the same time as food, an arrangement is always made for them to be taken before the meal is served rather than after. Many establishments have designated areas (with colourful backgrounds) or small stages where customers stand with the maid for the photo to be taken. The customer is always asked which maid on duty they would like their photograph to be taken with, a privilege that comes at a cost in some establishments (*Akiba Itchōme Gekiba* [Akihabara] and *Meipa* [Osaka] have a charge known as *shimeiryō*

[指名料] or a "designation fee", which requires customers to pay for requesting what maid they will have their picture taken with).[22]

Performance-based spatial practices are perhaps at their peak with the taking of *cheki*. In the construction of this *perceived space,* the maid asks the customer in what manner he or she would like to pose for the picture before it is taken. In all cases where I informed the maids I had no preference, only two gestures were ever initiated: the *moe* pose (*moe pōzu* [萌えポーズ]) and the cat pose (*nyan nyan pōzu* [ニャンニャンポーズ]).[23] The first of these, which was explained to me as symbolic of maid-master love, is formed by the maid and customer holding out one hand each, touching thumbs and bending the fingers to form a cusp creating a heart shape (see Fig 5.31). In many cases as part of the decorative art process, the outline of the two hands is traced or the space between them is coloured in with marker to create a more defined shape of the heart (Figs 5.32, 5.33 and 5.34). The second pose (the cat pose) is as equally popular, and is formed by both parties holding their fists out above their heads to emulate the paws of a cat (Fig 5.35). Again as part of the decorative text, cats ears, whiskers, paw prints, and the Japanese onomatopoeia for "meow" (*nyan*) are often dawn on to the picture (Figs 5.36, 5.37, 5.38). In some cases props are used for the shot and accessories are added to the body of the customer, such as at *Pinky Cafe* (Akihabara) where star-shaped wands are used (Fig 5.41), @*home Cafe Don Quijote* (Akihabara) where pink feline-like ears are added (Fig 5.38), and *Maidream* (Osaka) where a frilly headband known as a *kachūsha* (カチューシャ) is worn (Fig. 5.40).

All of these poses are at the confluence of *performance-based spatial practices* and *competence-based spatial practices.* While elements of production (the *cheki* itself) and reproduction (of gestures) are enabled through the material configurations of the "place" of the venue, the boundaries of the house rules (particularly the no touching or inappropriate

language directives) must be observed. This is also linked to the poses simultaneously being *spaces of representation.* The *moe* pose initiates the construction of a metaphorical space of love between maids and masters, a space of "imagination, embodiment and desire" (Tonkiss 2005: 3). Once again power possesses dynamic qualities in this *lived space.* While it is an imaginative representation, the *spatial practice* of the house rules prohibits physical touch.

Fig 5.31
Moe Pose at *Pinafore 1* (Akihabara)

Fig 5.32
Moe Pose at *Cafe Doll Tokyo* (Akihabara)

Fig 5.33
Moe Pose at *Maid in Cafe* (Osaka)

Fig 5.34
Moe Pose at *Pondicherry* (Akihabara)

Fig 5.35
Cat Pose at *Akiba Itchōme Gekiba*
(Akihabara)

Fig 5.36
Cat Pose at *Cafe De Porte*
(Osaka)

Fig 5.37
Cat Pose at *Cafe Doll*
(Osaka)

Fig 5.38
Cat Pose at *@home Cafe Don Quijote*
(Akihabara)

Fig 5.39
Moe Pose at *Maidolce* (Osaka)

Fig 5.40
Cat Pose at *Maidream* (Osaka) ⬇

Fig 5.41
Props used at *Pinky Cafe* (Akihabara)

Fig 5.42
Cat Pose at *Ichigo Miruku* (Shibuya)

いちごみるく

なっとう
食べたことない
同盟

2010年
9月7日(火)

きょう♡

Once the picture has been taken, the maid takes several minutes before returning it to the customer, in which time she decorates it with coloured pens. Additional objects such as adhesive stickers and glitter are also frequently pasted on to add to the colourful effect (Fig 5.42). With the exceptions of *Meipa* (Osaka), *Akiba Ichōme Gekiba* and *Gentōkan* (both Akihabara) this decorative text/artwork is always free of charge, and in almost all cases includes the name of the café, the date the customer visited, and a personalised message about the experience of the customer in the café, usually related to the topic of conversation between the maid and customer (see Figs 5.32 and 5.42). The messages become important *representations of space* that the preserve the memory of the experience in the café and the conversational content. For example, the message in Fig 5.42 might best be translated as "Go team no-natto!" (*nattō tabeta koto nai dōmei*), which is a continuation of a discussion I had with the maid about the smell and appearance of the Japanese food natto preventing me from trying it (she claimed the same about herself). More generic

representations of space can be seen in the *cheki* in Figs 5.35, 5.36 and 5.37 with the inscription of the phrase *okaerinasaimase goshujin-sama,* and in Fig 5.32 which thanks me for "talking a lot today".

Customers have the option of choosing to be in the photograph with the maid or having her a picture of her alone, in which case she makes one of a variety of poses (these can be requested). More than two maids in any one shot is highly unusual. The *cheki* in Fig 5.39, where every maid in the café posed for the photograph, is exceptionally rare and was given to me free of charge on the condition a duplicate copy could be placed in a *cheki* photo album left for display inside the café (the purpose being for other customers to look at). This was because I was a foreigner, and it was explained to me that the café wanted to showcase a *cheki* album featuring all different kinds of customers.

While the instant Polaroid is the norm in most cafés, a variant referred to as *purikura* (プリクラ) is available in three venues (*Maidoll* (Shizuoka) *Maid Station Cafe* and *Hand Maid Café* [both Akihabara]). These are essentially the same, however instead of being taken with a Polaroid they are shot with a digital camera. This allows for multiple replications of the image which can be distributed to other people, with the decorative art process being digitised in the fashion of *purikura* booths (see Fig 5.43). While *Hand Maid Cafe* also offers *cheki, Maid Station Cafe* offers only *purikura.* At both venues the price for the *purikura* is ¥1000.

The concept behind *cheki* is to start a collection of different maids and different cafés, almost in the fashion of accumulating baseball or collector cards. I often observed male customers who had entire folders of these and were proudly showing them to other patrons seated nearby, and many cafés accommodate this practice by selling merchandise such as photos albums for the *cheki* collection to be kept in. This is significant as it contributes to one of the eight essentials of otakuism: *collecting.*

5.7.3 *À la carte photography*

For customers who pursue photography as a hobby, opportunities to take photographs of maids with their own equipment exist in a very small number of cafés. Of all venues visited, only four were found to have this element: *Candy Fruits, Akiba Itchōme Gekiba* (both Akihabara), *Meipa* (Osaka) and *Cafe Charlotte* (Okayama). This service is a permanent à la carte menu item and can be ordered at any time during the regular hours of

operation of the café (the exception is *Cafe Charlotte* which only offers it in the ten minutes directly after closing time). There is no standard name for this item - *Candy Fruits* calls it *kyasuto satsuei* (キャスト撮影) "cast photography", *Cafe Charlotte* the *mochikomi kamera sābisu* (持ち込みカメラサービス) "own camera service", while *Akiba Itchōme Gekiba* simply lists it on the menu as *goshujin no kamera de no satsuei* (ご主人のカメラでの撮影) "photography with the master's own camera" and *Meipa* as *sutajio de gojibun no kamera de meido wo satsuei* (スタジオでご自分のカメラでメイドを撮影) "taking photos in the studio of the maid with your own camera". The system of à la carte photography is identical in three establishments (*Candy Fruits, Meipa* and *Cafe Charlotte*). For a fee (¥750 - ¥1000), customers utilise a designated area of the café to take photographs of a single maid within a limited time frame (either five or ten minutes). *Meipa* has a studio adjacent to the dining area for this purpose, while *Candy Fruits* (a much smaller establishment) has five settings complete with props located in between and around the customer seating areas of the café itself. These settings are a classroom, a palace, a hospital, the bedroom of a young girl, and the inside of a train.[24] Because of this configuration, any customers ordering the service must take the photographs in front of all other dining patrons, whereas the enclosed area of the studio in *Meipa* prevents this. Since the service at *Cafe Charlotte* is only available after the venue has closed, the tables are cleared to one side and all customers who have requested it photograph simultaneously.

The à la carte photo service at *Candy Fruits* is in fact only available to members of their photo club (*satsuei kurabu*)[撮影クラブ] which is free to join. Membership requires supplying all contact details and presenting photo identification.[25] This is the only establishment of the four that requires registration prior to photographing, and outlines the

procedure in written form. This includes the protocol for bringing photographic equipment such as tripods and reflectors into the venue, as well as information on consulting maids about how customers wishes them to model.

Customers nominate the maid they would like to photograph (a designation fee applies only at *Akiba Itchōme Gekiba* and *Meipa* for this, as it does with *cheki*), and a kitchen timer is set to indicate that the countdown has begun at the same time as the maid makes an announcement of its commencement. For the entire duration of the appointed time, the customer is able to take as many photographs as they wish, with the maid presenting a variety of poses in front of the backdrop (see Fig 5.44). Once the timer has sounded the maid again makes an announcement that the photo shoot has ended, and I observed on most occasions the customer showing the photographs to the maid on the LCD panel of the camera in the minutes after.

Unlike the other establishments, the à la carte photography available at *Akiba Itchōme Gekiba* is bound by quantity and not time. For ¥680 customers are permitted to take two photographs of any maid with their own camera or mobile phone, which are verified after being shot. While this seems to afford customers fewer opportunites for good shots, the emphasis of their photographic services appear to be on photo sessions (see the following section).

The photographs from this à la carte option, such as those in Fig 5.44, are part of the *spaces of representation* of the establishments that have this service. The range of poses and the setting of a young girl's bedroom, suggest a childish innocence to the maid persona. In some poses she coyly covers her mouth with her hand as if speaking was prohibited, while in others she endearingly clutches them to her chest. In one pose she grasps her hands together in the style of a prayer. There is a sexual innocence too, with the maid pulling her

skirt down and modestly placing her hands on her knees while sitting on the bed. All of these projections of the maid as a naïve ingénue are consistent with the historical representations of domestic servants discussed in Chapter Four, creating a *lived space* of imagination and desire.

Fig 5.44
A range of poses are offered during the *kyasuto satsuei* session at *Candy   Fruits*

5.7.4 Photo Sessions

Satsueikai (撮影会) are photo events held by maid cafés and generally occur on a monthly basis, though depending on the time of year may be held more frequently. They operate in a similar fashion to the à la carte photography, however these events take place after normal opening hours and can often last for the entire night (from 11pm to 5am). Customers pay an admission fee to enter the café and are entitled to photograph the maids without a limit on time or the number of photographs taken. Not every establishment has photo sessions, and they appear to be more common in venues in Osaka than in Tokyo.

Akiba Itchōme Gekiba (Akihabara) operates their photographic service in a different manner. They conduct what are know as "surprise photo shoots" (*totsuzen satsueikai*) [突然撮影会] during normal opening hours, where they randomly announce photographic opportunities. The information of what day or time is never disclosed beforehand, so it is regular patrons who have the highest chance of being able to participate in the event.

Customers who wish to participate are allowed three minutes (for the price of ¥735) to take photographs of all maids on duty who pose on the stage area of the café.

The *@home cafe* branches also have a photo session protocol that differs greatly to other establishments. To participate in the photo events at these venues, customers must first make an application over the Internet to be approved for an appointed session.[26] After providing their contact details and nominating a preferred date and time, the customer receives confirmation from the café administration within three days. Once the photo session has been scheduled, the customer is requested to arrive 20 minutes before the appointed time on the day of the shoot. The photo session takes place at the café's studio and customers are required to sign consent forms for how they will conduct the session and what will be done with the photographs after taken. Camera phones, video cameras and Polaroid cameras are all prohibited. In addition to forbidding customers to ask for the autographs of the maids and their phone numbers, several other practices are also strictly forbidden: touching the maids (*moderu no karada e no sesshoku* [モデルの体への接触]), making uncouth remarks (*bōgen* [暴言]), forcing them to make poses that would make them feel uncomfortable (*iyagaru pōzu no kyōyō* [嫌がるポーズの強要]), and shooting at an extreme low angle (*kyokutanna rōanguru* [極端なローアングル]). These are an extension of the house rules, and form part of the *competence-based spatial practices* of these venues.

5.8 Food Art

Food art is another prevalent element of the maid café *mise en scène* with 82.5% of all venues found to have this feature. As with à la carte photography, food art has no standardised appellation across venues. In the vast majority it is called either *rakugaki* (落書き) ["scrawl" or "graffiti", literally "fallen writing"] or *ekaki* (絵書き) ["picture drawing"], thought it is also referred to as *moji'ire* (文字入れ) [literally "putting in letters"] in many places. Food art is fundamentally the decorative practice of drawing pictures or words on food in condiments such as ketchup or chocolate syrup. This transpires in two separate ways - the drawing either takes place in the kitchen with no involvement from the customers before it is served, or the image is drawn by the maid in front of the customer after a brief conversation. The second interactive phenomenon is the most common. The maid asks the customer what they would like drawn, and in most cases I witnessed customers request an anime or manga character (on some occasions however I saw male customers banter with the maids, asking them to draw pictures that clearly would not have been possible, to which the maids declined stating it was too difficult). In the instances where I left the decision to the maid, faces resembling icons such as *Anpanman, Miffy, Doraemon,* and *Peko-chan*, as well as generic animal faces drawn in ASCII style appeared with the highest frequency (Figs 5.45, 5.46, 5.47 & 5.48). In one instance (*Pinafore 1* [Akihabara]) a personal message was scribed for me following my conversation with the maid about my studies (Fig 5.46), though this was a single case (the message reads "you came to Akihabara! Study hard!"). Once the drawing is complete, the maid tells the customer to enjoy their meal, and the customer responds by thanking the maid and generally commenting on her skills. In this sense *rakugaki* is a service which affords the customer a brief moment of one-on-one time with the maid, a communicative exchange that

also appears to be a very marketable element since images of *rakugaki* can frequently been seen on flyers (see Fig 5.8 in Section 5.1) and listed on menus explicitly as a service.

Since not all available food items are suitable for this service, it is restricted predominantly to *omuraisu* (rice omelette), *hanbāgu* (hamburger steak) and desserts. In most cases where the *rakugaki* is not drawn in front of customers the dish served is a dessert, while for the other items the communicative feature of conversing is always present. This is what renders food art a *performance-based spatial practice. Perceived space* is constructed through the dialogue of the maid and the customer, using *rakugaki* as the catalyst for this conversation. At the same time however, food art also forms part of the *representations of spaces* in maid cafés, reflecting both the maids' artistic and professional power over space.

Fig 5.45
Rakugaki face of a cat drawn in ketchup at *Maid Station Cafe* (Akihabara)

Fig 5.46
ASCII style face and message *rakugaki* at *Pinafore 1* (Akihabara)

Fig 5.47
Rakugaki face on a dessert in chocolate
syrup at *M-Fact Cafe* (Akihabara)
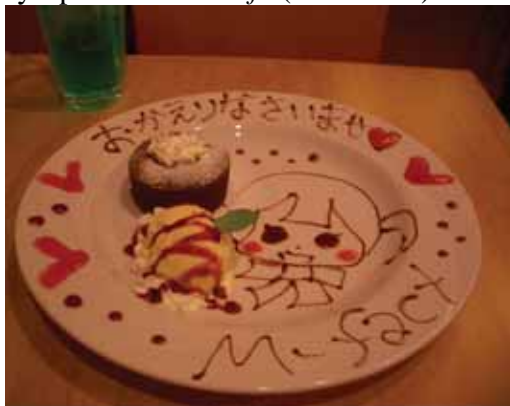
Fig 5.48
Rabbit-like *rakugaki* image on a dessert at
Wonder Parlour Cafe (Ikebukuro)

5.9 *Moe* incantation

As part of the broader *mise en scène* of the maid café, the *moe* incantation has considerable standing with 36.7% of cafés containing this element. The incantation is referred to as an *omajinai* (おまじない) by the maids, and essentially entails customers casting a "spell" on the food and drinks that are served to them by repeating a series of words linked to the idea of *moe*. The process of the incantation begins by the maid placing the beverage or dish on the table, and then kneeling beside the customer so that she is at table height (or lower). She explains her wish to inject "love" into the food and to make it more delicious than it already is, usually by stating the phrase *motto oishikunaru yō ni aijō wo iretai to omoimasu* (もっとおいしくなるように愛情を入れたいとおもいます). She demonstrates how the chant should be done by saying it out loud, asking the customer to repeat it and to follow any actions (if part of the incantation). Once this demonstration is complete she announces the start of the real spell, urging the customer to repeat it as "cheerfully" as possible (*genkiyoku go isshoni onegai itashimasu* [元気よくご一緒にお願いいたします]). After the spell has been cast the maid thanks the customer and tells them to

enjoy his or her meal, before finally leaving the table. *Omajinai* thus form important *spaces of representation* since they are associated not only with traditional religious rituals (Gabriel 2006: 50), but also with the "charms or spell-casting" associated with the courting of romantic interests among young people (especially women) [White 1996: 266].[27]

A maximum of two incantations exist for any one visit - one for the pre-meal drink served in most cafés, and the other for the main dish. *Omajinai* come in two forms: a "mixing" spell where the maid is the active agent, or a chant where gestures need to be performed by both parties. The mixing spells are the most passive of the two for the customer, since the only requirement is to observe and repeat the incantation. These particular chants involve the maid stirring sugar or milk into warm beverages such as tea and coffee with a spoon as it is being said, or simply swirling the ice around with a straw if a cold drink has been ordered. For food items, the mixing spell is only reserved for pasta, and the sauce and seasonings are blended through for the duration of the incantation. For the second form of spell that requires gestures, the maid has no involvement with the food. It requires both maid and customer to take on the *moe* pose with their own hands (explained in Section 5.7.2), and moving the heart-shaped space in front of them as they repeat the incantation. There is no incantation that is common to all cafés. Below are examples of five that were noted during my visits:

@home cafe Don Quijote - *maze maze moe moe kyun kyun doki doki waku waku nyan nyan wan wan piyo piyo oishikuna~re!* (mixing spell)

Popopure - *moe moe moe moe oishikunare kyun kyun!* (*moe* gesture spell)

Maidreamin 2 - *maze maze maze maze moe moe oishikunare dokyun!* (mixing spell)

@home cafe Main - *maze maze moe moe kyun kyun wan wan pyon pyon piyo piyo oishikuna~re !* (mixing spell)

Maidreamin Honten *- oishikuna~re kyun kyun kyun!* (*moe* gesture spell)

As is visible from the above examples, *omajinai* consist of little more than onomatopoeic words beyond the imperative *oishikunare!* （おいしくなれ！）["become delicious"].[28] According to Haseda, the Japanese language typically classifies onomatopoeia in three ways: phonomines (*giongo/giseigo*) which describe sounds, phenomimes (*gitaigo*) which describe appearances and states of the world, and psychomimes (*gijōgo*) which describes inner feelings and mental conditions (2003: 217). Of particular interest are the psychomines (and the phonomines connected to them) present in the incantation since these have a direct relationship to the concept of *moe*. These are *doki doki, kyun kyun* and *waku waku. Doki doki* is a phonomine representing the sound of a repeated heartbeat (Haseda 2003: 233), and is usually an emotional expression of the "anticipation of meeting an object of romantic interest" (Palmer & Occhi 2006: 9). *Kyun Kyun* is an abbreviation of the expression *mune ga kyun to naru* or *mune-kyun* meaning "my heart aches for you" (Shibatani 1990: 255). Finally, *waku waku* signifies the intensity of excitement in anticipation of something (Occhi 2006: 163). In light of what these onomatopoeia signify, there clearly is a construction of some elements of the *gijiren'ai* (pseudo-romance) Enomoto describes in relation to *moe* (2009: 31). The references to animals and the sounds they make are indicative not only of *moe* but also *kawaii* tendencies. Perhaps a continuation of the *cheki* pose is *nyan nyan* (sound made by a cat), in addition to *wan wan* (sound made by a dog), *piyo piyo* (sound made by chicks), and *pyon pyon* (sound made by jumping or hopping animals, such as rabbits or frogs).

Omajinai, while *performance-based spatial practices,* aid in the construction of *spaces of representation.* With this link to *moe* and pschomines such as *kyun kyun,* it is possible that a *lived space* of embodiment and desire is created between maids and

customers. Power in this space once again hinges on the *competence-based* nature of the interactivity. "Users" must recognise that this imaginary romance cannot be actualised because of the house rules, and that any form of physical contact with the "inhabitants" must remain in an imaginary space.

5.10 Games

Games are another prevalent element of the maid café, with 52% of all cafés having a games service. Like cheki, these often come as part of a set menu or can be ordered à la carte, with the average cost around ¥500 per five minutes. Some establishments, such as *Filles* (Akihabara), offer longer sessions of around fifteen minutes for ¥1000. Often referred to as 'minigames' (*minigēmu* in Japanese), the short-duration games are usually simple endeavours that might be classified as *alea* under Callois' (1958) schema of game playing. That is, games of chance that require no skill or previous experience, an element of randomness and contain a certain resignation to destiny (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al 2008: 26). By contrast, the games that last for a longer duration, often called 'party games' (*pātīgēmu*), can be considered *agôn* under Callois' classification. As the opposite of *alea,* games under the *agôn* schema do not rely on luck but require skill and self-reliance on the individual player. While there are no standard games, the most common under the *alea* classification found in maid cafés are:

1) *Pop up pirate* (*kurohige kiki ippatsu* [黒ひげ危機一発]) - where players take it in turns to place plastic swords into the side of a barrel. The loser is determined when the pirate inside is ejected.

2) *Gator Panic* (*wani wani panikku* [ワニワニパニック]) - players press down the teeth of a plastic alligator which has its jaws open. The loser is determined when the jaws randomly close on a player's finger.

3) *Jenga* (*jenga* [ジェンガ] - although called *jenga* in most venues, it is not the original game where players remove wooden blocks from a tower with the objective of preventing its collapse. In this version, players simply place the wooden blocks on top of each other as high as they can until the structure overbalances and falls over. The player who places the last piece that causes it to topple becomes the loser.

Games under the *agôn* classification:

4) *Woody Style* (*rittai yonmoku narabe* [立体四目並べ]) - similar to the game *Connect Four,* players must place four coloured wooden balls in a row on a vertical rod to win.

5) *Othello* (*osero* [オセロ]) - a strategic game that requires players to line up coloured markers to win.

These games, regardless of their categorisation as *alea* or *agôn,* are *performance-based spatial practices.* They are enacted through the physical dimensions of the café, with the games intended to afford maids and customers a predetermined length of time to converse based on this activity. The games are, in the same fashion as *cheki, rakugaki* and *omajinai,* a conduit for chat. Power in this *perceived space* becomes trivialised and is treated as an object of mirth. As part of the rules of the game in most establishments the customer is warned that he/she will be made to do something 'embarrassing' (*hazukashii*) in the event that they are not successful at winning the game. For example, after losing the game of *jenga* I was playing (that was part of my "set system" [see Section 5.14]) at *Filles*

(Akihabara), I was made to wear a rabbit ear headband for the remainder of my stay in the café. Similarly, on two separate occasions (at *Pinky Cafe* [Akihabara] and *Maidreamin 1* [Akihabara]), I observed a maid announce over the microphone that a customer in the café had something important to say. The lights were dimmed, and both times a young man wearing rabbit ears jovially approached the microphone before saying "hippity hop, I'm a loser!" (*bokuchin makechattayo, pyon!*). Both men received applause from dining patrons who all laughed. These displays of *hazukashisa* (embarrassment) became catalysts for discussion among other male patrons dining alone, again adding to the otakuism essentials of fraternising and making friends. On occasions when the customer wins a game, the losing maid does not engage in anything deemed embarrassing. Instead, the customer is offered a free drink, a few hundred yen discount off the final bill, or a small souvenir. This suggests that this trivialisation of power is indeed formative to the homosocial relations of male customers.

Finally, in larger establishments like the @*home cafe* branches (Akihabara), there are surprise "parties" (*tanoshimikai* [楽しみ会]) where a mass audience (i.e. all diners in the café at that particular moment) participates in one game together (usually *paper, scissors, rock*). This, however, appears to be unique to those branches and no similar game involving all participants was encountered at any other venue.

5.11 Notebook Exchange

One element found in a relative number (38.2%) of maid cafés is the notebook exchange (*kōkan nōto* [交換ノート]), also referred to as communication notes (*komunikēshon nōto* [コミュニケーションノート]). The concept of the notebook exchange as a *performance-based spatial practice* is standard in all cafés that utilise them, in that it is

designed to be a secondary form of communication with the maids. Unlike the primary communicative exchanges (i.e. conversation, *rakugaki, cheki*) however, it is delayed and retrospective, relying on the written abilities of both the maid and customer. This is what makes the notebook exchange one of the most significant *representation of spaces* in the maid café *mise en scène.*

The procedure for communication notes is relatively simple: each maid in the café has her own personal notebook, which is labelled with her name and sits on the bookshelves where the manga and magazines described in Section 5.3.4 are available. While sometimes the notebook is an elaborately decorated hard-cover diary with an illustrated title page, more often than not it is simply an A4 sized exercise book purchased at a discount store (¥100 shop). While it was not possible to measure with precision the frequency of the maids' entries in the notebook (this would require gauging every maid in every café), it appears that at least every few days to once a week the maid writes a piece, similar in content to an online blog entry: she may comment on her new hairstyle, the latest fashion accessories that have piqued her interest, or her thoughts and feelings (in the style of what is known as a *kansōbun* in Japanese) about an event that the café has recently held. On only a few occasions was I ever encouraged by maids to make an entry, and for the most part the notebooks are simply there for customers to read and write in at will. In a similar fashion to the maids' pieces, the entries by customers that I viewed were examples of *kansōbun,* with comments on their experiences the café, the food, the cuteness of the maid, and what was talked about. Drawing pictures (predominantly of the maid) in manga style was also a common feature. In this respect, the communication notes function much like a visitor's book in a museum (or other attraction) for the casual visitor, and form a large part of customer's *conceived spaces*. However, they are also popular with regulars

who return to see the responses of the maids to their comments, questions and drawings. This then becomes an important extension of their dialogue that takes place inside the café, and hence straddles all three *spaces* in Lefebvre's triad by becoming a notable *space of representation.* In this *lived space,* customers change and appropriate certain elements of their familiarity with maids, as the embodiment of a "pseudo-romance" is also made possible.

PROPS[29]

5.12 Websites and Blogs

Websites are an important element of the *representations of spaces* of maid cafés, with 100% of all venues visited possessing one. Of these, 98% had their own Internet domains, while the remaining 2% were hosted by other (mainly blogging) sites such as *jugem* or *hatena*. All websites contained the following four pieces of information concerning their respective establishments:

i) details of location (including maps, contact numbers and addresses)

ii) hours of operation of the venue

iii) menu samples

iv) information on cover charges and systems.

In most cases, the following six were also present:

v) a recruitment tab for interested workers

vi) information on upcoming events

vii) a tab containing links to external maid and cosplay-oriented sites

viii) a photo gallery of the store

ix) links to goods that are available for purchase online

x)   a blog

Of these elements listed above, blogs are the most significant in terms of deconstructing the temporal and spatial experiences afforded to customers. The blogs, which are mostly referred to as "diaries" (*nikki* [日記]or *nisshi* [日誌]) on the websites, act in some respects as virtual, digitised versions of the communication notes described in Section 5.11. A critical difference is that blogs are severely limited in their interactive capacities when it comes to sustaining *direct* contact between maids and customers. It is for this reason I suggest that maid café blogs are a form of unidirectional *nonspace.* According to Morse, *nonspaces* are the imagined or "particularly 'realised' virtual environments" where people meet and interact (1998: 17). This accords with Lefebvre's belief that spaces are socially produced. However, since no physical "place" exists for these communicative exchanges to occur (electronic networks are their exclusive domain), their inception relies not only on human agents interacting with each other but also on "the semiautonomous agency of machines" (Morse 1998: 17).

The content of the blogs on maid café websites can be categorized in two ways: the *informative* and the *descriptive.* Examples of the informative include letting customers know of changes in opening times, announcing changes to events, or unexpected closures of the café. These announcements fulfil a direct function to inform. The *descriptive,* however, are akin to the content found in the communication notes. These include comments how enjoyable recent events were, banter about customers, the thoughts and feelings of the maid that is posting, and thanking customers for their patronage. This is exemplified by the following extract from the diary of *Fairy Tale* (Sendai) in October 2011, where the posting maid comments firstly on an event in celebration of a colleague's birthday, and then on new staff members:

As I expected lots of Masters and Ladies attended!

There's never a dull moment at the counter ♪ I got a giggle when I saw everyone trying to hand over

their presents (￣∀￣)

Today I worked with two new maids. There wasn't a whole lot of time to talk to them, but I'm glad

they seemed like they were having fun (＊＾o＾＊)

And the Masters were jokingly giving them a hard time LOL

The evening goes by so quickly when I'm having fun I totally lose track of what time it is!

These descriptions, however, do not exemplify *nonspace* in its truest space. *Nonspace,* under Morse's definition, involves the sustained contact among two or more people. Since there is no way to respond to, or comment on the descriptions created by the maids, it is a unidirectional *nonspace.* Readers engage with this virtuality individually, although it is possible to bring the issues up in the "realspace" of the café on future visits. Because blogs are a unidirectional *nonspace,* I consider them a prop in the *mise en scène.* They are peripheral and act as an assist, highlighting again, as with the flyers and the street performance, that the spatial practices of the maid café are performed both inside and outside of the geographical "place".

5.13 Maid Goods

Original maid goods (*guzzu*) [グッズ] are the items for sale at individual venues branded as products unique to that particular establishment. These goods may also be considered props in the *mise en scène* since not every customer is obliged to or compelled to purchase and engage with these products. The sale of these items occurs via two platforms; the first is the physical items available for purchase at cafés, while the second is through the websites of each establishment. The price and type of product for sale by cafés

stretches across a broad spectrum. Goods may be as simple as plastic wrists bands retailing for a few hundred yen (the only item that *Cafe Doll Tokyo* [Akihabara] sell) to elaborate and sizeable objects such as suitcases costing upwards of ¥20000 (sold at the @*home cafe* branches and known as a "*moe* carrier"). Indeed, at first glance the range of goods seems limitless. For example, *Pinafore* offers face towels, ball point pens (with the café's logo imprinted on the centre), candy with the word "*moe*" engraved on each individual piece, and curry rice stock with unique packaging (branded as *pinakarē* and made from Habanero chilli, retailing for ¥500). As equally diverse with their range, *Cure Maid Cafe* offers 60cm doll figurines of maids dressed in the café's uniform for ¥39800, telephone cards for ¥1200, book covers for ¥1000, cups and saucers for ¥1500, and hour glasses engraved with the café logo for ¥600. Items of clothing are also popular - *Afilia Kitchen's* sells their unique style of maid costume for a costly ¥80000 (though this price does not include accessories such as socks and shoes), while similarly the *MaiDreamin* branches sell the style of knee socks that are worn by the staff members (in addition to folders, badges and "*moe*" cigarette lighters).

Amongst this diversity there are three items that are most common to all establishments offering maid goods. These are *buromaido*, CDs and DVDs. *Buromaido,* or "bromides" in English, originate in the 1960s and are essentially photographs of celebrities (Gerow 2010: 322) that are important *representations of spaces.* They aim to artistically memorialise the dining experience of cafés and effectively act as photographic postcards, retailing at around ¥500 a piece. In the case of *Wonder Parlour* (Ikebukuro) [Figs 5.49 and 5.50], *buromaido* are awarded to customers complimentarily once their bill has reached over ¥4000. The photographs typically feature the maids of the café (or possibly models dressed in its costume) in a variety of poses, and are not dissimilar to the images displayed

in photo books such as *Akihabara Housemaid-cafe Costume Collection & Guidebook* (2005) and *Parlour Maid Cafe Costume Collection* (2006). Since there is a wide variety of *buromaido* on offer at different cafés, the act of accumulating them would seem to add to the otakusim essential of *collecting.* Similarly, the DVDs and CDs on sale at cafés (Fig 5.51) capture the stage performances of maids and are usually filmed at events. These, like *buromaido,* are important *representation of spaces* since they memorialise for customers the experience inside the establishment.

Fig 5.49
Compliment *buromaido* from *Wonder Parlour Cafe* (Ikebukuro)

Fig 5.50
Compliment *buromaido* from *Wonder Parlour Cafe* (Ikebukuro)

Fig 5.51
The entrance to *Maidreamin 1* playing the DVD that is available for purchase from all branches.

'PUTTING IN THE SCENE'

5.14 Cover Charges and Systems

The most fundamental *spatial practice* of maid cafés is a fee for admission. In fact, this charge is what enables participants in the *mise en scène* to enter a *perceived space,* engage with *conceived spaces,* and appropriate *lived spaces.* The fee is, in effect, the starting point of the maid café "place" from which all other *spatial practices, representation of space* and *spaces of representation* are formed, and without it none are possible. These cover charges (*sekiryō* [席料]) to maid cafés are a prevalent feature, with 40% of establishments implementing them and consequently formulating the literal sense of the customer being "put in the scene". These fees are generally around ¥500 per person (not per table), though the way cafés implement them varies wildly. Some places only have a *sekiryō* on weekends or charge a higher fee on Saturdays and Sundays (@*home cafe* branches [Akihabara] charge ¥700 but only ¥500 on weekdays), or only when special

performances are scheduled (*Moe Shandon* [Osaka]). Others only charge in the evenings (*Hiyokoya* [Akihabara]) after 5pm when they receive the bulk of their business, most likely to make up for the shortfall during the quieter lunchtime hours. Some, like *Pinky Cafe* (Akihabara) and *Maidream* (Osaka), make considerable profits by charging (¥500 and ¥1000 respectively) on the hour and every hour, though these are exceptions. The cover charge in many cafés is also less expensive for women, usually at around ¥300. This is likely an attempt to encourage female patronage, since the majority of customers are male (see Section 5.14).

Cafés that do not have a *sekiryō* implement a de facto cover charge with what is known as a "system" (*shisutemu* [システム]). While there is a large gap in price between establishments (*Filles* [Akihabara] charges ¥1500 for 90 minutes, *Maidoll* [Shizuoka] charges ¥2500 for the same length of time), the concept between establishments varies little. Included in the system is one drink, a stay of 90 minutes and a game with the maid. Any food or extra drinks must be ordered à la carte at an additional cost, as does an extension of the time limit. It is, in effect, a set menu that customers are required to select to gain entry, with the emphasis on systems being the concept of communication (the maids in these venues spend considerably more time chatting to customers than at other establishments).

5.15 Loyalty Cards

Loyalty cards (or "point cards" [*pointo kādo*]) are a feature common to most businesses in Japan, and maid cafés are no exception. 100% of all cafés visited have a loyalty card system, issued free of charge at all but one outlet (*Meido Gekiba Ichōme* [Akihabara] charges ¥315 for the card on the first visit, but customers subsequently need to

accumulate fewer points that at other establishments). The process of earning points varies from café to café, and there is no standard for the rewards given to customers either. In over 80% of cafés one point is awarded for every ¥500 to ¥1000, whereas the remaining cafés award one point per visit. The cafés using the latter system have extra incentives, such as awarding two points on rainy days or if the patron leaves the café within one hour. In these establishments female customers also receive double points. Regardless of which system is used, all are incentives for regular clientele to be established and to be frequently 'put in to the scene'.

Loyalty cards construct multiple and concomitant *spaces* of the maid café *mise en scène.* Although they form *representations of spaces* in various ways, the most common are through pictorial displays of maps (Fig 5.52), descriptions of how the loyalty system works, (Figs 5.53-5.57), and through both the stamps delineating the number of points accumulated and the symbols drawn on them by maids (which serve the same function). This element of the *conceived space* of loyalty cards represents the professional and artistic power maids possess, especially in relation to the production of *moe* and cuteness. At many cafés, instead of using stamps, maids draw small pictures to indicate the points earned on the card. These symbols are clear manifestations of *kawaii,* such as the frog in Fig 5.57, the rotund body in Figs 5.53 & 5.54 and the cat (drawn below the word "wow!!") in Fig 5.55.

Fig 5.52
The front side of the loyalty card for *Ichigo Miruku* (Shibuya) displaying a map

Fig 5.53
The front side and rear sides of the first type of loyalty card for the *Pinafore* branches (Akihabara)

Fig 5.54
The front side and rear sides of the second type of loyalty card for the *Pinafore* branches (Akihabara)

Fig 5.55
The front side and rear sides of the loyalty card for *Cafe de R* (Saitama)

Fig 5.56
The front side and rear sides of the loyalty card for *Honey Honey* (Yokohama)

Fig 5.57
The front side and rear sides of the "maid idol" card for *Meido Gekiba Ichōme* (Akihabara)

Fig 5.58
The front side of the loyalty card for
After School Cafe (Nagoya)

Fig 5.59
The front side of the loyalty card for the
@*home cafe* branches (Akihabara)

     The manner in which maids are depicted on loyalty cards also forms part of the *representation of spaces* of the maid café *mise en scène.* For example, there are two versions of the point card for the *Pinafore* branches (Figs 5.53 & 5.54), both of which depict maids in an animated style. These manga-style representations display images of the costumes the maids wear and allude to their disposition (in both versions the maids coyly have their hands to their mouth in *burikko* style), factors that customers may come to naturalise in association with the establishment. By contrast, *Meido Gekiba Ichōme* (Akihabara) [Fig 5.57] is an exceptional case in that it contains a photograph of a real-life maid who works at the venue. This card in fact is not referred to as a "point card" as such, but rather states that the customer accumulates points by "meeting" the maid three times in any one month. Customers, thus, come to anticipate that the *spaces* they construct inside the café will be with the maid displayed on the card.

     While loyalty cards are *representation of spaces,* they are also (perhaps surprisingly) *spatial practices.* This is because conversational content can be memorialised by the messages the maids inscribe on them. For example, at *Cafe de R* (Saitama), the maid, who was a *Star Wars* fan, joked with me how excited she was that she had met somebody with my name, since her favourite character Luke Skywalker. The chat that was centred

around *Star Wars* subsequently became a memorialised *spatial practice*, since she wrote my name on the loyalty card as "Luke ♥ Skywalker" (Fig 5.55). Similarly, the extensive conversation I had with the maid about my life in Australia at *Honey Honey* (Yokohama) was kept to memory with her inscription "thanks for teaching me about Australia ♥" (*ōsutoraria chishiki arigatō gozaimashita* ♥).

Finally, loyalty cards may also be seen as *spaces of representation.* The *After School Cafe* (Niigata) calls its loyalty card a "student ID" (*gakuseishō*), awarding customers different grade levels (after being a "first year student" [*ichinensei*] and accumulating thirty points, they advance to the second grade) [Fig 5.58]. In a similar fashion to avoiding the term "point card", @*home cafe* (Akihabara) branches offer a "licence of your majesty" (original English), with the basic bronze level one referred to as "my master" (Fig 5.59). These are significant as in the *lived spaces* of these cafés, customers are able to change and appropriate the dynamic and imaginative meanings of being a student in a classroom environment (incongruently facilitated by maids), or, in the case of @*home,* attaining a rank of regality.

COSTUME

5.16 Maid Attire

As with the internal properties of venues outlined in Section 5.3, there are no standard features that unite maid cafés when it comes to the attire that their staff wear. However, maid uniforms can be conceptualised in the same manner as the internal properties of their respective establishments, and expectedly this accords with the certain ambience the venue wishes to achieve. Maid uniforms can thus be categorised as *Victorian-*

influenced, kawaii-influenced, and *contemporary other,* reflecting the continuum in Fig 5.15.

A number of publications have endeavoured to document photographically the difference in styles among maid cafés across Japan. Two that are significant are the 2005-released *Akihabara Housemaid-cafe Costume Collection & Guidebook* (hereafter *AHCCG*) and the *Parlour Maid Cafe Costume Collection* (hereafter *PMCCC*) published in 2006. While this section does not aim to reconstruct those visual representations in a photographic manner, it does present some descriptions of each category of uniform by making reference to the two photographic guides, in addition to Fig 5.60 which comes from the *AHCCG.* This assists in achieving the aim of this section which is to examine how uniforms shape *spaces of representation* in Lefebvre's terms and contribute to the overall *mise en scène* of establishments.

Fig 5.60

The diversity of maid costumes as displayed in the foldout attached to the front cover of the *AHCCG*. Although the rest of the publication documents the uniforms of each café photographically, this section depicts the *spaces of representation* created by the costumes in manga-style form.

Uniforms under the *Victorian-influenced* category are described in several ways in Japanese, including "English style" (*eikokushiki* [英国式]), "traditional British style" (*toradisshonaruna buritisshu* [トラディショナルなブリティッシュ]), "classic design" (*kurashikkuna dezain* [クラシックなデザイン]), and "Orthodox Victorian" (*vikutoria no seitōhana meido fuku* [ヴィクトリア式の正統派なメイド服]). The maid attire in cafés with a *Victorian-influenced* motif essentially captures an element of authenticity and originality of the nineteenth century British domestic servants. The *AHCCG* contains the following description of the uniforms at *Cure Maid Cafe:*

OrthodoxVictorian-style maid costume: the basic colours of dark navy blue and white display a neat and clean design. The uniform is characterised by an apron that reaches to just below the knee and a long skirt that goes all the way to the floor. The outfit is reminiscent of old fashioned maids (2006: 59).

This description represents the *Victorian-influenced* category well, though in most incarnations the colours of the uniform are simply black and white. The costumes in this category aim to emulate the uniforms of Victorian-era servants by keeping them in a state as close as possible to the original styles. This is reflected in the style of headwear also, where a head cap, rather than a frilled headband (*kachūsha*), is most common.

The *Contemporary Other* category (like the corresponding internal properties) is the broadest, and variations within the category are tremendous. What ties all of these together, however, is that they appear to be modern interpretations of the *Victorian-influenced* costumes. They are, in effect, what the *AHCCG* refers to as "*moe* maid" or "sexy maid" outfits (2006: 38). While the uniforms are often black and white they are generally shorter and have extras like lace and bow ties. Since the skirts are not full-length, thigh-high or knee-high socks are common additions to the costumes in this category (e.g. *Maid Station Cafe* [Akihabara]). Although similar in style, variations in colours are found frequently,

such as *Mel Cafe* and *Cafe Andante* (both Osaka) with their dark yellow and green costumes respectively.

Like the décor of cafés, at the opposite end of the continuum to *Victorian-influenced* costumes are those that are *kawaii-influenced* (e.g. *Pinafore* and *Royal Milk* [both Akihabara]). Outfits in this category are invariably pink (and short). These miniskirts are usually accompanied by blouses with aprons that sit below the breasts. Additionally many *kawaii-influenced* maid uniforms exhibit a myriad of "cute" accessories, such as hand bags in the shape of animals, clip-on toys, cat ears (*neko mimi*), and mammalian-like tails.

In the vast majority of cafés, all staff members wear the same outfit, though in a small number (e.g. *Maid in Café* [Osaka], *Cafe Charlotte* [Okayama], *Maidolce* [Osaka]) each maid wears an individual version. While this adds a certain variety to the café, it also has the disadvantage of the café having no identifiable uniform for marketing purposes or otherwise. Maid uniforms are part of the *spaces of representation* of maid cafés as they form part of the embodied desire of how maids are represented in manga and subsequently reified.

5.17 Attire of Secondary Personas

While the very term "maid café" would seem to imply that the maid character was the single constituent in the *mise en scène,* there are a number of establishments (including *MaiDramin* [Akihabara], *Wonder Parlour Cafe* [Ikebukuro], *Fairytale* [Sendai]) where peripheral personas make appearances. This is in the form of a "butler" (*shitsuji* [執事]), who usually performs back of house duties or works as the bartender of the café. These butlers, however, are not men but rather are women in "reverse drag" (Senelick 2000: 340), referred to in Japanese as *dansō* (男装), literally meaning "dressed in men's clothing". As

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male impersonators, their appearance is somewhat reminiscent of the Takarazuka, an all-female troupe that have gained immense popularity in Japan since their formation in the early twentieth century (Robertson 1998). The *AHCCG* writes that *dansō* staff typically wear thin black neck ties over white shirts, wearing vests adorned with accessories such as badges and other metallic objects (like pendants replicating old-fashioned stop watches) [2006: 11]. Wearing blue contact lenses and glasses is also another common feature, emulating a style known as "gothic Roman" (*AHCCG* 2006: 11). In addition to these back of house staff, on several occasions at cafés that were holding "free cosplay" event days (that is, when maids come dressed in any costume they please), male characters from anime and manga series such as *Prince Endymion* (from the series *Sailor Moon*) were popular.

Dansō personas are not restricted to any one motif of café, and are found in establishments that are *Victorian-influenced, kawaii-influenced* and *contemporary other.* Although somewhat inconspicuous since they rarely engage in conversation with customers, *dansō* characters nevertheless form important *spaces of representation* in the maid café *mise en scène.* Like the performers of the Takarazuka they "project a theatrically persuasive image of masculinity" (Senelick 2000: 339), and in doing so have the function of accenting the femininity of the maids. Although this *lived space* is changed and appropriated by customers, one possible way this might be constructed is by customers overhearing (or consciously observing) the interactions between maids and butlers, or perhaps in the *nonspace* of the café websites (where videos featuring maids and *dansō* characters giving commentaries together have been posted).

5.18 Summary

In the first section of this chapter (Section 5.0), in introducing the *mise en scène* as a metaphor for performance, I suggested that who is the *auteur* and who is the *metteur en scène* (director) inside maid cafés required some consideration. In this summary I offer some suggestions to this in relation to space and power, however, I would first like to reiterate the findings of maid café elements vis-à-vis Lefebvre's triad of space. Some elements occupy more than one space - posing for the taking of *cheki,* for example, can simultaneously be part of both the *spatial practices* and *spaces of representation* of the mise en scène. Similarly, *chirashi* occupy both *conceived spaces* (reflecting the creative power their designers have over customers), while their distribution on streets by maids create *perceived spaces.* Further examples of these convergent spaces can be seen in Table 5.0. Additionally, some spaces lie outside of Lefebvre's triad (namely Morse's [1998] *nonspace* and Tétrault's [1998] *meta-space*) which I have highlighted in Table 5.1.

Table 5.0
Summary of different types of *spaces* produced in maid cafés.

Lefebvre's Spatial Triad		Examples in relation to maid cafés
Spatial practices	*Performance-based*	Distribution of *chirashi* on streets
		Engaging with boards placed outside venues
		Interaction with internal properties
		All salutations
		Maids bowing to customers
		Kinshi jikō
		Taking *cheki* and making poses
		Refraining from taking photographs with own equipment
		Collecting *cheki* in albums
		À la carte photography
		Rakugaki
		Moe incantation
		Moe and *nyan nyan* poses for the taking of *cheki*
		Playing minigames
		Writing in the notebook exchange
		Purchasing maid goods

		Paying cover charges Utilising loyalty cards on each visit
	Competence-based	Recognising the meanings of obstructions of external properties Not saying *tadaima* on entry Not returning bows on exit *Kinshi jikō* Using appropriate poses for the taking of *cheki* Recognising that the imaginary romance in *moe* incantations cannot be actualised
Representations of spaces		Images on *chirashi* Anonymity of written descriptions on *chirashi* Boards placed outside venues Placement of internal elements in an ordered way Posters containing no photography directive Messages inscribed on *cheki* Images drawn for the *rakugaki* service Café websites *Buromaido,* DVDs and CDs sold both online and on site Pictorial displays and written descriptions on loyalty cards
Spaces of representations		Selection of certain potential customers by maids with the distribution of *chirashi* Obstructions of external properties Appropriation of images from boards placed outside venues on its interior The continuum of internal elements (Fig 5.15) Maids bowing to customers *Okaerinasaimase* phrases *Itterasshaimase* phrases *Moe* and *nyan nyan* poses for the taking of *cheki* Poses made by maids for à la carte photography services Onomatopoeic words used during *moe* incantation Alternative appellations for 'loyalty card'

	(e.g. student ID card, licence of your majesty) Maid uniforms *Dansō* characters

Table 5.1

Summary of other types of *spaces* produced in maid cafés outside of Lefebvre's Spatial Triad.

Other Spaces	Examples in relation to maid cafés
Nonspace	Engagement by patrons outside the maid café "place" with café blogs and other features of establishments' websites
Meta-space	The transparency of conversational content (and interactive services) between maid and customer which forges cross-customers relations

Power in the *mise en scène* of maid cafés has a "capillary existence" (in Foucault's terms) and is fluid, dynamic and at times subject to reversal. It hinges on the construction of three types of spaces; these are *perceived spaces, conceived spaces* and *lived spaces,* corresponding to Lefebvre's triad consisting of *spatial practices, representations of spaces* and *spaces of representations* respectively. The *auteur* of the *mise en scène* has creative control, while the *metteur en scène* exercises authority over the environment as a whole. The roles of *auteur* and *metteur en scène* are interchangeable between maids and customers, and sway back and forth (or work in tandem) depending on which type of *space* is constructed. For example, a customer can exercise his/her *auteurism* by having a maid draw food art in the way he/she wants, getting her to pose in a certain manner during a *satsueikai* event, or having the maid personalise a *cheki* by writing a message in the way he/she

requests. However, the maid becomes the *metteur en scène* by enforcing the house rules. Customers must not ask for anything crude to be drawn for food art, touch the maid, ask her to pose in a provocative manner, or shoot at a low angle during *satsueikai* events, or request anything inappropriate be written on *cheki*. This role of the *metteur en scène* for the maid can also extend to the *spatial practices* of generating conversation, where prescribed boundaries dictate content. The limits of my own *auteurism* were demonstrated in Section 5.4, with my example of breaching the parameters by enquiring about the maid's previous employment.

The relationship of *metteur en scène* and *auteur* may be compared to Pearson's "performance relationships" (1998: 35, cited in Wiles 2003: 3), which I also raised in Section 5.0 of this chapter (i.e. performer to performer, performer to spectator [and vice versa], and spectator to spectator). In addition to these "performance relationships" and Goffman's metaphor of the theatre, Brockett's (1982, cited in Wiles 2003: 2) reflection on the distinction of "theatre as a form of art" and "the incidental use of theatrical elements in other activities" is worth mentioning. While superficially it may appear that the maid is the exclusive performer and the customer is the exclusive spectator, the trivialisation of power when it comes to the playing of minigames is one example that counters this view (Chapter Five, Section 5.10). Albeit relatively brief, the male customers who lose and are made to wear rabbit ear *kachūsha* (or do some other *hazukashii* act such as announcing they are "losers" on stage over the microphone) become performers, while all other participants in the *mise en scène,* including maids, become spectators. There are other occasions where customers also become performers, enabled by the production of *meta-spaces.* The publicity, and consequently the *power of access,* of activities such as taking *cheki* and *rakugaki*, in addition to the transparency of conversational content, enables customers to be

spectators of other customers, who have taken on the role of performer within the *meta-space.* This spectatorship can continue once conversations are generated amongst customers independently of the maid (i.e. as cross-customer relations develop), as their desire to display their knowledge of topics to others peaks (influenced by a *yūetsukan,* "sense of superiority"). These "performance relationships" are thus fluid and interchangeable, which challenges what Wiles terms the "Cartesian theatrical dichotomy" (2003: 7) - that is, the assumption of active actor and passive spectator when it comes to performances in the theatre. Since these roles are not mutually exclusive, power in the maid café *mise en scène* is also dynamic and interchangeable in accordance with these roles. Maid cafés thus occupy a liminal space between "theatre as a form of art" and "the incidental use of theatrical elements in other activities". While customers pay to enter and create *perceived, conceived* and *lived spaces* where maids act out a role and are "performers", as we have just seen they simultaneously take on this role through the influence of the production of *meta-spaces.* In these spaces the public and the private interpenetrate, and power operates in tension to create this fluidity of roles.

Notes

[1] The quote comes from the English translation of their text, while the original text in French reads: *la mise en scène du désir.*

[2] Examples of these include YTV's *Koeda no sugotoku* and TBS's *Shinchi Shikaikyū Kumagusu.*

[3] These include *Japanorama* (presented by Jonathan Ross) and *In Search of Wabi Sabi with Marcel Theroux,* both produced by the BBC in 2006 and 2009 respectively.

[4] While these media aim to inform foreign audiences about the existence of maid cafés, their perspectives are invariably from the "outsider" angle with loaded adjectives such as "kinky", "quirky" and "bizarre" frequently used to describe the café culture. Kelly (2009: 40) of *Fodor's* describes Akihabara as a "whacky fetish district where *otaku* (nerds) can indulge in Japanese anime computer-game fantasies, hang out in kinky cafés, and buy anime comics. Visitors don't just come here to buy digital cameras, but to observe the bizarre subculture of this tech-savvy country". Similarly, Chinn (2010) from the *Pilot Guides* series refers to maid cafés as part of the "quirky side of Tokyo life", while Reiber (2010: 8), writing for *Frommer's,* banters that Tokyo is "one of the quirkiest cities you'll find anywhere (coffee in a so-called 'maid café', anyone?)".

[5] *MIA Cafe, Maidreamin, @home Cafe* (all Akihabara), *Maidolce* (Osaka), and *Dear Cafe* (Yokohama) all have links on their websites for media outlets interested in covering the venue, who are requested to fill in the details of what they plan to explore in their segments on the café.

[6] The English loan word *furaiyā* (フライヤー) also exists, but was seen on only two distributed flyers.

[7] The original reads: "une manière de penser, d'être, de parler, d'écrire, de gesticuler."

[8] The original reads: "*kawaii* désigne tout ce qui est petit, enfantin, asexué, doux, sans défense ou que l'on peut cajoler."

[9] Tse states that *okoshiyasu* is also used in the Kansai region, in particular Kyoto (1993: 64).

[10] Yamaguchi & Yamaguchi (2008: 25) note that *-sama* is applied to the surnames of customers, superiors, VIPs and is used in letters.

[11] To align with their slogan that they are "a café for everyone" (*minna no omise*) [みんなのお店], the flyer for *Ichigo Miruku* contains the translated phrase for *okaerinasaimase goshujin sama* not only in English ("Welcome back home, My master"), but also in Chinese (清返回、我的主人).

[12] Rowthorn translates *ojō-sama* in the maid café environment as "mistress" (2009:149), however this is incorrect since it is not a form of address like "master". *Ojō-sama* in everyday vernacular refers to the spoilt daughters of affluent families (translated as "daddy's little princess" [Fargo 2009: 29] or simply "princess" [McLelland 2000: 104]).

[13] *Arigatō gozaimashita,* simply translating to "thank you", is the standard expression utilised in Japan (and no doubt in most other places in the world) once any commercial transaction is complete. The more polite *dōmo arigatō gozaimashita* ("thank you very much") is also heard, but rather than classify this as a separate salutation I consider it a variant of *arigatō gozaimashita.*

[14] This reflects the tendency (that I noted in footnote 4 of Chapter Three), that all foreigners (especially Caucasians) in Japan are viewed as native speakers of the English language, or, at the very least, that all foreigners are proficient in English.

[15] The way in which language skills and unfamiliarity of the scene impact the maid café experience became evident on at least one occasion. While dining at *Filles* (Akihabara), I witnessed a young Caucasian male enter, and after attempting to converse unsuccessfully with the maids in English, he departed awkwardly after approximately five minutes.

[16] This is discordant with Marcel Theroux's account of language in maid cafés who describes it as "old fashion courtly language". However, his inability to speak the Japanese language makes this claim extremely dubious.

[17] One specific example of this could be an experience I had in Osaka while ordering at a fast food restaurant, when I was asked informally (and slowly) "*koko de taberu?*" (meaning "eat here?"), as opposed to the formal "*tennai desuka?*" ("will you be dining in?") which is normally heard.

[18] In Ito's (2005) research on mobile phone usage amongst Tokyo teenagers she recounts the attempts of local authorities to regulate their use on trains and buses. This was in response to a surge of articles in the popular press complaining about poor manners in public places. Most forms of public transport in Tokyo now prohibit the use of mobile phones entirely in the vicinity of priority seating areas, and request that commuters put their phones on silent mode while in other areas of the carriage or vehicle.

[19] Under the maid profiles page of the *Cafe Hiyokoya* website, it states that "taking photos is ok, so please ask" [写真撮影もＯＫなので、声をかけてくださいね]
(http://www.hiyokoya.net/pro/mem01.htm accessed 9 September 2010)
The *Sunny Pages* review of Café Hiyokoya states that "if you ask nicely you can take a picture with the maids here".

[20] The signs read: *meido no saitsuei wa kinshi desu. Oryōri no satsuei wa dekimasu. Satsuei no sai wa meido ni okoe wo okakekudasai*
(メイドの撮影は禁止です。お料理の撮影はできます。撮影の際はメイドにお声をおかけください).

[21] The card in its entirety reads: *tennai de no satsuei wo gokibōsareru bāi wa, osoreiremasuga, sutaffu ni okoe wo kakekudasaimase. Mata, sutaffu satsuei ni tsuite wa, ikanaru bāi ni mo okotowari saseteitadaite orimasu. Mudan de satsueisareta bāi wa, gazō wo shōkasasete itadaku bāi mo gozaimasu node, arakajime goryōshō kudasai*
(店内での撮影をご希望される場合は、恐れ入れますが、スタッフにお声をかけ下さいませ。また、スタッフ撮影については、いかなる場合にもお断りさせて頂いております。無断で撮影された場合、画像を消去させて頂く場合もございますので、予めご了承下さい).
An English translation of this would be "We would appreciate it if customers wanting to take photographs inside the café could inform a staff member first. Under no circumstances are photographs of maids to be taken. In the event that this happens, customers may be asked to delete the image from their camera. We thank you for your understanding".

[22] In these instances, if no one is chosen by the customer, the café makes the selection

[23] Shibatani states that "in baby-talk, many animals are referred to by the words that mimic their cries" (1990: 157). *Nyan nyan,* the onomatopoeia for "meow", is one such case.

[24] Some of these settings appear to be more consistent with a *shōjo* themed type of role-play. However, while there are some members of staff dressed in generic cosplay (pyjamas, cheerleaders, etc.), the majority of staff are dressed as maids.

[25] Membership also includes invitations to "secret events" (*shīkuretto ibento*) unavailable to the general public.

[26] It is possible this may be to prohibit patrons who have broken the house rules on previous occasions from returning.

[27] White claims that this is a popular trope aimed at young women in magazines. These "love charms" for attracting the boy of one's dreams must be followed in a meticulous fashion, as are the "spells" that promise more money (1996: 266).

[28] The second last vowel of this expression is normally held longer for the incantation, becoming *oishikuna~re!*

[29] It must be noted here that there is some blurring of categories within these components of the *mise en scène*. In labeling "websites and blogs" and "maid goods" as "props", I view them as elements that support or aid other phenomena integral to the maid café experience. This is because unlike those under the "performance, movement and action" heading, their selection depends on the individual customer's preference.

CHAPTER 6

A TAXONOMY OF MAID CAFÉS

6.0 Introduction

I demonstrated in Chapter Five that there are vast differences in not only what elements are present inside maid cafés, but also amongst what the elements themselves are composed of and involve in relation to the wider setting of the venues. The results and subsequent discussion set out in Chapter Five highlight the variations that exist within the *mise en scène* of the maid café, indicating disparities in the services and interactivities provided, how space is constructed and its resultant power relations, and the forms of role-play that are present. Thus, to refer to maid cafés as if they were a single entity is an inaccuracy, despite the prevailing inclination to regard them in this homogenised fashion. The aim of this chapter then is to reflect on this heterogeneity of maid cafés and the spaces and power dynamics created inside of them, by presenting five case analyses in the form of different establishments. These establishments, from different areas of Honshū, are: *Fairy Tale* (Sendai), *Ichigo Miruku* (Shibuya), *Milkcafe* (Osaka), *Filles* (Akihabara), and @*home Cafe* (Akihabara). The case analyses in this chapter accord with the definition presented by O'Reilly (and with her differentiation between a "case analysis" and a "case study"), in that they "illuminate various themes central to the analysis" (i.e. space and power) and are "used as focal points for discussion and elaboration, rather than being something that was initially selected as a case" [2009: 27]. Considering the multiplicities of maid café *mise en scènes* displayed in Chapter Five, I suggest a taxonomy in Section 6.2 of this chapter that is illustrative of the diversity of Lefebvre's spatial triad. However, before I make this

suggestion, I would like to discuss the two predominant ways that maid cafés in Japan are commonly classified.

6.1 Current Framework: *Iyashi* versus *Moe*

The propensity to view maid cafés in a homogenised fashion is found in both Japanese and English language media commentaries, in local promotional literature, and, to a considerable degree, in the small body of academic literature dealing with the topic. On the occasions when they are referred to heterogeneously, however, placement into one of only two categories is common: venues that are intended for relaxation purposes (known as *iyashi-kei* [癒し系], "the healing type"), or those that have an agenda to entertain (*moe-kei* [萌え系], "the *moe* type", or in English language literature simply "entertainment-kei").[1] Indeed, many establishments themselves embrace these dichotomous (and essentialised) terms, with a self-labelling process evident in forms of promotion. For example, laminated cards placed on the tables in *Cafe Mai:lish* (Akihabara) that provide background information on the venue and explain how it operates (see Fig 6.1) describe the café as "a small space for some healing in Akihabara" (*Akihabara no chīsana iyashi kūkan* [秋葉原の小さな癒し空間]). Similarly, *Royal Milk* (Akihabara) markets itself as a place for "healing of the soul" (*kokoro no iyashi* [心の癒し]),[2] while *Cure Maid Cafe* (Akihabara) invites customers to take "a moment of healing" (*iyashi no hitotoki* [癒しのひと時]) by indulging in their organic teas and food menu.[3] Indeed, its very name (*Cure Maid*) alludes to the therapeutic ambience it strives for, since *iyasu,* the verb from which the noun *iyashi* stems, can be translated as "to cure" (Henshall 1998: 595).[4]

While Galbraith believes "soothing" to be an aspect of leisure that otaku particularly

hold in high regard (2009a: 108), the allure of repose as a marketing technique is not a

phenomenon unique to maid cafés. As Allison points out in her discussion on toys for

children in Japan (2006: 14):

"Healing" and "soothing" *(iyasu, iyashikei)* are perpetual tropes in the marketplace of play goods

these days, and increasingly adults as well as kids engage the animate inanimateness of fantasy fare as

"friends" or even "family". Said to be a relief from the stresses caused by consumer capitalism (and its

downswing in Japan since the bursting of the Bubble), such devices are also capitalistic: commodities and

things that stand (in) for spirits and kin.

Hence, there is a strong link to Napier's *fantasyscape* in the form of escapism with this self-promotion, and by marketing themselves as *iyashi-kei* maid cafés seem to be not only appealing to, but also capitalising on the emotional responses of customers. Allison refers to this as an encoded form of familiarity, consumerism and techno-social interaction mixed together, all of which shape the fundamental construction of Japanese play (2006: 14). Comparably, this can be viewed as a clear example of what Jenkins calls "affective economics", a nascent marketing theory that seeks to understand emotionality in the process of decision-making for purchases by consumers (2006: 61).

The application of the term *moe* per se as a marketing strategy is somewhat less palpable than *iyashi,* and its use as a category is restricted primarily to media commentaries and online reviews via fan blogs. Both *Otamappu* and *Akibamap,* for example, which highlight the locations of cafés in Akihabara, list establishments under the heading *moe-kanren* [萌え関連] (*moe*-related cafés). Some cafés themselves likewise suggest this association by incorporating the term *moe* into the name of the actual venue, such as *moekon@cafe* (Akihabara) and *Moe & Shandon* (Osaka). The agenda for entertainment at the latter establishment is evident in its weekend "*moe* time" sessions, when live karaoke performances by the maids take place and the cover charge increases during these times. Lastly, some establishments do not view *moe* and *iyashi* in absolute terms when it comes to their marketing strategy. For example, corresponding to its mantra that it is "everybody's store" (*minna no omise* [みんなのお店]), the flyer for *Ichigo Miruku* (Shibuya) states that it "offers to customers both *moe* and *iyashi*" (*moe to iyashi wo goteikyō suru* [萌えと癒しをご提供する]). By suggesting it able to please "everybody" regardless of their *moe* or *iyashi* orientations, this *chirashi* effectively encapsulates the polar extremes of these two agendas.

While the two terms *iyashi-kei* and *moe-kei* may be reasonable starting points to think of maid cafés in terms of functionality, they are problematic for several reasons. Firstly, since there is no fixed contextual definition of either *iyashi* or *moe,* the boundaries of exactly what constitutes them vis-à-vis the *mise en scène* of the maid café are limitless. The line between the two is thus subjective, and the terms are arbitrarily applied by venues for marketing purposes. On the surface, the image portrayed by both the media and cafés themselves is that *iyashi-kei* venues strive for a tranquil ambience where interactive elements (often the catalysts for conversation) are minimal. *Moe-kei* are depicted as the antithesis to this: highly communicative, loud and colourful with "a syrupy sweet atmosphere" (Galbraith 2009a: 137), offering a vast array of interactive elements. What became noticeable to me, however, was that venues with an agenda of maid-customer interactivity often touted themselves as *iyashi-kei.* All branches of *Pinafore* (Akihabara), for example, while having several interactive elements (based on the act of conversing) available à la carte, imply an *iyashi* tendency on the title page of their menus by stating "this establishment offers a space for healing" (*iyashi no kūkan wo teikyōsuru kissaten* [癒しの空間を提供する喫茶店]). The perception of what is "soothing" and "what heals the mind" in such venues then, is *not* the tranquillity of the café environment from a lack of interactive service, but rather the very chance to converse and engage in communicative activities as if they were a form of therapy themselves.[6] Hence, the differences in these meanings facilitates a wide gap between the conceptions of what *iyashi* and *moe* processes entail amongst establishments.

6.2 Suggested Taxonomy

The rift between conceptions of "healing" and "entertainment" practices renders categorising maid cafés simply as either *iyashi-kei* or *moe-kei* ineffective in examining their differences. Instead, by presenting five case analyses in this chapter, I suggest classifying maid cafés into five categories to illustrate the contrasts highlighted in Chapter Five. These are:

1) Type A (No or minimal interactive elements with little or no conversation between maid and customer)

2) Type B (Low to Medium level of interactive elements with moderate volume conversation between maid and customer)

3) Type C (Venues where conversation is the main objective with a considerable level of interactive elements)

4) Type D (Venues where conversation is the main objective with a strong emphasis on interactive elements)

5) Type E (Theatre-like venues with an extreme level of interactive elements but with little or no conversation)

Under this taxonomy, I have disaggregated the terms "interactive element" and "conversation".[7] This is because (as will be illustrated by the case analyses) the relationship between services of an interactive nature in the *mise en scène* and the conversations generated between maids and customers is multifaceted, and significantly the two phenomena are not always intricately linked. That is to say, there are occasions when interactive elements and conversation exist independently of each other - while the concept of the "interpersonal" is ostensibly a common feature of the two, interactive elements do not always necessarily result in conversation, and conversation is not always necessarily

contingent on interactive elements. For example, Type A cafés provide very few interactive services (i.e. *rakugaki, cheki,* games) on their menus, and conversation between maids and customers, beyond ordering food and settling payment, is extremely limited. By contrast, Type E cafés, predominantly illustrious establishments because of their touristic agendas and the generous media coverage they receive, provide an overwhelming number of interactive services that have become iconic drawcards. However, conversation generated between maids and customers exists at these establishments at only a marginal level as with Type A cafés (which have no interactive elements of the sort). This may be attributed to the type of clientele they receive (one-time customers), the exceedingly high turnover of customers during opening hours (the maid to customer ratio is low during these times), and the time restrictions imposed in them. Comparably, Type C cafés, which constitute the largest number of venues in the taxonomy (see Fig 6.3), take at their core the art of repartee while providing a considerable number of interactive elements. However, although these elements do exist, conversation between maids and customers is not always contingent of them, and chat is generated as a standard service. This differs to Type D cafés which utilise interactive elements as the catalysts for conversation. That is, these services form the foundation for chat which is initiated by them, and the course of the conversational content that follows usually revolves around these services (e.g. what types of games one is good at, what characters they like, etc.). This is reflected by the set menus many of these cafés implement. Type B cafés on the other hand occupy a quieter and less active end of the communicative spectrum - neither chat nor interactive elements are found in these establishments in any significant way.

In effect, the manner in which conversation is generated (if indeed it is generated at all) is not uniform in maid cafés. The act of initiating it may or may not depend on

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interactive elements, and the degree to which these elements forge the content of the chat also varies. The differences in these communicative spectrums can be seen in Fig 6.2.

Fig 6.2
Communicative spectrums of interactive elements and conversation
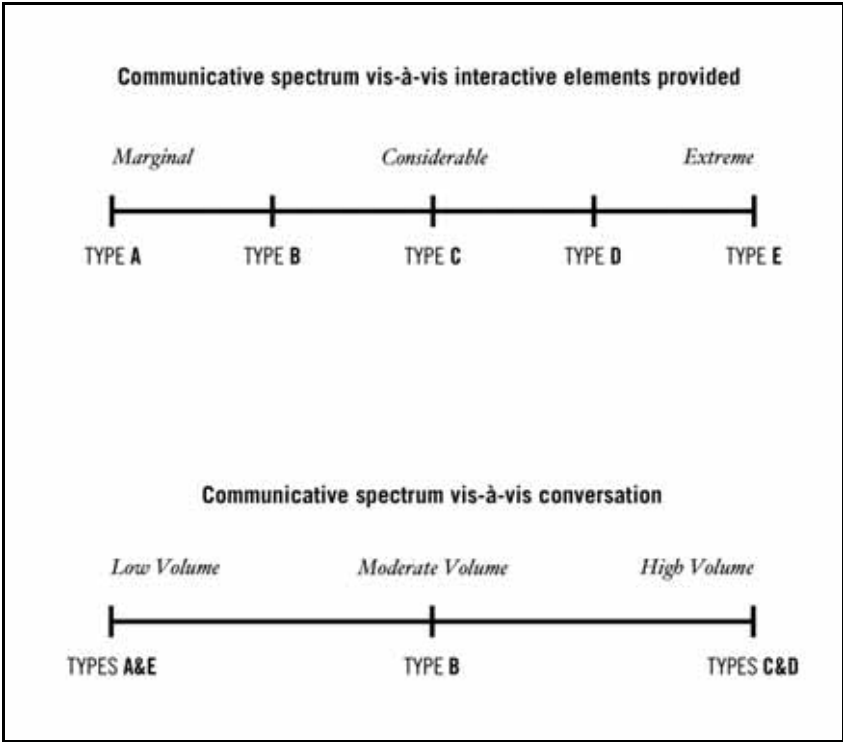
In creating this taxonomy, I would like to suggest moving on from a dialogue of the *mise en scène* (singular) of maid cafés to a discussion of their *mise en scènes* (plural). In doing so, this chapter aims then to not only highlight the polarities that exist between venues, but also to consider the implications of these for future discussion of maid cafés as a holistic phenomenon. It will also act as a departure point for seeking an answer to research question two (Chapter 1 Section 1.5.2), *What functions do maid cafés serve for customers?*.

Lastly, in a similar vein to the caveat issued by Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005) with their development of chronotopes, it is important to recognise that this taxonomy of maid cafés should not, as with chronotopes, be viewed in Aristotelian terms (that is, in fixed, static and allotted terms). Since it has been devised to correspond with the results and discussions of Chapter Five where the prevalent themes were interactive elements and conversation, it must be noted that an entirely different taxonomy would be in order for the classification of, for example, the interior dimensions of maid cafés (i.e. their décor), or the uniforms that maids wear (discussed in Chapter Five). As it is inevitable that there will be some overlap with these classifications, I recommend (as Kamberelis and Dimitriadis do with their chronotopes) that they best be viewed as tools for the consideration and evaluation of maid café interactivities and conversation, rather than as prescriptive components for what make up maid cafés.

Fig 6.3 illustrates a breakdown of cafés as they have been categorised by type. The vertical axis indicates a numerical figure out of 73 (the number of venues visited - see Appendix 9 for a list of the names of cafés visited for this study by category), which is represented as a percentage on the horizontal axis. I will now turn to examine each café type, and will use a case analysis to illustrate each one.

Fig 6.3 Percentage and comparison of numbers of café types

	Type A	Type B	Type C	Type D	Type E
%	12.3	19.2	46.6	13.7	8.2
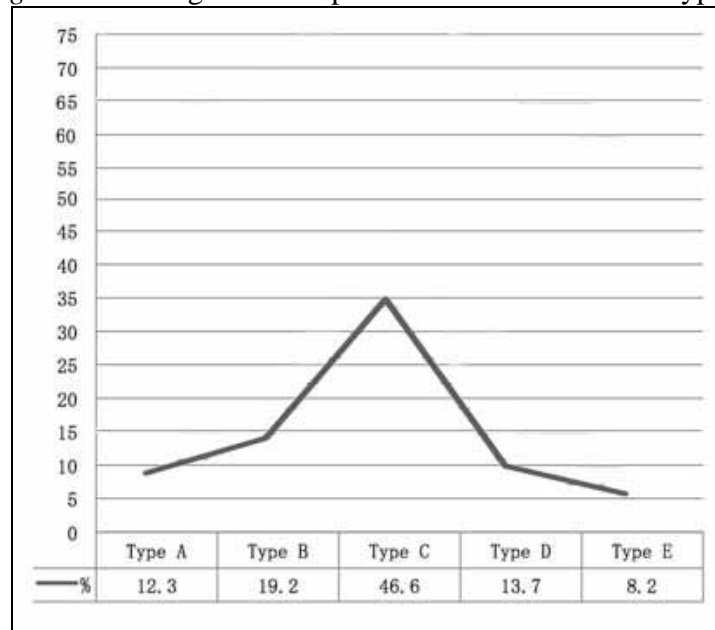
6.3 Type A (No or minimal interactive elements with little or no conversation between maid and customer)

The suggestion of the term *iyashi-kei* that interactive elements exist in no discernible form in cafés with this label is only partially correct. While it is true that participatory services are not available in any form at all in some establishments, in others there are communicative interactivities that are present, albeit at only marginal levels. A hybrid form of these two degrees constitute the cafés of Type A, and account for the second smallest number of the five types identified with 12.3% of all cafés visited falling into this category. These venues provide no regular *cheki* or other photographic service, use the entry and exit greetings *irasshaimase* and *arigatō gozaimashita* universally, only sell a limited (if any) range of maid goods, and have no *moe* incantation, games, or notebook exchange service. While food art created in front of diners is not unknown (requiring minimum interaction between the maid and customer), pre-drawn *rakugaki* is the dominant feature. This practice appears to be the only element that is present in Type A cafés

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involving a perceptible communicative exchange beyond greetings and ordering, and with this exception these establishments function, on the whole, like most non-cosplay restaurants with table service. In light of this, *spaces of representation* in Type A cafés are minimal, since the *lived spaces* that customers seek to change and appropriate in the imagination are limited by the lack of verbal communication between maids and customers (and between each other). *Spatial practices* in Type A cafés then predominantly revolved around the activities of eating and drinking.

Correspondingly, since it is the food (and beverages where a bar-style service is offered in the evenings) at these establishments that appear to be the main drawcard (which differs dramatically to the appeal of Types C, D & E, where communicative experiences are the predominant attraction), the meals served in Type A cafés are of much higher quality than other venues, and their menus are considerably diverse. Galbraith, speaking holistically of maid cafés, states that they serve only a few dishes commonly found on the children's menu of many family restaurants (2009a: 137), including *omuraisu*, curried rice and simple pastas (such as spaghetti with canned bolognaise sauce). This is true for Types C, D & E, and the lack of variety on the menu is perhaps reflected by the fact that at some venues the total number of kitchen staff is no more than one or two. Indeed, at *Pondicherry Floreal* (Akihabara) and *Frontier* (Osaka) [Type C cafés], I was surprised to see the maids themselves preparing curry dishes by putting rice into a bowl from a rice cooker and heating up the curry roux in a microwave. Type A cafés, however, generally have an extensive list of items on their menu not normally found at other venue types, including fish and other seafood, *agemono* (deep fried foods), gourmet pizzas and various red meat dishes. A vast array of alcoholic beverages also form an important part of their gastronomist agenda. For example, *Granvania* (Akihabara) touts itself as having 30

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European beers from over twelve countries, *Milkcafe* (Osaka) proudly promotes its 300-plus types of spirits, and *Hiyokoya* (Akihabara) offers wines in excess of ¥8000 per bottle. This emphasis on the dining experience rather than the communicative experience can be seen in the manner Type A cafés market themselves - the *chirashi* for *Granvania* is covered with text about and pictures of their dishes, while similarly others (unlike café Types C, D & E) have no mention of the term *moe* and contain no images of maids. In light of the above considerations, Type A cafés are consequently olfactorily more diverse than other venues, where I tended to encounter the same smells (i.e. *omuraisu,* curried rice, ketchup) repeatedly.

Despite the marginal levels of interactivity at Type A cafés, event days do exist at these venues. Far from the fanfare present at events in Types C, D, and E, for some venues so-called events may be little more than a day when an alternative menu is offered to customers, with added bonuses such as an amnesty on expired reward cards or free drink tickets. Arguably, event days at Type A cafés are when the lines between them and other venue types become blurred, as interactivity is heightened. *Emaid* (Osaka), for example, offers a *cheki* service only on event days, while *M's Melody* (Nagoya) holds a biannual *satsueikai* (photographic) event. Beyond these, events may occur with higher frequency. *Cure Maid Cafe* (Akihabara), for example, holds a concert each weekend where the maids put on a performance by playing musical instruments. Some event days are also connected to the promotion of specific enterprises, which usually sponsor the event. This could be the launch of a new video game or computer software, where promotional products are given out to customers (such as posters, or download desktop wallpapers). Events may also simply be a change of usual costume to celebrate or correspond to an annual festival (such as Valentine's Day, Halloween or Christmas).

There is a possibility that the focus of Type A cafés not being on communicative experiences is connected to another significant feature of these venues - the high number of female customers. *Emaid* (Osaka) and *Wonder Parlour Cafe* (Ikebukuro) in particular had considerably large numbers, with females actually outnumbering male customers at both of these establishments. The females in Type A cafés were observed in groups of two to four, though females dining alone were also present. In my discussions with fellow customers at other cafés, it was suggested that the females who patronise Type A venues are in fact avid cosplay fans themselves, motivated by creative inspiration. That is to say, their visits are to observe and admire the costumes of the maids, seeking ideas and motivation for their next cosplay endeavours. Since extensive interviews were not a part of the methodology of this study this claim is difficult to verify, however my own observations and encounters with female customers support it, at the very least, as a possibility. On several occasions in Osaka, I witnessed young women (usually in pairs) dressed in some cosplay variant, and while visiting more than one café on the same day also saw the same women at those different venues. While some were in full cosplay (with wigs and make up), others were only wearing cosplay accessories (such as mini top hats with veils). Similarly, at *M's Melody* in Nagoya, I was approached by a young woman who left her table to speak with me. At the very start of our conversation she announced she was a "cosplay otaku", and proceeded to show me a collection of photographs of her in full costume stored on her mobile phone (many shots of her were dressed as a maid). These observations could suggest then that for female customers communicative exchanges are secondary reasons to visit Type A cafés, and an esoteric appreciation of the surroundings is at the forefront of motivations. Additionally, many of these women arrived at cafés together, suggesting they have some kind of preexisting relationship. Since *meta-spaces* (i.e. the interpenetration of

the public and private) are what enable strangers in maid café settings to generate conversations amongst each other, their production in Type A cafés is extremely limited because of these women already having contact with each other before entry.

Finally, despite the limited interactivity in Type A cafés, blogs are an important communicative avenue in the release of information to customers (only *Emaid* [Osaka] does not have one). The content of these blogs varies to other types of venues, where there is often an emphasis on commentaries about the communicative experiences between maids and customers at events. Their primary function for Type A cafés, however, is to promote food and make announcements in the form of a bulletin board. These could be changes in hours of operation, new additions to the menu, introductions to new staff members, or important information concerning upcoming events. I now turn to the Osaka venue *Milkcafe* to examine Type A cafés in further depth.

6.3.1 Case Analysis: *Milkcafe*

City	Osaka
District	Nipponbashi
Logo	
Website	http://milk.penne.jp/milktop.html
Contact Number	06-6646-5523
Address (in Japanese)	大阪市浪速区日本橋5-18-21 パッキーズ日本橋2・3階
Hours of operation	15:00 - 23:00 Mon-Thurs & Sun, 15:00 - 23:30 Fri-Sat
Year of opening	2006
Number of seats	22
Other maid cafés in close proximity to location	*Meipa, Maid in Café, Honey Channel, Sweet Tease.*

Fig 6.4
The entrance of *Milkcafe* displaying sign and banners

Fig 6.5
The location of *Milkcafe* circled on the 2009 edition of *Otamappu*

   Milkcafe is located in the Nipponbashi area of Osaka, which, like Akihabara in Tokyo, is famous for its electronics-oriented businesses and as an otaku Mecca. While situated just south of *otarōdo* (see Fig 6.5), where the heaviest concentration of maid cafés is found, there are several other establishments located in close proximity. *Meipa* is a mere four doors down to its east, *Maid in Cafe* and *Honey Channel* are one block away to the west and north respectively, and *Maidolce* lies along the same street albeit much further east. *Milkcafe* is situated just one block north of Nipponbashi Junior High School (*Nipponbashi chūgakkō*) and occupies the second and third floors of a building which houses a parking lot at ground level. The entrance to the café is from off the street via one flight of stairs and a small electronic sign is placed in front, alongside a board with a large colour menu, a banner with photos of various dishes, and a custom made *Milkcafe* mat (see Fig 6.4). The logo of the café is written in a modern bold white font, followed by the capital letter "M" in Pink with a yellow crown. In both the 2009 and 2010 editions of the free

guide *Otamappu,* the café is listed as one of only ten establishments as a "recommended store" (*osusume tenpo* [オススメ店舗]). It also has advertisements in this publication (see Fig 6.6), as well in the fourth edition of the *Pombashi Map* (released August 2010) [Fig 6.7].

Under the schema of décor suggested in Chapter 5 Section 5.3, *Milkcafe* could be classified as *Contemporary other.* The third floor has a counter seating six people, with six tables accommodating two to four people each. There is a large television screen in the far left hand corner of the floor relaying live broadcasts of the selected channel. The furniture is a dark mahogany colour and a large vertical white light stands by the stairs leading down to the cashier on the second level, in front of which *chirashi* and other promotional materials are placed. This type of décor in *Milkcafe* is in fact not the norm for Type A cafés - five of the nine establishments in the category fall under the Victorian motif. Correspondingly, unlike the full-length gowns commonly found in the cafés with the Victorian influenced motifs, *Milkcafe* has a contemporary version with short black skirts, long sleeves, a black bow, and a white corset-like apron. The congruence of this uniform with the décor form important *spaces of representation* in *Milkcafe,* with the *lived spaces* created in the venue becoming the imaginative workpieces of individual customers.

Type A cafés are characterised as having little to no interaction between maids and customers, and from the outset, *Milkcafe* leaves no ambiguity about its intentions or function as an establishment. The first page of their menu (which is encased in a thick black folder) contains an extensive list of expectations and demands from customers, which, although printed in a relatively small font, occupy the entire space of the page. The first three items state:

1) This establishment is a restaurant. Beyond offering food and drinks, we provide no other kinds of services (*tōten wa inshokuten desu. Inshokubustu no teikyō igai no ikanaru sābisu mo itteorimasen*).[8]

2) Customers should be aware that the staff at this venue are not paid company - they are waitresses (*tōten sutaffu wa konpanion de wa naku, uētoresu desu*).[9]

3) If your purpose is to find a date, we recommend that you spend your money at some other café which is that way inclined (*deai mokuteki no okyakusama wa sōiita rui no omise ni sorenari no ryōkin wo haratte iku koto wo osusumeitashimasu*).[10]

While other cafés may not be so direct with the expectations of their customers, the explicitness of these texts are indicative of the feel Type A cafés aim to achieve - a *mise en scène* where only minimal interaction exists between maids and customers and where passivity in the experience of dining is the dominant objective. This is where Pearsons's (1998) reflection on "performance relationships" is stark - the customer remains the constant "passive spectator" of the surroundings of the café, and there is little opportunity for the production of *meta-spaces* where the role of "active actor" can be taken. The unambiguous designation of the venue as a "restaurant" (as opposed to a "maid café") and the declaration that its only concern is *inshokubutsu* (food and drink) reinforces this, leaving the fact that the possibility of conversation with staff is remote. Similarly, by branding the maids as "waitresses" and distinguishing them from "paid company" places definite parameters around their role as servers (and not as generators of conversation). The third expectation, while highlighting the function of *Milkcafe,* also appears to be about elucidating the difference between their venue and other establishments such as cabaret clubs. All of these statements of course also assist in forming part of the *competence-based spatial practices* of the establishment.

The focus on food, and not on interactivity, is further reinforced with their emphases on the quality and range of products available to customers in the *representations of spaces* of their advertising materials, and in the *nonspace* of the blog content on their website (Fig 6.6). The blog entries of the maids at *Milkcafe* rarely involve commentary on anything but food. This can be seen in the images and text of their September 2011 blog, where the aim of the post is to "inform everyone who's hungry of today's menu" (*onaka ga hettekita minasama ni, kyō no gentei menyū wo oshiraseshimasu*). It goes on to explain and recommend various dishes, and unlike the entries from other types of cafés, there is no mention of any interactivties between maids and customers.

Fig 6.6
Milkcafe blog from September 2011

Similarly, the printed advertisement for *Milkcafe* in the 2009 edition of *Otamappu* (Fig 6.7) is bereft of any mention of interactive elements. The top half appears to be aiming to capture the ambient nature of the establishment with a focus on the subtle lighting of the third floor and its greenery. The bottom half of the advertisement accents the availability of food and drinks, highlighting the café's clear agenda as an *inshokuten* - the bottom right hand corner displays a mug under a coffee machine, while the foreground of the bottom left is a concentration of bottles of alcoholic content. In the background, almost in obscurity, an image of a maid polishing a glass can be seen, suggesting her presence is peripheral to the experience of dining in the café. The text in the advertisement also exhibits the café's appeal to gastronomists. The top right hand corner proclaims its variety and quality:

> We have over three hundred types of alcohol and genuine espresso. Even tea salons are shocked by the quality of our tea! *(300shu ijō no osake to honkaku esupuresso. Tīsaron mo odoroku honkaku kōcha)*

This emphasis on a superior standard of *inshokubutsu* continues in the following lines, positioned in the very centre of the advertisement:

> From our style of cooking and the good quality products we use, to the dishes we make - we're out of this world! That's the reason connoisseurs of food continue to choose us! (*ryōri mo shi'ire kara chōri made subete ga betsujigen no kodawari. Otona no okyakusama ni erbaretsuzukeru noni ha riyū ga aru*).[11]

Fig 6.7
Advertisement for *Milkcafe* in the 2009 edition of *Otamappu*

Fig 6.8
Advertisement for *Milkcafe* in the August 2010 edition of the *Pombashi Map*

The second advertisement for *Milkcafe* in the *Pombashi Map* (Fig 6.8) has a markedly different feel to the first, though the emphasis still remains on the food and drink element of the venue. An image of the second floor seating arrangement to capture the ambience of the café is complemented by three photographs of different dishes the establishment serves - a slice of chocolate cake, a gourmet Margherita pizza and a cheese platter accompanied by a glass of red wine. In the foreground of the second largest image in the advertisement is a maid preparing a cocktail at the bar, showing a wide variety of bottles of alcohol. The accompanying text provides three pieces of important information:

(i) that the venue caters to groups of up to 20 people (ii) that it has a darts machine and other forms of amusement (iii) that it is a venue (*omise*) serving tasty coffee, alcoholic beverages and food. This mention of available activities would seem to counter the projection in the first advertisement of a dining experience void of interactive elements. However, the "amusement" referred to does not allude to interaction with maids, and since it follows the line highlighting the number of people the venue can cater for, this "amusement" can be understood as the entertainment available for large reserved groups. The self-appellation of *mise* ("shop" or "venue") as opposed to "*meido kissa*" would seem to indicate its extrication from other maid cafés.

Lastly, the website of *Milkcafe* contains several elements revealing its proclamation as an independent establishment that is not reliant on interactive elements. In what perhaps could be described as an explicit anti-*moe* statement, the venue's *Ai no Epuron* (Love's Apron) promotion in September 2011 contained the following text (Fig 6.9):

> *Milkcafe* has no entry fee, table charge, service tariff or the like (*Milkcafe wa chājiryō, sekiryō, sābisuryō, nado issai itadakimasen*).
>
> We also have no tacky theatrical *moe* service or anything of the sort (*wazatorashii gehinna 'moe' sābisu mo issai arimasen*).

This defiant distinction that *Milkcafe* makes between itself and other maid cafés reaches an extreme when a direct comparison is made between *meido kissa* and the establishment further in the promotion. The white box below the centre makes the following statement:

> Maid cafés are expensive and the food tastes awful (*meido kissa wa takakute mazui*)
>
> *Milkcafe* is cheap and the food tastes great (*mirukukafe wa yasukute umai*)
>
> We offer lunch from ¥500 but we do not compromise our high standard of quality
>
> (*kuoriti wa sono mama ni 500 en de ranchistāto!*)

Clearly, this differentiation of "maid café" and "*Milkcafe*", the emphasis on the quality of food and the rejection of a *moe*-oriented service indicate the venue has no preoccupation with sustaining interactivities between maids and customers. This typifies Type A cafés.

Fig 6.9
The September 2011 *Ai no epuron* promotion at *Milkcafe*

6.4 Type B (Low to Medium level of interactive elements with moderate volume conversation between maid and customer)

Type B cafés represent venues that are moderate volume vis-à-vis conversation on the communicative spectrum and between marginal and considerble vis-à-vis interactive elements. Interactivities and conversation in these establishments are best described as both

fleeting and noncommittal. That is to say, the communicative exchanges that do exist in these cafés are not bound to any set length of time (unlike Types C, D & E which have fixed time limits for certain services, such as games and *satsueikai* events) and since the maids are not obligated to engage customers in such a manner, these exchanges are consequently very brief. In this sense conversation initiated by maids between customers is a somewhat arbitrary act - if the number of patrons is low she may spend longer chatting to them than if the venue had reached its capacity (in which case she may not chat at all), and activities such as the delivery of food to tables and greeting new customers on entry always take priority over conversing with customers. Type B cafés form less than a quarter of all establishments at 19.2% (or 14 in total of the 73 visited). These venues typically provide no *cheki* or other type of photographic service (including *satsueikai* events), sell only a small range of maid goods, and have no *moe* incantation, games, or notebook exchange services. The entry and exit greetings are not standard for the cafés in this category. While some utilise the *irasshaimase* and *arigatō gozaimashita* variations, others greet and farewell customers with *okaerinasaimase-oki wo tsukete itterrashaimase* partnership. Food art exists in these venues, and is perhaps the most interactive of services provided. Consequently, *rakugaki* can act as the conduit for the limited conversation that is initiated. As with Type A cafés then, Type B cafés rely on food art as the only element that initiates communicative exchanges between maids and customers apart from the acts of ordering and initial salutations. In this sense, like in Type A cafés, *spaces of representation* are consequently minimal since *spatial practices* largely revolve around eating and drinking. In accordance with this, the quality of food in Type B cafés is generally good (compared to Types C, D & E, though perhaps less than Type A). Food is generally a common feature of the blog entries on the websites of Type B cafés, with photographs of dishes and information

concerning daily specials common. Because of this dedication to the quality of food, as with Type A cafés, there is olfactory diversity in Type B cafés.

While interactive elements are minimal and conversation between maids and customers is arbitrary at Type B cafés, event days are scheduled with a relative degree of frequency. These events are more upscale than those at Type A cafés, and in the same fashion as Type A, are when the line between them and cafés with an agenda for conversation become blurred. This is because the objective of event days is to provide an occasion for more communicative elements than are usually present. Promotion of these events exists on both the websites of the cafés and at the physical venues (via leaftlets, posters and announcements on bulletin boards). I shall now examine the café *Fairy Tale* to illustrate Type B cafés.

6.4.1 Case Analysis: *Fairy Tale*

City	Sendai
District	Aoba
Logo	
Website	http://fairy-tale.cc/
Contact Number	022-224-9788
Address (in Japanese)	宮城県仙台市青葉区一番町2丁目7-3 サンモール日泉ビル B1F
Hours of operation	11:00 - 22:00 Mon - Sun
Year of opening	2005
Number of seats	22
Other maid cafés in close proximity to location	None

Fairy Tale, located in the Aoba-ku ward of Sendai in Miyagi prefecture, is the only maid café in the Tōhoku region (there is, however, a maid bar in Akita prefecture). Approximately a ten-minute walk from Sendai station, it is situated on the basement level of Sun Mall Ichibanchō, a *shōtengai* (shopping arcade) that stretches for about 450 metres.

Being the only maid-related venue in the area, the establishment has a considerable monopoly on both the *representation of spaces* and *spaces of representation* of maid cafés for this particular region. Because of its isolation, promotion for *Fairy Tale* is extremely limited. Although some maid cafés in smaller prefectural locations still advertise their venues in the free publications that are circulated in the metropolitan areas of Japan (i.e. Tokyo, Osaka, Yokohama, Nagoya), no media I encountered contained any material relating to the existence of *Fairy Tale*. It is, however, listed in many maid-oriented directory style websites, such as *moeten.info.*

The interior of *Fairy Tale* is best categorised as *Victorian-influenced.* There is a counter seating eight people, with six tables seating two to four people each. The tables are dark wood and covered with white lacy-trimmed tablecloths, and each table also contains an antique ornament. The floor is tiled with a mixture of light and dark brown tiles, while the walls are wallpapered white with vertical pink stripes. Two floral ceramic clocks have been placed on opposite walls of the café. To align with the Victorian motif, the uniform the maids wear (although only knee length) follows a classic style, with the apron also reaching knee length. Black shoes and black stockings are worn by all maids, whose costume comes in three different colours: black, light blue and brown. The aprons cover the bust and the top half is frilled, as is the standard *kachūsha* each maid wears. This style of uniform and the internal properties of *Fairy Tale* are thus consistent *spaces of representation* for customers.

Type B cafés characteristically have few interactive elements (many market themselves as having an *iyashi* agenda) but simultaneously engage customers with a limited degree of conversation (that is not time-based). This is exemplified by the mission statement of *Fairy Tale.* The home page of its website states that it aims to recreate a

"classic image of a maid café" and offers "a place to unwind when feeling tired". However, highlighting the liminal space they occupy between relaxation and conversation, the statement continues with a description of what a "fairy tale" connotes in English:

The term "fairy tale" corresponds to "*dōwa*" or "*otogibanashi*" in Japanese, conveying a sense of nostalgia and amusement from within to those who hear it. In this manner, our café offers **tranquillity yet friendliness also** (my emphasis) [*Fairy Tale wa dōwa ya otogibanashi to itta imi no sōgo to narimasu. Kiku hito ni, dokoka natsukashisa ya tanoshisa wo ataete kureru dōwa. Sono dōwa no yōni, hajimete no kata ni mo ochitsukeru, yasashii omise ni shitai to omoimasu*].[12]

"Friendliness" in this sense is best understood to be the act of conversing between maids and customers, while "tranquillity", as with Type A cafés, alludes to the deliberate non-engagement of communication between both parties. This suggests that the initiative of either rests with the customer - maids, if prompted, will converse with customers in the fashion of café Types C & D (though because not an explicitly time-based service, priority is given to delivering food and greeting new customers on entry). However, if the customer chooses not to chat (by either initiating it themselves or responding to the prompts of the maids), then communication between him/her and the maids advances no further - it is understood that they have taken the "tranquil" path. This arbitrary nature of conversation and liminal space that exists between it and interactive elements typify Type B cafés.

6.5 Type C (Venues where conversation is the main objective with a considerable level of interactive elements)

Type C cafés constitute the largest number of venues, representing just under half of all establishments with 46.5% in this category. These cafés, like Type D cafés, are high volume vis-à-vis conversation on the communicative spectrum with a considerable number

of interactive elements. Critically this means that the main objective for the venues in this category is to provide customers with an opportunity to converse with maids, for which interactive elements generally - though not always - act as a conduit. This is the differentiating characteristic between Type C and Type D cafés, where the interactive services provided *consistently* make the environment amenable to chat. As such, *meta-spaces* in Type C cafés are common constructs.

The vast majority of Type C cafés provide a *cheki* service and regularly hold events (including *satsueikai*). They place an emphasis on food art drawn in front of customers (as opposed to pre-drawn *rakugaki*) and sell a wide range of maid goods both in-store and online through the website of the establishment. While the *moe* incantation is an element found relatively widely, it is not common to all cafés in this category, as is the notebook exchange service. Games also play a part in the *mise en scène* of Type C cafés. The entry and exit greetings of *okaerinasaimase* and *itterashaimase* are used the most frequently. Considering these points, *spaces of representation* are dominant in Type C cafés. These *lived spaces* are open to different appropriations by individual customers, which work in tandem with the *perceived spaces* produced by these activities.

Type C cafés have an olfactory diversity since the quality of food varies. Some establishments follow the gastronomical agenda of Type A cafés (and to a small extent Type B), though generally food is more similar to the Type D & E cafés (i.e. of a low quality and limited to a few main dishes of pasta, curries and omelette rice). While the blogs of Type C cafés focus largely on the interactive elements of the venues (e.g. event days), there are also commentaries on food (as café Types A & B do). I shall now investigate *Ichigo Miruku* as a case analysis for Type C cafés.

6.5.1 Case Analysis: *Ichigo Miruku*

City	Tokyo
District	Shibuya
Logo	いちごみるく
Website	http://ichigomilk.sakura.ne.jp/
Contact Number	03-3789-9960
Address (in Japanese)	東京都渋谷区宇田川町13-9　KN渋谷2ビル8階
Hours of Operation	11:30-23:00
Year of opening	2010
Number of seats	20
Other maid cafés in close proximity to location	None

Ichigo Miruku is a recent establishment having opened at the beginning of June 2010. It is situated in the Shibuya ward of Tokyo (on the top floor [level eight] of the Yamato Building), and according to its flyer (Fig 6.10) is the first maid café to be established in the district (and currently continues to be the only).

Fig 6.10
Front and back of the flyer for *Ichigo Miruku* (Shibuya)

Fig 6.11
Flyers placed at the exterior of *Ichigo Miruku* (Shibuya)

Access to the café from off the street is through a small open foyer and then via an elevator outside which a number of flyers have been placed (see Fig 6.11). The café has an unmistakable manga/anime motif. Its website and flyer contain three separate images of maids drawn in manga style (as opposed to photographs of maids as in other flyers). It also suggests a slight *dojikko* (clumsy girl) theme, with one of the figures on the front side of the flyer tripping and spilling the drink on her tray. The logo for *Ichigo Miruku* is coloured with two shades of pink and is written entirely in the hiragana script. Two strawberries form a *dakuten* (a diacritic mark in Japanese) over the symbol for *ko,* a play on the name of the café (*Ichigo Miruku* can literally be translated to English as "strawberry milk"). Since the café is located in Shibuya, promotion of the venue is somewhat limited. No free Akihabara publications I collected contained any advertising materials for the establishment.

The décor at *Ichigo Miruku* is unmistakably *kawaii-influenced,* its flyer promises a "bright atmosphere" (*akarui funiki*). The café occupies a limited area and seats around twenty people over three tiers, which face down towards a small stage where *cheki* are taken. On the upper tier there are cushions shaped as pink strawberries, and the walls are

covered with posters of maids and information about the menus. The maid costumes are also *kawaii-influenced,* with a pink *kachūsha* and pink dress covered by a frilly white apron.

There is a cover charge of ¥400 per hour for male customers and ¥300 for females, with a reduced rate for students (¥200 for boys and ¥150 for girls). This system is explained verbally to customers as they enter the store, and any previous visits to maid cafés are confirmed at the same time. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, *Ichigo Miruku* promotes itself as a venue which that offers both *moe* and *iyashi*, and welcomes "grandpas and grandmas, mums and dads, boys and girls, couples, and foreigners". Indeed, this distinction between *moe* and *iyashi* seems reified by the two types of menu that are presented in two different folders to customers: one is described as the "usual menu" (*futsū no menyū*), understood to be the *à la carte* menu where individual items can be selected, while the other is simply named the set menu (*menyū setto*). While the presence of a set menu may seem more indicative of a Type D venue where interactive elements have fixed time limits, it is more representative of the level of engagement that customers can attain while conversing with maids. Selecting a set menu usually guarantees the maximum time possible communicating with maids - on top of the general chat she provides as part of the service at the café (since this is the main objective of Type C cafés), customer who choose set menus are also afforded "extra time" spent playing games, taking *cheki* and engaging in *rakugaki* activities (the dishes on set menus are usually *omuraisu,* curry or other items amenable to food art). Conversely, customers who choose the *futsū no menyū* select items individually and do not avail themselves to maximum communication time, opting only for the standard chat that comes as a service. The prerogative to maximise conversation thus lies with the customer, and this typifies Type C cafés - conversation is not *always* necessarily contingent

on interactive elements and is generated as part of the service since that their main objective.

6.6 Type D (Venues where conversation is the main objective with a strong emphasis on interactive elements)

Type D cafés form the third largest in the taxonomy and constitute 13.7% of all cafés (or 10 of the 73 visited). They are venues that are high volume vis-à-vis conversation on the communicative spectrum and between considerable and extreme vis-à-vis interactive elements. The links between conservation and interactive elements in these establishments are strong. Effectively, unlike in Type C cafés where conversation may not necessarily be contingent on the interactive services offered, in Type D cafés these act as a pivot point. That is, conversation is *founded on* these interactive elements, the development of which is bound by a set length of time (e.g. 5 minute games, 10 minute à la carte photography, 30 second *moe* incantations). Type D cafés almost universally provide a *cheki* service and other forms of photographic opportunities (i.e. *satsueikai* events and à la carte photography), sell a wide range of maid goods, and generally have a *moe* incantation, a variety of short-duration and long-duration games, and a notebook exchange service. Food art drawn in front of customers is also a common interactive element in Type D cafés, though pre-drawn *rakugaki* is not unknown. Although there may be isolated cases, *okaerinasaimase* and *oki wo tsukete itterrashaimase* are the entry and exit greetings always used in these establishments. Because of the prevalence of these interactive elements, Pearson's (1998) "performance relationships" in Type D cafés are fluid and interchangeable. Through the construction of *spaces of representation* enabled by the maid persona, the maids in the café initially begin as the "active actors". However, once customer start engaging in

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interactivities, their role as "passive spectator" alters as they become involved in the performances. Since these activities take place in front of other customers, *meta-spaces* are also an unmistakeable feature of Type D cafés.

Since the generation of conversation based on interactive elements is the dominant objective of Type D cafés, food at many is inconsequential. Indeed, beyond drinks, some offer nothing more than *otsumami* (small savoury snacks) such as potato chips and *edamame*. Those that do offer more are restricted to a few main dishes, such as curried rice, pasta and *omuraisu*. Accordingly, Type D cafés have olfactory similarities, and the blogs on the websites of these establishments are concerned more with the interactive elements of the venues (i.e. recounting event days, posting *cheki* and pictures of *rakugaki*), and less on the informative aspects of the food that is available (as is the case with café Types A & B). I will now examine *Filles* as a case analysis for Type D cafés.

6.6.1 Case Analysis: *Filles*

City	Tokyo
District	Akihabara
Logo	
Website	http://filles.run.buttobi.net/
Contact Number	03-5209-0210
Address (in Japanese)	東京都千代田区外神田3-16-17　住吉ビル4階
Hours of operation	14:00 - 21:00 Weekdays, 11:00 - 22:00 Sat, 11:00 - 21:00 Sun
Year of opening	2008
Number of seats	27
Other maid cafés in close proximity to location	*Cure Maid Cafe, Maidreamin 1*

Filles is officially known as *Filles Meido Kissa Gakuin* (フィーユメイド喫茶学院), best translated to English as the "*Filles* Maid Café Academy". This title combines the term "filles" (the French word for "girl" which is equivalent to the Japanese term *shōjo* [少女]), and the word "*gakuin*" meaning "academy", "institute" or simply "school" (Kakuchi 2001). This connotes a classroom-themed "girl maid" scenario with an ingénue-type pupil/teacher role-play, however, in reality the establishment is no such thing. This contrasts to other establishments that do strive to emulate this type of setting with no reference to "school" in their names, such as *Afilia Kitchen's* (Osaka) and *Candy Fruits* (Akihabara), which, along with being decorated like school classrooms with desks and blackboards, are staffed by hybrid schoolgirl-maid personas. The word "filles" then is most likely a marketing strategy in the creation of *representations of spaces* to achieve a level of sophistication and/or elegance, since loan words from European languages are considered somewhat trendy in Japan (Hyde 2002).

Fig 6.11
Map indicating the location of *Filles* on their flyer

Filles is located along *Chūō dōri,* one block to the south of Suehiro metro station (see Fig 6.11). From street level it is accessible by taking an elevator to the fourth floor (which the café occupies entirely) of the Sumiyoshi Building. There are usually maids on the corner of the intersection with *Chūō dōri* distributing flyers, not far from the entrance of the building. The décor may be considered *Contemporary other* - the interior is not heavily

decorated and consists of three tables to the right side seating four people each, while to the left is one long counter seating fifteen individuals (see Fig 6.12). Service is centred around the counter rather than at the tables, and while counter-style service is common to other maid cafés in Akihabara, *Filles* appears unique in that the structure is a focal point. This is something they promote, and the flyer I received on the street before entering boasts: "this café has a new kind of counter service never seen before!" (*ima madeni rui wo minai atarashii kauntā sutairu no meido kissa!*).[13] The flyer also offers a ¥300 discount to first-time visitors, women and couples on the regular ¥1800 cover charge known as a system. The price includes one (non-alcoholic) drink and a short-duration game (i.e. a "minigame"), with the length of time for a stay being capped at 90 mins. Once this limit is close to being exceeded, customers have no choice of extending their stay for a discounted fee (which is the case at many other establishments) - they must simply pay another cover charge of ¥1800 which allows them another one hour and a half. Food at *Filles* is an additional cost and is extremely limited. There is nothing more on the menu than a few savoury snacks to accompany the drink, as well as toast, some sandwiches, and one or two types of cake. In short, the dining experience at *Filles* is supplemental to its communicative agenda, and customers do not come to eat, but to interact and converse.

Fig 6.12
An interior shot of *Filles,* as displayed on their flyer

Since the menu is so limited, food art does not exist at *Filles.* This is in fact an exceptional case, since all other cafés categorised as Type D have this interactive element. It does have a *cheki* service available (for ¥1000 per shot) as in most Type C & E cafés, however, since the focus is on instantaneous communication, there is no notebook exchange service and, expectedly, no collection of reading materials. The sale of in-store maid goods is also limited. Perhaps its *rakugaki* and communication notes shortfalls are made up with an interactive service quite rare among other cafés (found only at *Candy Fruits* [Akihabara], *Honey Honey* [Yokohama], and *MIA Cafe* [Akihabara], though it is becoming a noticeable trend in recently opened cafés). This is the chance for female customers to dress up in full maid costume on site. At *Filles* this is free of charge for 30 minutes (at other venues it is usually included as a set), and comes with an added bonus unheard of at other cafés. This is the opportunity for the female customer to serve the food and drinks ordered by those she is dining with to them. This is marketed on the *chirashi* and website of *Filles* to male-female couples (under the heading "great news for couples!" [*kappuru ni rōhō!!*]), suggesting to the females it is an opportunity to know what it feels like to be a maid body and soul (*kokoro mo karada mo meido-san ni narikitte itadakima~su!*).[14]

Event days also exist at *Filles.* These only involve a change of costume, and there are up to four "free cosplay" days a month, where the maids come dressed as any character they please. On non-event days the waitresses are dressed as maids of different varieties (i.e. no one costume is the same), and *dansō* bartenders are also present.

Customers are greeted with *okaerinasaimae goshujin-sama* as they enter, and after they have sat down the maid wipes their hands with a wet warm hand towel (known as *shibori*). The maids immediately start chatting after explaining the "system", and within

moments after ordering, beverages arrive. Customers are simultaneously given two poker chips (one white and one red) in a black folder containing the bill. When he/she is ready to play a game with the maid (included in the price of the cover charge) they put the white chip on the table. For any games after that (at an additional cost of ¥1000 for 15 minutes) the red chip is to be put down. There is a specific card that lists the games that are available, though there are only four for the short duration variety (*Toranpu, Uno, Othello,* and *Jenga*) [see Section 5.10 for a description of these games]. While the additional games are capped at 15 minutes, the initial game has no such time limit. This is significant since at most other venues all games are timed, and most do not usually go for longer than a duration of five minutes. Customers are informed by the maid that winning results in receiving a prize (usually some type of candy), and that the consequence of losing is being made to do something embarrassing (*hazukashii koto wo saseru*). As explained in the previous chapter (Section 5.10), this "embarrassment" usually entails the customer wearing a *kachūsha* until their departure.

The time spent conversing with maids at *Filles* is extensive and by using these minigames as a catalyst for chat, it typifies Type D cafés. That is, venues where the generation of conversation is always reliant on one or more interactive element, which are usually part of a fixed "system" or set menu.

6.7 Type E (Theatre-like venues with an extreme level of interactive elements but with little or no conversation)

The communicative spectrum presented in Fig 6.2 demonstrates that, despite there being links between interactive elements and the generation of conversation among maids and customers (as shown in the case analyses of café Types C & D), the two can in fact be mutually exclusive. This is indicated by Type E cafés, where there is a discord between the level of conversation (low volume) and the forms of participatory services available (extreme). Type E cafés account for the smallest number of the five types identified, constituting 8.2% of all cafés visited. The drawcard for patrons who visit these venues is their emphasis on interactive elements and role-play in the fashion of theatre restaurants. All provide *cheki* services (some also have regular *satsueikai* events), all use the entry and exit greetings *okaerinasaimase goshujin-sama* and *oki wo tsukete okaeri kudasaimase* universally, all sell a wide range of maid-related goods touting them as *omiyage* (souvenirs), and all have various *moe* incantations and a selection of games available. Since forging a regular stream of communication between maids and customers is not the primary objective of Type E cafés, the notebook exchange service is uncommon. *Rakugaki* is an especially noticeable (and marketable) feature of these venues, with food art images consistently appearing on their websites, *chirashi,* and other advertising material. Additionally, stage performances (where one or more maids do a karaoke rendition) are a prevalent element of these cafés and are, arguably, what designates them as entertainment-*kei* venues. Because of this focus on musical performances and the cover charges they attract (for example, *Pinky Cafe* charge ¥500 every sixty minutes to correspond with their on the hour every hour performances), Types E cafés are among the most expensive to visit. At the opposite end of the continuum vis-à-vis interactive elements to Type A cafés, where the gastronome

experience forms the core purpose of the establishment, Type E cafés aspire to play on the novelty of what are popularly perceived as maid café fundamentals - it is the unfamiliar, the unusual and the unique facets of stereotyped and exoticised maid cafés (e.g. waitresses dressed in cosplay attire, intermittent musical performances, casting spells on food and drink to make them taste better) that are the amplified points of attraction in *perceived spaces*. As such (apart from single males), these venues target and subsequently attract foreigners, male-female couples and mixed groups, women, and casual one-off visitors interested in gaining an ephemeral insight into maid cafés.

Because Type E cafés exist for the purposes of entertainment, the food and beverages at these establishments are peripheral in terms of their variety and quality. This is clearly at the polar opposite of Type A cafés, which often go to great lengths to emphasise the good quality of their products (as demonstrated in the case analysis of *Milkcafe* in Section 6.2.1). The culinary scenario that Galbraith (2009: 137) describes of maid cafés serving a limited range of dishes that are staples of family restaurant children's menus (i.e. *omuraisu*, curried rice and spaghetti) is perhaps truest for Type E cafés. Indeed, while filming at @*home cafe honten* (categorised as Type E) for the BBC Four programme *In Search of Wabi Sabi,* broadcaster Marcel Theroux (2009) describes the menu as "something like from a child's tea party".[15] It is possible that these dishes are the most amenable to the drawing of *rakugaki,* and that offering a more varied menu would diminish the opportunities for customers to partake in this particular interactive element. This is an especially marketable feature of Type E cafés, and the *chirashi* for *MaiDream, @home Cafe* and *Pinky Cafe* all contain images of either *omuraisu*, curried rice or desserts covered in *rakugaki.* Similarly, all contain the word "*moe*" somewhere on the flyer, noticeably in the artwork created with ketchup. Since Type E cafés serve only a limited range of foods,

olfactorily they have many similarities, with the smells of *omuraisu,* curried rice, ketchup and pasta the most recurring.

Event days at Type E cafés occur with the highest frequency among all cafés. These can be as often as two to three days a week (as is the case with @*home Cafe)* or once a week (such as *Pinky Cafe,* in comparison to once a month with most Type A cafés). Many of the larger events, such as Halloween or Christmas, last for longer than a day and are usually drawn out over a two to three day period. The most common events at Type E cafés are *satsueikai* and costume changes.

As with Type A cafés, Type E cafés attract considerable numbers of female customers, though the make-up of these numbers between café types has one major difference. While female customers in Type A cafés were observed either alone or dining in groups of two to four together (i.e. without men), the highest number of female customers in Type E cafés were found to be accompanied by males. This could either be as a couple, or in a group of male-female couples. It is possible that visiting a maid café for this demographic is for the musical performances and sensationalised interactive elements, and act a social outing or date. Similarly, because of this focus on entertainment in Type E cafés, foreign tourists were also present in noticeable numbers.[16] I now turn my attention to the Akihabara venue @*home cafe Don Quijote* to investigate Type E cafés.

6.7.1 Case Analysis: *@home cafe Don Quijote Branch*

City	Tokyo
District	Akihabara
Logo	
Website	http://www.cafe-athome.com/
Contact Number	03-3254-7878
Address (in Japanese)	東京都千代田区外神田4-3-3ドン・キホーテ秋葉原店5F
Hours of operation	11:30 - 22:00 Weekdays, 10:30 - 22:00 Weekends
Year of opening	2004
Number of seats	36
Other maid cafés in close proximity to location	*@home honten, Pinafore 2, Maidreamin 3*

While *@home cafe* is often represented in the media as a singular entity,[17] it is in fact fragmented into two "branches" (*ten*), one of which is further divided into separate sites. The primary location (known as *honten* [本店], the "main store") is in the Mitsuwa Building off Akihabara's *Chūō-dōri* and comprises four floors. These are known as *honten yonkai* (main building fourth floor), *Hana* (where staff are dressed in kimonos), *honten rokkai* (main building sixth floor), and *honten nanakai* (main building seventh floor) respectively. Despite the identical geographical location of each venue, each is subtly different in terms of the services offered and ambience, and in online reviews and blogs they are usually treated as wholly separate establishments. The second location is on the fifth floor of the Don Quijote (romanised as *donkihōte*) department store on *Chūō-dōri,* around three blocks north of the *honten.*[18] The branch goes by a number of appellations, including "*@home cafe donkiten*" (@ほーむカフェドンキ店) in Japanese, and "*@home Don Quijote*" or *"@home Donkey location*" in English (according to the café's official website). The café prides itself on the large number of customers it has attracted, announcing in bold letters on the homepage of its website that it has had over one and a half million visitors.

The café is located on the west side of the department store's fifth floor. To reach it customers must ascend several escalators that take them through the different floors of the store before reaching Level Five. Stepping off the escalators on the fifth floor, customers first see a vast array of cosplay merchandise on sale before them, with an entire section dedicated to different maid costumes. Interestingly, as almost a statement of the origins of the maid persona, adjacent to this display in the far corner of the floor lies an adult goods section, selling sex toys, pornographic DVDs and other types of erotica. The area is partitioned off with a sign admonishing that people under the years of eighteen must not enter. On the opposite side of the floor is the café itself, which occupies only a small area (less than one quarter of the entire level). In front of the entrance to the café (which is chained off to prevent patrons from entering without acknowledgment from the staff) there is a small waiting area with chairs for customers to be seated on if the café is at full capacity. On the occasions I went I was given an A4 sized laminated card that I was asked to read before I entered, stipulating the house rules of the establishment. This effectively functions like a consent form, and acknowledgment of it being read signals entry to the café.

The venue is divided into two sections that are separated from each other by a wall. These are known as the *@counter space* (with twelve seats available) and the *@living space*, containing tables and chairs that can seat 24 people in total. The décor is *kawaii-influenced* with the walls wallpapered pink and blue, and heavily decorated with fluffy toys and posters of the maids. The maid uniforms similarly fall into the *kawaii-influenced* category, with its pink scarves, pink bows and pink-buttoned white apron over a light brown dress.

The food menu at *@home donkiten* (and indeed for all *@home cafe* branches, since there is a standard menu for all locations) vies for one of the most limited of all cafés in

Akihabara (if not Honshū). It has two items in its pasta category (both are spaghetti with different sauces) and four items in its rice category (curried rice, omelette rice, a surprise dish, and *hanbāgu* with rice), totaling less than ten main dishes available. Its dessert menu contains four items also, while the drinks (both hot and cold) menu is somewhat more extensive. It is undeniable that the taste of the savoury food items is, at best, questionable and of low quality when compared to that of Type A cafés. This is reflected by a discontented informant on the *Lonely Planet* website, expressing his/her ire at the inclusion of the café as a recommended eating venue in the publication's Tokyo guide (under the Akihabara section):

I expected a nice cute place...What I found was a spectacular tourist trap in every way. Has somebody visited the place before putting it in the guide, without any warning?...The "kawaii" food, covered with Heinz ketchup, seems to come straight out of cans (Lonely Planet 2011).

This dissatisfaction, however, reflects a misunderstanding from this tourist that the food items at *@home cafe* are more about eating and less about the interactivities that accompany them (i.e. *moe* incantation, food art). Indeed, I suggest that the limited nature of the savoury food items available (and their indisputable poor quality) is intended to be neutralised by the novelty and amusement of the interactivities that are involved with their consumption. This counterbalance is indicated on the menus themselves, where in colourful writing it explains that for all rice meals, "to finish the dish off the maid will draw a picture on it with ketchup in front of all masters" (*saigo no shigae ni, goshujin-sama no mae de, meido ga kechappu de oe kaki itashimasu*), as if to say the dish is incomplete without the *rakugaki* component.[19] Similarly, for spaghetti dishes, "the maid will mix in the sauce while she says a word like 'moe' together with the master" (*moe~na kotoba wo meido ga goshujin-sama to isshoni iinagara mazemaze itashimasu*).[20] By explicitly announcing this

as a part of the meal, customers are being made aware that what they are paying for is not the dish per se, but rather the incorporation of these interactivities into their dining experience, a novelty that does not exist at non-cosplay cafés.

The preoccupation of @*home cafe* with matters apart from food is further reiterated by the design of their website. Its homepage has only a single small (animated) image of a food item acting as graphic icon to link the menu page. By contrast the remainder of the home page is festooned with images of merchandise and photographs of maids. There is one moving image of maids dancing on a stage, with a special "WEB TV" link where full members of the café's fan club can view videos of the maids' performances. Entertainment then, and not food, is clearly at the forefront of their agenda, and this typifies Type E cafés.

6.7 Summary

This chapter has reflected on the heterogeneity of maid cafés by presenting five case analyses of different establishments across Honshū. The need for this consideration of the heterogeneous qualities of maid cafés stems from the results presented in Chapter Five, which indicate vast differences in the services and interactivities provided by venues, in addition to consequent constructions of space and formations of power. These multiplicities of maid café *mise en scènes* are at odds with the homogenised fashion in which these establishments have been treated in the popular press, in local promotional publications and also in academic literature (this echoes the way in which otaku have also been viewed, as discussed in Chapter Two). In the instances when the heterogeneous qualities of maid cafés do come to the surface via these media, they are, however, oversimplified and placed into one of two categories. These are *iyashi-kei* (venues for relaxation purposes) and *moe-kei* (venues with an agenda to entertain). These terms, however, are problematic since the

components of what both the *iyashi* and *moe* experiences entail are fluid and changeable from venue to venue. Additionally, the terms also reflect little on how space and power are formed in maid cafés. In response to this neglect of the diversity of the *mise en scènes* that exists among venues, this chapter has suggested a taxonomy of maid cafés as a heuristic for viewing them heterogeneously. The dominant features of each have been summarised in Fig. 6.13.

Fig 6.13
Different café types and their dominant features

Café Type	Dominant Features
A	- interactive elements not widely available: no *moe* incantation, no games, no notebook exchange service, pre-drawn *rakugaki* common, *cheki* only on event days - diverse food and drinks menu, usually of a high standard - use *irasshaimase* and *arigatō gozaimashita* greetings - sell only a limited range of maid goods (if any at all) - large number of female customers - event days low-key - conversation between maids and customers minimal - blogs used to comment on and inform about available food, rather than interactivities with maids
B	- interactive elements not widely available: no *moe* incantation, no games, no notebook exchange service, rarely *cheki* but *rakugaki* common - food and drinks menu somewhat diverse, usually of a good standard - use both *irasshaimase-arigatō gozaimashita* and *okaerinasaimase-oki wo tsukete itterrashaimase* greetings - sell only a limited range of maid goods - event days somewhat low-key - conversation between maids and customers moderate, though very arbitrary - blogs used mainly to comment on and inform about available food, rather than interactivities with maids

C	- interactive elements available widely available: *cheki,* games, *rakugaki,* often *moe* incantation and notebook exchange service - food and drinks menu varied, usually of poor quality - use *okaerinasaimase* and *oki wo tsukete itterrashaimase* greetings - sell a wide range of maid goods - event days widely promoted - conversation between maids and customers high volume; this is not always centred on interactive elements (pivot points) - blogs used mainly to comment on interactivities with maids but occasionally to inform about available food
D	- almost all interactive elements available: *moe* incantation, games, notebook exchange service, *cheki* and *rakugaki* - food and drinks menu limited, usually of poor quality - use *okaerinasaimase* and *oki wo tsukete itterrashaimase* greetings - sell a wide range of maid goods - event days widely promoted - conversation between maids and customers high volume; this is centred on interactive elements (pivot points) - blogs used mainly to comment on interactivities with maids rather than inform about available food
E	- interactive elements widely available: *moe* incantation, games, no notebook exchange service, *rakugaki* a standard feature, *cheki* - wide selection of food and drinks unavailable, quality usually of a low standard - use *okaerinasaimase* and *oki wo tsukete itterrashaimase* (or variant) greetings - sell a wide range of maid goods in store (and online) - moderate number of female customers - event days widely promoted - conversation between maids and customers minimal - blogs used to inform customers of changes in the establishment, rather than to communicate with maids

Notes

¹ Some examples of productions and websites that have utilised this schema include NHK's *Tokyo Eye,* reviews on *www.akibanana.com* and *www.Otaku2.com,* and listings on *www.sunnypages.jp.*

² They use this expression on their website under the tab "about this cafe" (*Royal Milk ni tsuite* [ロイヤルミルクについて]).

³ The top banner of the *Cure Maid Cafe* homepage contains this phrase.

⁴ This is only one meaning of the verb *iyasu.* The Progressive Dictionary lists "appease" and "satisfy" in relation to hunger (*ue*) and "quench" in relation to thirst (*kawaki*) as other possible translations, using the example sentences "a (single) piece of bread was not enough to satisfy/appease my hunger" (一切れのパンでは飢えをいやしきれなかった) and "we quenched our thirst with water from the spring" (泉の水で渇きをいやした) respectively. I would argue that these two additional meanings are not mutually exclusive since both indicate a need for a particular object - a panacea in the case of the meaning "cure", and relief from a physical condition in the case of the secondary meanings. The first definition of "cure" at any rate appears to the dominant understanding in the realm of maid-themed services, as evidenced by establishments such as *Iyashi Maiden,* a reflexology parlour dedicated to "ailments".

⁵ The first half of the card says:
About Cafe Mai:lish
A small space for some healing in Akihabara. That's *Cafe Mai:lish.* During the day, come and meet the adorable maids in their cute little frills.
At night, the waitresses are dressed individually in unique cosplay character costumes. Every Tuesday and Friday (excluding events), they stay in the maid costumes all day.

⁶ This interpretation most likely stems from the secondary meaning of *iyasu* (to satisfy or appease) discussed above in Footnote 4, and in the case of *Pinafore*'s marketing strategy it suggests "quenching one's thirst" through conversation.

⁷ By the term "interactive elements" I refer to services that involve significant levels of interaction between maids and customers, such as *cheki, rakugaki, moe* incantations and games.

⁸ The original text in Japanese reads: 当店は飲食店です。飲食物の提供以外のいかなるサービスも行っておりません。

⁹ The original text in Japanese reads: 当店スタッフはコンパニオンではなく、ウエートレスです。

¹⁰ The original text in Japanese reads: 出会い目的のお客様はそういった類のお店にそれなりの料金を支払って行くことをお進めいたします。

¹¹ I have translated "otona no kyakusama" in this context as "connoisseurs of good food", though "gourmet customers" might be as equally appropriate. Since the literal translation of "otona no kyakusama" (and not the contextual one here) is "adult customer", it is also possible that *Milkcafe,* with its rejection of the label "maid café", may also be insinuating that the establishment serves "real food" and not the items found on children's menus in many other venue.

¹² The original text in Japanese reads: *Fairy tale* は童話やおとぎ話と言った意味の造語となります。 聞く人に、どこか懐かしさやたのしさを与えてくれる童話。 その童話のように、初めての方にも落ち着ける、優しいお店にしたいと思います。

¹³ The original reads: 今までに類を見ない新しいカウンタースタイルのメイド喫茶!

[14] The original reads: 心も体もメイドさんになりきって頂きま〜す!

[15] A clip from this series can be seen here:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLIFqfOFVhA

[16] It is important to note that "foreign tourist" in this sense is limited as it refers exclusively to those of Caucasian appearance.

[17] Tokyo Eye, Marcel Theroux, and Danny Choo's coverage of @home café are examples of this.

[18] While the standard spelling of Cervantes' character seems to be Don Quixote (i.e. with an "x"), in its English logo the company uses the letter "j" (i.e. Don Quijote).

[19] The original reads: 最後の仕上げに、ご主人様の前で、メイドがケチャップでお絵かきいたします。

[20] The original reads: 萌え〜な言葉をメイドがご主人様と一緒に言いながらまぜまぜいたします。

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

7.0 Introduction

In this concluding chapter I will revisit the four research questions of the study and their corresponding three purposes. To revise, these questions are:

1) What functions do maid cafés serve for customers?

2) How is *moe* manifested in maid cafés?

3) How is the maid persona developed inside maid cafés?

4) What role do maid cafés play within the construct of otakuism?

In this chapter I shall provide a response to questions one and four under separate sections (Sections 7.1 & 7.3 respectively), however, since questions two and three correspond to the same purpose, it is more effective to explore them together (Section 7.2). In the final two section of the chapter, I provide a summary of the thesis (Section 7.4) and recommendations for further study (Section 7.5).

7.1 Question One

This question was formulated to explore the first purpose of the study, which is to investigate what functions maid cafés serve and why they exist. A thorough response to this question requires acknowledging not only the diversity of maid cafés but also the diversity of customers, both of which have been treated homogeneously in the mainstream media and in academic writing on the topic.

Despite the tendency in many productions (broadcast and print, including fictional works such as *Train Man* (2005), documentaries such as *Akihabara Geeks* (2006), featured segments on variety shows and photobook collections) for the "average" maid café customer to be painted as a single (otaku) male, this study has highlighted that maid cafés are not *exclusively* a male otaku domain. The heterogeneous nature of maid café patrons makes profiling the "average" customer of maid cafés no easy task, due solely to the heterogeneity of the establishments themselves (discussed in the case analyses of Chapter Six). Indeed, the composition of customer demographics across the spectrum of maid cafés includes males dining alone, females dining alone, pairs of males, pairs of females, mixed couples, groups of more than three consisting exclusively of either females or males, or mixed groups of more than three. These combinations of groups composing of both genders in different maid café *mise en scenes* suggest venues can be sites of both homosociality and heterosociality (this will be discussed further in Section 7.3). Macias reported in 2006 on the NHK program *Tokyo Eye* that the female clientele of maid cafés constituted some 30% of all patrons. While collectively the data gathered for this research correlate with this figure, there are vast differences in what types of cafés are frequented by female customers. In Type A establishments (such as *Emaid* [Osaka] and *Wonder Parlour Cafe* [Ikebukuro]) females actually constitute the highest number of customers, while in other venues (especially Type C & D cafés) their presence is much lower to the point of being outnumbered by men tenfold.

Gender, however, is not the only factor to impact this diversity of maid café customers. As I explored in Chapter One Section 1.3, age, profession, physical ability, sexual orientation, marital status and ethnicity may also be possible variables when considering the heterogeneous nature of clientele. Since interviews and surveys did not

form a part of the methodology of this study, exact figures concerning these particular factors of customers were not possible to ascertain. However, as I also mentioned in Chapter One Section 1.3, my observations revealed that customers presenting these variables were also a feature of the *mise en scenes* of cafés, suggesting a counterbalance to the *exclusive* stereotyped otaku male between the ages of twenty and forty. There were men clearly above the age of forty, and customers with disabilities were also present (I communicated with a deaf patron at *Frontier* [Osaka], and saw others in wheelchairs at other venues). Similarly, the attire of customers also intimates a variance among them. While many are dressed casually, it was not uncommon (especially in Akihabara) to see both men and women (often dining together in groups or three of four) in business suits, suggesting some kind of after-work social outing.

In addressing what functions maid cafés serves for customers, the diversity of customers is inextricably linked to the diversity of the cafés themselves. The case analyses presented in Chapter Six demonstrated the heterogeneity of maid cafés, and suggested a taxonomy of five different establishments. Consequently, the functions that maid cafés serve for customers cannot be limited to one phenomenon, as they depend entirely on what type of establishment the café is (within the suggested taxonomy). More specifically, where they are situated on the communicative spectrums of interactive elements and conversation is indicative of the functions they serve. There are four identifiable functions maid cafés serve for customers:

1) *to be spectacles for passive consumption* - as explored in Chapter Six Section 6.2, this is a function restricted largely to Type A cafés, and predominantly serves female customers. Many of these women are cosplay aficionados who visit maid cafés seeking stylistic inspiration by observing the attire that the maids of the café wear. It is possible that

since cosplay involves the emulation of gestures and attitudes in adopting a persona (combing both the physical and mental properties of a character [Norris & Bainbridge 2009]), customers with this objective may also be seeking behavioural inspiration. It should be noted that many of these female customers visit cafés dressed in variations of cosplay.

2) *to provide opportunities for conversation* - "conversation" in this sense refers to the sustained dialogue between customers and maids (separate from the generation of chat amongst customers themselves). This is the main function of café Types C & D, and as was highlighted in Chapter Six Sections 1.4 & 1.5, may or may not be contingent on the interactive elements (i.e. *cheki, rakugaki, moe* incantation and games) available. In the venues where they are not reliant on these elements, they form a standardised part of the service.

3) *to provide opportunities for homosociality* - As above, this is also a function of Type C & D cafés. As I explained in Chapter Five Section 5.4, the convergence of the "public" and the "private" in maid cafés makes communication between fellow customers possible. Conversation, however, may not always be the catalyst for forging homosocial relations in cafés. As I have described above, groups of women (mainly cosplay aficionados) also frequent (Type A) maid cafés together, suggesting a pre-organised gender-specific social outing.

4) *to be spectacles for active consumption* - the function of the cafés with this agenda is to spectacularise the maid persona and exploit the novelty of the interactive elements of essentialised and stereotyped maid cafés. Because of the high turnover of customers, conversation at these cafés is minimal, and one-time customers (often tourists) consequently form large numbers.

To summarise, in light of what has been explicated above, there is no one function that maid cafés uniformly or universally serve. The taxonomy created in Chapter Six assists in determining what type of café offers what to customers (in the realms of interactive elements and conversation), and because maid cafés are *spaces of representation* there is undoubtedly individual variation in what customers anticipate from each establishment.

7.2 Questions Two and Three

The questions '*how is "moe" manifested in maid cafés?*' and '*how is the maid persona developed inside maid cafés?*' were posed to address the second purpose of this study, which is to explore the links between maid cafés, the maid persona and the concept of *moe.*

The manifestation of *moe* in maid cafés transpires through the production of all *spaces* in Lefebvre's triad. However, because of the heterogeneity of cafés and the different services they offer, not all *spaces* are constructed in *all* cafés simultaneously. For example, *moe* is reified as a *performance-based spatial practice* through the interactive elements of *cheki* (via the "*moe* pose"), *rakugaki* (via the inscription of *moe*-related objects on dishes), and the *moe* incantation (through the repetitious and onomatopoeic cycle of the word "*moe*"). These elements are restricted primarily to café Types C, D & E, though on occasions may also be experienced in Type B venues. As was made evident in the case analysis of *Milkcafe* (Chapter Six Section 6.2.1), with its unambiguous repudiation of *moe* through its mission statement, Type A cafés are free of interactive elements and consequent manifestations of *moe.* Hence, *moe* as a *perceived space* is not present in all maid cafés. Conversely, *moe* as a *lived space* of imagination, embodiment and desire is manifested in a greater number of cafés. This is because these *spaces of representations* may be constructed

through conduits as common as the uniforms that maids wear (maid costumes are a feature of 100% of cafés), particularly the "*moe* maids" (*moena meido*) highlighted by the *Akihabara Housemaid-cafe Costume Collection & Guidebook* (2005), as well salutations such as "welcome home Master". As a *conceived space, moe* is manifested in the names of cafés (e.g. *moe and shandon, moekon@cafe*) and also in *chirashi* (see Chapter Five Fig 5.7 where a photograph of a *moe* pose is present).

The development of the maid persona rests largely on the notion of *gyappu,* which simultaneously yields discursive regimes of power. To summarise these power relations in alignment with the epistemological position of this study, it is useful to reflect on Foucault's considerations of S&M vis-à-vis the "master" (or in the case of maid cafés, the *shujin*). While the phenomenon encompasses a vast array of practices and personas, it is undeniable that the master-slave partnership is a pillar of S&M theatricality, due largely to its emphasis on "exhibiting the 'primitive' (slave, baby, woman) as a *character* (original emphasis) in the historical time of modernity" (McClintock 1993: 91). The S&M master-slave relationship (or as Foucault refers to it, "the master and the one on whom he exercises his mastery") thus has parallels to the construction of the master-maid affinity in maid cafés, since it recreates a past era through contemporary modes of embodiment. While Foucault never wrote extensively on the issue of S&M, his brief commentaries on the matter are useful for gaining insight to the development of the maid persona and the power relations surrounding it. According to Plant, Foucault's two central claims concerning S&M are that (2007: 538):

1) Power roles of participants can be subject to reversal

2) Pre-determined "boundaries" exist to prevent the sole domination of one practitioner by another

As explained in Chapter One Section 1.4.1, Foucault rejected the Marxist notion that power be best understood with a top-down model, where A necessarily exercised control over B (under certain conditions). The "capillary existence" of power that he suggests renders it flexible and open to change, with a constant push and pull existing between the individuals of any given scene. *Gyappu,* as outlined in Chapter Five Section 5.5, represents this fluidity of power in the development of the maid persona. Since maids rarely use *sonkeigo* or *kenjōgo,* there is a rift in the imaginary of how formal she *should* be (based on her status in the *lived spaces* of the café), and in the actualisation of how formal she is (in the *perceived spaces* that are constructed through her use of *performance-based* casual language [i.e. *futsūgo*]). So while *shujin* are ostensibly participating in a role-play of dominance over maids in the *lived space* of cafés via the anticipation of exalted language, there is a 'reversal' of roles with the omnipresence of *futsūgo* during conversation with maids. The image of submissiveness ceases to exist as a sense of familiarity is generated between participants. The power in maid cafés then, much like the power in S&M, is what Foucault brands a "game of strategy" - it is open to the possibility of reversal, it is changeable, and it is dynamic. This "strategic power" is vastly different to "socio-political power" which enables "dominance", as it is made static and stabilised through institutions becoming inflexible and locked. The development of the maid persona is thus not reliant on "socio-political power" but on "strategic power", and *gyappu* (like S & M), is effectively an "eroticisation of strategic power". Maid cafés are *places* (in de Certeau's terms), where the maid persona produces *spaces* with customers. These *spaces,* if *spatial practices,* may or may not involve interactive elements (that incorporate or include manifestations of *moe*).

7.3 Question Four

Finally, in order to address the third purpose of this study the question '*what role do maid cafés play within the construct of otakuism?*' was posed. Again, as with answering the first research question, the heterogeneous nature of maid cafés impacts the manner in which the construct of otakuism is shaped. In Chapter One Section 1.4.2 (Fig 1.6) I presented a translated version of the chart devised by Enomoto (2009) to illustrate his theory of the *Eight Essentials of Otakuism*. In Fig 7.0 below I present a restructured version of this same chart, explicitly in relation to maid cafés and the findings of this study (which is why I have renamed it *The Eight Essentials of Otakusim vis-à-vis Maid Cafés*, highlighting which *essentials* within the cultural orientation are applicable to maid cafés). There are, however, lacunae with Enomoto's original chart, which I wish to remedy with my own restructured version below. Perhaps the biggest deficiency in his chart is a lack of any explanation of the arrows in the diagram. Beyond stating that the "eight essentials are all intricately linked" (2009: 23), Enomoto never fully elucidates how each individual *essential* is connected to each other, and ignores completely any explication of what the arrows indicate. In the discussion that follows, I aim to explain the interconnectedness of each *essential* via the arrows, which are best viewed as the regimes of power created by the spaces of each *essential*. The double headed arrows indicate a particularly fluid regime where a constant push and pull of power is contingent on the spaces produced.

Fig 7.0
Reconstructed chart of Enomoto's "*Eight Essentials of Otakuism*" vis-à-vis maid cafés
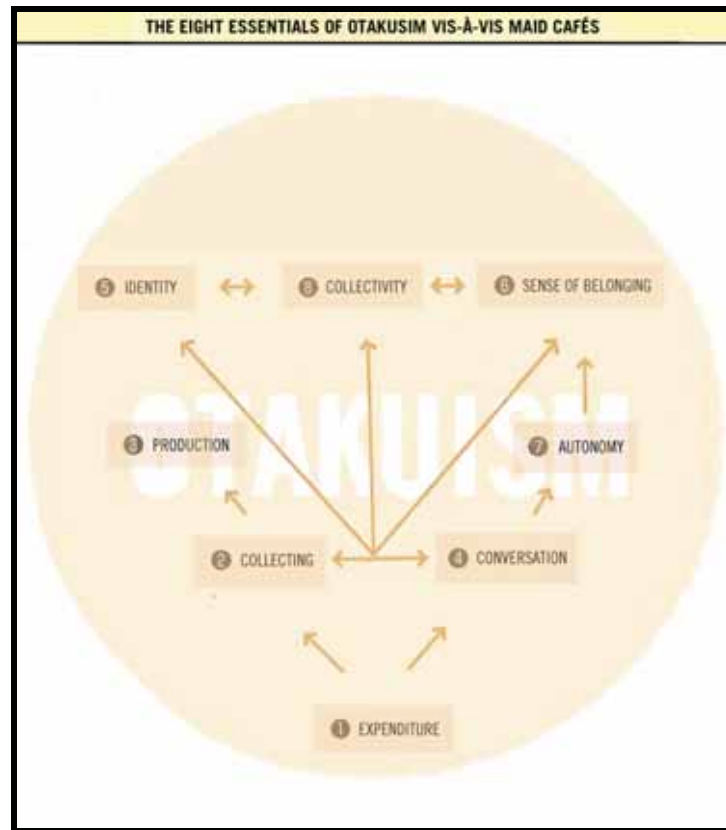
The *essentials* in the reconstructed chart now take the shape of an inverted pyramid. Effectively, *expenditure* is the bedrock of otakuism in maid cafés as it is the *essential* from which all are based. Additionally, in the original chart, Enomoto places the circle encapsulating 'otaku' at the centre of the construct. To accord with my definition in Chapter One Section 1.3 that otakuism refers to the sets of activites and practices within a cultural orientation (influenced by Lamarre's [2009] suggestion), I have enlarged the circle to envelope the entire pyramid. By placing it at the centre as Enomoto has done, he indicates that 'otaku' is a fixed type of person at the centre from which all *essentials* emanate. Rather, in the restructured chart 'otakusim' is a holistic phenomenon (the "whole" in the chronotope of *Reading and Interpretation*) that has the constituents of *essentials* that

produce space and power (the corresponding "parts" in the chronotope of *Reading and Interpretation*).

At this juncture I would also like to make a note on the structure of the discussion set out below in relation to the chart. Although I have retained the original number that Enomoto allocates to each *essential* in the chart (which he also fails to explain his reasoning for), I do not follow this order below. Instead, I begin the discussion from the bottom of the pyramid and proceed to the top, explaining how each regime of power between *essentials* and their constructed spaces work. In doing this I wish to demonstrate how the restructure of the chart also aligns with elements of the chronotope of *Power/Knowledge and Defamiliarisation.* Specifically, the chart correlates with Foucault's theorisation that power is not a centralised entity, and that as a result it is not something that is possessed but is rather something that people participate in at the microlevel of society (Sawicki 1991: 23). The "bottom up" structure, in opposition to a Marxist "top down" location of power, recognises that elements such as the body, sexuality, kinship, knowledge, and technology are integral to its formation (Sawicki 1991: 23). Clearly, as the results from Chapter Five indicate, space is also a vital element in these configurations of the regimes of power. I shall now explain how this works in the discussion that follows of each *element.*

Expenditure - money, time, effort (*shōhi - kinsen, jikan, tema*)

Regardless of which café type a venue might be (i.e. A, B, C, D or E), expenditure is the foundation of all activity and the production of all of Lefebvre's *spaces* in maid cafés. This correlates with Enomoto's claim that "the basis of every otaku's actions is expenditure" (2009: 21), and resonates with Mansvelt's insistence that "consumption takes

place in space…and space is produced through consumption" (2005: 56). It is for this reason, as I have explained above, that *expenditure* has been placed at the bottom of the restructured chart, since it is the gateway of otakuism vis-à-vis maid cafés and is the *essential* from which all other *essentials* stem. Power in this sense does have an element of ossification and inertness to it, since there is no *collecting* nor *conversation* (the next steps in the pyramid) without *expenditure* (and subsequently the regimes of power that form from these two *elements*). The expenditure of money, time and effort, however, may not be evenly spread across all café types, with the last two in particular varying according to the motivation and constructed *spatial practices* of each individual café goer.

Financial expenditure in all café types (with the exception of Type A) is significantly greater when compared to other non-cosplay related cafés, as the cost of food and beverages is inflated (despite the lower quality of food that is common especially in café Types C-E) and minimum orders (usually totalling ¥1000 per hour) are enforced. Cover charges (*sekiryō*), a feature of 40% of establishments (and which do not exist in standard cafés), contribute greatly to the financial expenditure of customers. While these vary (as explained in Chapter Five Section 5.14), an additional ¥500-¥700 on average increases the expenditure of visits to those establishments implementing such charges. Similarly, the financial expenditure of patrons is dictated in fixed terms by venues that operate with "systems" (*shisutemu*), a set price with a time limit and predetermined services. Beyond the financial obligation of these types of cover charges and minimum orders, the expenditure of money by customers is flexible and contingent on patrons' personal preferences, as well as their constructions of *lived* and *perceived* spaces. The purchase of maid goods (ranging from ¥500-¥40000) and à la carte services such as games (¥500-¥1000), *cheki* and associated costs (e.g. "designation fees" [*shimeiryō*] and personal

inscription tariffs) [¥350-¥1000], as well as photography sessions [¥1000+]), are optionally instrumental in the financial expenditure of customers.

The expenditure of both time and effort in maid cafés is intricately linked to money, although generally cannot be as controlled as equally as the expenditure of money (regardless of Type). What Enomoto terms "leisure time" (*tanoshindeiru jikan*), referring to the time actually spent engaging in an activity, particularly has definitive borders in maid cafés. This is because of the time limits that are stringently imposed on customers at almost 100% of cafés, which, depending on the establishment, ranges from sixty to ninety minutes. From the perspective of the venue, this time limit is to maximise its turnover, and to prevent customers from staying for extended periods of time without ordering. On the contrary, what Enomoto calls the "time before leisure time" (*tanoshimu mae no jikan*), varies from individual to individual and is not restricted by establishments. For example, in metropolitan Tokyo, where over 90% of maid cafés are situated in Akihabara, the commuting time on public transport of many customers to reach these establishments is a factor when considering what their *tanoshimu mae no jikan* is composed of. Queuing to gain entry into venues is another activity to reflect on when it comes to the expenditure of both time and effort for maid cafés patrons. At times when I visited on weekends, establishments such as *@home cafe Don Quijote* (Akihabara) and *Cafe Mai:lish* (Akihabara) had long queues to gain entry. While I never had to wait for such an extended period of time (the most was half an hour), there are reports (e.g. Galbraith 2009d) stating that entry into these establishments can take as long as two hours. Expenditure, thus, is the building block of otakuism vis-à-vis maid cafés, and is responsible for the development of all other *essentials.*

Collecting (*shūshū*)

The *essential* of *expenditure* of money and the *essential* of *collecting* have an unmistakeable partnership in relation to maid cafés. Indeed, as I explained above, both *collecting* and *conversation* are direct outcomes of *expenditure.* The act of collecting material possessions in venues is limited mainly to three elements: *cheki,* loyalty points, and maid goods. While the collection of *cheki* is normally restricted to café Types B, C, D, & E (some Type A cafés have them as a temporary service on event days), loyalty points and maid goods may be collected at all venue Types. Beyond these material goods, collecting may include the metaphysical, such as tastes, memories, experiences, and ideas. The construction of both the *lived spaces* and *perceived spaces* involved in these elements are salient in all café types. However, the collection of these is particularly intensified in Type A cafés, primarily due to the limited nature of material goods available to purchase.

As I highlighted in Chapter Five Section 5.7.2, one objective of *cheki* for customers is to use them for building (and sustaining) a collection of images. These could be of maids from one particular establishment (where photographs of maids in different poses or costumes [on event days] are collected), or of maids from several different cafés. The activity is not dissimilar to the activity of amassing collector cards (though *cheki* are never traded), and the sale of café-endorsed photo albums promote and encourage this *essential.* Rather than being traded, *cheki* collections operate as one impetus for conversation among customers (but generally not between maids and customers). It was not uncommon to observe male patrons displaying photo albums containing their collections to fellow customers, usually after ordering the service and in preparation of the shot. The conversational content that followed between customers may or may not have been centred on the actual collection itself. In the instances where it did become the focus, there was a

certain sense of esoterica attached to the activity, supporting Kitabayashi's view that *yūetsukan* ("a feeling of superiority") accompanies the practice of collecting. This particular act of collecting *cheki*, by functioning as a conduit for the generation of conversation, is thus a significant *spatial practice* in many maid cafés, and assists in forging three other *essentials: identity, collectivity,* and *sense of belonging* (as demonstrated in Fig 7.0 by the trident-like arrow formation stemming from the regimes of power between *collecting* and *conversation*). This is somewhat different to the collection of loyalty points and maid goods, which seem to operate at an individual level. While the overall objective of accumulating loyalty points is to obtain a reward (be it a discount or tangible object such as *buromaido*), this overall does not impact the *perceived space* of maid cafés. Likewise, while the collection of particular maid goods may forge a degree of *yūetsukan* with individual patrons, there was no evidence from my observations to suggest these catalysed *spatial practices* and subsequent formations of the *essentials* of *identity, collectivity,* and *sense of belonging.*

Production (*sōsaku*)

The practice of producing creative works, when considered in the terms of both Enomoto and Kitabayashi (Chapter One Section 1.4), is a relatively weak *essential* in relation to all maid cafés Types. From their perspective, creativity results in something that has a purely material existence. *Sōsaku*, thus, entails the production of physical objects, either as an alteration to an already existing form or as the construction of something tangible from zero. Viewed in this way solely as physical property, all maid café Types provide little opportunity for the *essential* of *sōsaku* to transpire. There are, however, principles of this *essential* (as described by Kitabayashi) that are manifest in café Types C,

D, and E. These are *orijinaruna hyōgen* (an expression of originality) and *jikoryū no kaishaku* (a reflection of personal style). *Cheki* and *kōkan nōto* are two elements that provide customers with opportunities to explore these principles. While patrons are never part of the creative process of *cheki* beyond physically posing in the shot (i.e. their input into writing the personal message or the procedure of decorating the photo is neither requested nor volunteered), the practice of collecting them is an original expression of their in-café experiences in a tangible form. This is why there is an arrow (i.e. regime of power) in the restructured chart of Fig 7.0, strengthening and reinforcing these type of regimes of power between *expenditue, collecting,* and *production.* Photo albums sold by establishments facilitate a type of creativity by enabling collectors to display them in a manner which reflects their own personal style (*orijinaruna hyōgen*). Similarly, as highlighted in Chapter Five Section 5.14, communication notes often contain elaborate pieces of artwork with manga style drawings. The messages relayed between maids and customers through this particular medium are also an expression of customers' *jikoryū no kaishaku,* while simultaneously forming a part of their *spatial practices.*

Conversing (*kenji*)

The act of conversing plays an important role in the construct of otakusim. While the *essential* of *conversation* is not a prominent feature of Type A, B & E cafés, it is the lynchpin of Types C & D, and since these form the highest percentage of all venue types, the overall reach of conversing as an *essential* is significant. Conversation inside maid cafés is simultaneously a *competence-based* and *performance-based spatial practice.* The production of Lefebvre's *spaces* created by the act of conversing is best conceptualised in two ways: firstly, as *maid-patron space,* in reference to the chat generated between

customers and maids, and secondly, as *homosocial space,* in reference to the conversation created amongst customers themselves. I will detail this *homosocial space* when I discuss the essentials of *identity, sense of belonging* and *collectivity* below.

The production of *maid-patron space* is demonstrated by the communicative spectrum of maid cafés vis-à-vis conversation (Chapter Six Fig 6.2). Chapter Six highlighted that conversation is generated at varying degrees in maid cafés, depending on the venue type - it can be high volume (Types C & D), low volume (Types A & E) or moderate volume (Type B). As an *essential* of otakuism then, conversation between maids and customers is most prevalent in Type C & D cafés (with it consistently being contingent on interactive elements such as *rakugaki, cheki* and games at the latter), with Type B also manifesting properties conducive to chat. Contrastingly, Type A & E cafés provide few opportunities for customers to converse with maids, despite the extremely high level of interactive elements available at Type E cafés.

Autonomy (*jiritsu)*

As with *production,* the otakuism *essential* of *autonomy* vis-à-vis maid cafés has limitations and is restricted mainly to Types C & D. Being autonomous, which Enomoto explains as a fundamental desire to live life on one's own terms, is enabled by the regimes of power and spaces created through the practice of *conversation* (as indicated by the arrow on the chart between the two *essentials*). This in turn leads to subsequent regimes and spaces that lead to a *sense of belonging.* Although, as Enomoto highlights, it is paradoxical that both *essentials* are simultaneously sought, *autonomy* in maid cafés is best viewed as the freedom of expression without the opprobrium of external bodies. In this sense then, *spatial practices* are produced by participants in *mise en scènes* who share a common

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interest, and those *perceived spaces* that are created function as safe havens where external censure is absent. The *sense of belonging* comes internally from cafés' communities by having a "common endeavour" and a common topic of conversation. With this expression of *autonomy* however, a desire "to be seen as a great or knowledgeable person by others" invariably develops (Enomoto 2009: 24) through the spaces generated by conversation.

Identity (*kyōkan*)

Sense of belonging (*kizoku*)

Collectivity (establishing a group and fraternising) (*shūdan*)

These final three *essentials* form the top of the inverted pyramid. The regimes of power created between them are fluid (as indicated by the double headed arrows), and there is considerable overlap in how they are developed in maid café *mise en scènes.* In analysing the interwoven nature of these *essentials,* Greenbie's (1988) conception of proxemic and dystemic public spaces in Japan is useful, since it relates to the production of Tétrault's (1998) *meta-spaces* and Kilian's (1998) power dynamics in space, both of which I discussed at length in Chapter Five Section 5.5. Greenbie, reflecting on the word "proxemic" (created by Hall [1966] to describe the use of space by humans through expressions of culture) as a public space, likens it to the adjective "tribal" in that it concerns groups within which people share "values, myths, and rituals that bind (them) together" (Greenbie 1988, cited in Wallin 1998: 101). In offering a counterpoint to this type of accessible public area where people with a preexisting relationship and common endeavours converge, Greenbie invents the notion of the "dystemic" space. This describes "the use of space for more impersonal, abstract relationships that enable members of various social groups to deal with each other amicably", and in essence is a "locale for a

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community of strangers" (Greenbie 1988, cited in Wallin 1998: 100). Wallin, by linking the proxemic/dystemic to the essentialist dichotomy of public/private, appears to miscontrue Greenbie's intentions in that he views these terms as necessary fixed constituents of space (1998: 101). Instead of considering both the "proxemic" and "dystemic" as symptomatic of an inexorable public/private binary, I regard them rather as levels of homosocial engagement and indexes of power within Tétrault's *meta-space.*

Meta-spaces enable the act of conversing, which in turn satisfies the "inclination towards collectivity" of café goers that Enomoto refers to (2009: 24). This is perhaps what makes *conversation* one of the most pivotal *essentials* in the construct of otakuism, and as Fig 7.0 demonstrates, regimes of power (i.e. the arrows) linked to four other *essentials* are manifest. The production of homosocial spaces via *collectivity*, however, might not always be contingent on the *meta-spaces* created through conversation with strangers, and the equilibrium of when it is and when it is not alters across all cafés Types. This is ultimately the distinction between proxemic and dystemic spaces, with the gender of the participants in the *mise en scène* a major factor in their construction. In Type A cafés, for example, where large groups of female patrons are present, proxemic spaces, based on preexisting relationships (i.e. the women who frequent these venues in groups already know each other) are most prevalent in this formation of homosocial *collectivity*. The same is also true for Type B & E cafés (in relation to women), which contrasts to *collectivity* in Type C & D cafés. This is because the production of these spaces is dystemic since no previous relationship exists between these male customers, and the regimes of power based on the *meta-space* facilitate conversation. As Kilian highlights (1998: 125), both forces work within the same *spaces* with a degree of tension, and the limited physical dimensions of most cafés enable the exclusivity of one-on-one conversations between maid and individual

customer to become accessible to fellow patrons. This then forges "communities of practice" (Gee 2003: 192) as fraternal activities become intensified, while a *sense of belonging* and *identity,* or more precisely *identifying* with others with the same interests are simultaneously made possible.

7.4 Summary of the Thesis

This study has explored the ways in which 'otakuism', *moe,* maid cafés and *meido* intersect vis-à-vis space and power. Chapter One detailed the rise of the maid persona as an iconic figure of contemporary Japanese popular culture, rivaling both the *shōjo* and geisha as potent feminine symbols. Despite this prominence of the *meido* in the popular imaginary and the sizeable number of maid cafés in Honshū, I emphasised how greatly understudied these phenomena were in academia, prompting a need for a study such as this. After formulating four research questions, I paid particular attention to the problematics of the term 'otaku', specifically the insistence to frame 'otaku' as a fixed type of person (usually based on gender, age and marital status), whose social ineptitude was a defining quality. With this in mind, I continued the chapter by highlighting how the study was informed theoretically by Lefebvre (1974, 1991) in relation to space, and by Kitabayashi (2005) and Enomoto (2009) in relation to 'otaku'. Here I suggested that 'otakuism' as a holistic activity (and the spaces and power dynamics that are subsequently constructed) was a more effective way of framing the phenomenon. This is also connected to the epistemological underpinnings of the study, which sit at the juncture of two 'chronotopes': *Reading and Interpretation* (influenced by Goffman [1959]) and *Power/Knowledge and Defamiliarisation* (influenced by Foucault [1977, 1990]).

Chapter Two further elucidated the problematics of the term 'otaku', and pinpointed three deficiencies with academic research on otakuology. Specifically, these are the homogenisation of otaku and maid cafés, the *a priori* assumption that there is a direct link between formations of identities and fan practices, and the pathologisation of fandom. I paralleled the monocultural view that many scholars have adopted towards otaku to the *nihonjinron* paradigm (essentialised theories about the homogeneity of "the Japanese"), and espoused a multi-stratified model of otakuology. With this endorsement I reiterated that specifically acknowledging the variations among maid cafés and their patrons would be a crucial part of this study.

In Chapter Three I highlighted ethnography as the methodology for the study, and outlined the processes that formed part of its six stages (i.e. gaining access, establishing a role, entering the field and employment of methods, getting out, returning to the field, coding and analysing). The chapter also discussed the problems and limitations concerning ethnography, including the need for it to be decolonised (attempted in this study by working within a "fantasyscape of Japan" model, rather than framing otaku and their activities as a "fantasy Japan") and the need for ethnographers to reflect on their roles as well as consider the validity of their research.

By providing an historical overview of servanthood and retracing representations of domestic servants in nineteenth century Britain, Chapter Four contextualised the contemporary Japanese maid persona. I examined the ways in which commercial sex in Japan evolved, paralleling the geisha teahouses of the Tokugawa period, the cafés staffed by *jokyū* during the "erotic grotesque nonsense" era, and contemporary hostess bars to maid cafés. These antecedents of maid cafés were sites of the commodification of conversation, female sexuality, and an eroticised form of male-female rapport. To accord with the

chronotope *Power/Knowledge and Defamiliarisation,* I attempted to answer the question of *What is a maid?,* suggesting that through these representations (whether historically accurate or not), she had come to symbolise dependence, servility, feminine passiveness, naïveté, (sexual) vulnerability, youthfulness, a diminished social status and domesticity. This, however, appeared to be challenged by how maid cafés operate, where the dominate male-subordinate female dichotomy is not a mandatory component and elements of Foucault's regimes of power become evident.

The results presented in Chapters Five and Six further illustrated this. This contradiction of a servile and passive appearance and the authority exercised by maids through the house rules of the establishment are a paradox on which the maid persona ultimately hinges. This, I suggest, is best captured by the power dynamics in the notion of *gyappu* - a rift or divide in how something appears and how it is actualised. The spaces that are constructed in order for these power dynamics to develop are pivotal, and in Chapter Six suggested a taxonomy of maid cafés that goes beyond the oversimplified categorisations of *iyashi-kei* and *moe-kei.* This taxonomy was demonstrated by five case analyses which display the heterogeneous qualities of space and power in different venues. This heterogeneity is ultimately contingent on the production of different "spaces" that are forged not only by the availability of interactive services (such as the taking of Polaroid shots [known as *cheki*], food art [*rakugaki*], board games and *moe* incantations), but also by the way in which conversations are generated in these "spaces". This act of conversing can be between maids and customers, or between customers themselves (made possible by the convergence of the "private" and the "public" in the limited geometric dimensions of establishments). Maid cafés thus form an important part in the construct of 'otakuism' and act as significant locales of homosociality.

7.5 Recommendations for Further Study

This study has highlighted the problematics with the homogenised term 'otaku' in academia, and for future studies I recommend that the heterogeneity and diversity of the phenomenon be acknowledged, rather than it being treating in a fixed and essentialised fashion. That is to say, a monocultural model has many pitfalls when dealing with studies related to otaku.

The limitations of this study were highlighted in Chapter One Section 1.5, and it from these that other recommendations for further study arise. Firstly, there were a number of establishments that were not considered 'maid cafés' for this study, despite often being categorised as such venues in local print media (such as *otamappu* and *boku no akiba mappu*). These include 'maid bars', 'maid *izakaya*' and 'maid *kyabakura*'. Similarly, many other maid-themed venues, which do not have food and drink at the core of their service but are classified as maid cafés nonetheless, exist in Japan but did not form a part of this study. Perhaps the most widespread of these are maid reflexology clinics, though other establishments, such as maid hair salons and a maid casino (in Akihabara) also exist. My recommendation for further study would be to investigate if there are any similarities between the development of the maid persona in maid cafés and these venues, if (and how) manifestations of *moe* are similarly present, and what the dominant *essentials* of otakuism are in these places. In a similar vein, a variety of cosplay venues have developed alongside maid cafés have also gone understudied. These are as vastly different as policewoman cafés, *miko* cafés, nun cafés, schoolgirl cafés, *dansō* cafés and stewardess cafés. The maid café's partnership with the butler café is especially worth exploring, and since these venues cater exclusively to female clientele, more research on women who identify as 'otaku' could be done.

In addition to these recommendations, the linguistic landscape of maid cafés requires further inquiry. In Chapter Five Section 5.4 I explored the changes in the degrees of politeness in relation to *gyappu*. These changes could further be examined by looking at the consistency of the transition from *sonkeigo* to *teneigo* and *futsugo* between maids and customers. Likewise, the type of language used between customers when conversing also merits attention.

Finally, the motivation for why some Japanese women seek employment in maid cafés is also a recommendation for further study. Regaling customers is undoubtedly an arduous task at times, and the minimum wage these women receive (most café websites that have 'position vacant' indicate the hourly wage is ¥800, with no tips) is unlikely their biggest incentive. Hence, the reasons for why they choose to perform these duties warrants research.

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APPENDIX 1
OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Name of café	
Address	
Contact number	
Website	
Opening hours	
Description of location	
Time of visit	
Date of visit	
Total number of customers present	Men: Women:
Total number of covers available	
Details of customer numbers	
How are most customers attired?	
How is the space organised? (i.e. décor, counters and tables)	
What was the ambience like?	
What was the greeting used when entering?	
What was said by the maid when exiting the café?	
How many maids on duty?	

How was the waitress attired?	Yes	No	Details
Pinafore			
Frills on pinafore?			
Stockings			
Head band			
Footwear			
Dress/skirt			

What duties were performed?	
Were any extras activities available? Eg. Board games, photo service	
Is there a time limit?	
Is there a cover charge?	
Is there a point card system?	
How does it work?	
What is the range of tastes?	
Are there any noticeable smells?	
Are they any forms of physical contact between anyone?	
Other relevant details	
Category	

APPENDIX 2
ENLARGED MAP OF HONSHŪ (EXCLUDING SURRROUNDING ISLANDS) INDICATING MAJOR CITIES (modified from Google maps)

APPENDIX 3
MAP OF HONSHŪ INDICATING REGIONS (modified from Google maps)
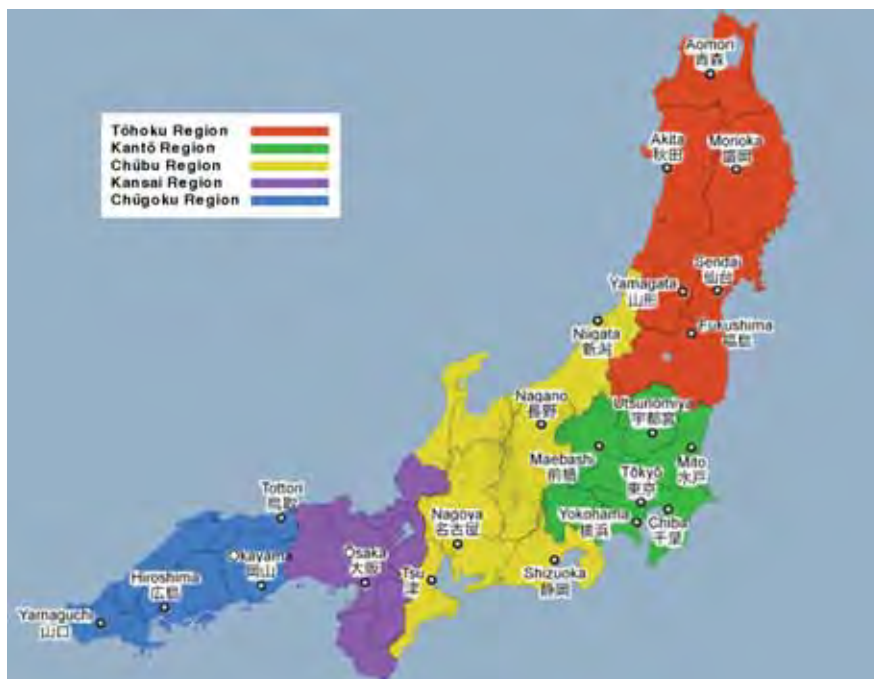
APPENDIX 4

MAP OF AKIHABARA INDICATING JR AKIHABARA STATION *DENKI-GAI* ELECTRIC TOWN EXIT (電気街口), *CHŪŌ DŌRI* (中央通り), AND DON QUIJOTE DEPARTMENT STORE (ドンキホーテ) [all indicated in purple, modified from Google maps].

APPENDIX 5
SAMPLE MAID CAFÉ FLYERS

1. *Maidolce,* Nipponbashi, Osaka.

2. *MaiDreamin,* Akihabara, Tokyo.

3. *Mia Cafe,* Akihabara, Tokyo.

4. *Maid Café Pinafore,* Akihabara, Tokyo.

APPENDIX 6
FRONT COVER AND INSIDE DETAILS OF (A) *BOKU NO AKIBA MAPPU* **(B)** *MOE MAPPU* **AND (C)** *EKUSUTORA OTAMAPPU*

(A)

(B)

(C)

APPENDIX 7
FLYER FOR *MEIDO-SAN NO KYŪJITSU* DATE TOURS AND GUIDE

|	Name of café	Alternative name	Address	Location
1	@ほぉ～むカフェ ドンキ店	@home Cafe Don Quijote	東京都千代田区外神田4-3-3 ドン・キホーテ秋葉原店5F	Akihabara, Tokyo
2	ミアカフェ	MIA Cafe (Maid In Angels' Cafe)	東京都千代田区外神田3-1-2 明治ビル1F (M2F)	Akihabara, Tokyo
3	Cafe Doll Tokyo	カフェ ドール東京	東京都千代田区外神田3-6-17フェニックスビル1F	Akihabara, Tokyo
4	Cafe Mai-lish	カフェメイリッシュ	東京都千代田区 神田佐久間町3-6-12円柱和スクエア2F	Akihabara, Tokyo
5	びなぅ～おあ1号店	Maid Cafe Pinafore 1	東京都千代田区 神田佐久間町1-19 山中ビル1F	Akihabara, Tokyo
6	Cure Maid Cafe	キュアメイドカフェ	東京都千代田区外神田3-15-5ジーストアアキバ/Y6F	Akihabara, Tokyo
7	Maid Station Cafe	メイドステーション・カフェ	東京都千代田区外神田3-10-12日加石油ビル4F	Akihabara, Tokyo
8	Cafe and Kitchen Cos-Cha	カフェ&キッチン コス-チャ	東京都千代田区外神田3-7-12イサミヤ第8ビル2F	Akihabara, Tokyo
9	MaiDreamin 本店	めいどりーみん 本店	東京都千代田区外神田3-16-17桂昔ビル6F	Akihabara, Tokyo
10	ひぅご家～メイドCafe・居酒屋～	Hiyokoya Maid Cafe and Bar	東京都台東区蔵1-27-29カオカビル1F	Akihabara, Tokyo
11	アキバ～T目劇場	-	東京都千代田区外神田1-5-7 ニュー東和ビル1F	Akihabara, Tokyo
12	JAM Akihabara	メイド喫茶ジャム秋葉原	東京都千代田区外神田3-2-13 山口ビルB1F	Akihabara, Tokyo
13	Royal Milk	ロイヤルミルク	東京都千代田区外神田3-10-12日加石油ビル2F	Akihabara, Tokyo
14	Filles メイド喫茶学院	フィーユ	東京都千代田区外神田3-16-17桂昔ビル3F	Akihabara, Tokyo
15	びなぅ～おあ2号店	Maid Cafe Pinafore 2	東京都千代田区外神田4-6-2 いすず゛ビル4F	Akihabara, Tokyo
16	ぽぽぷれ	Popopure Maid Cafe & Animation Studio	東京都千代田区外神田1-8-10	Akihabara, Tokyo
17	MaiDreamin せがんど	めいどりーみん せがんど	東京都千代田区外神田1-8-4銭谷ビル3F	Akihabara, Tokyo
18	Cafe la vie en rose	カフェ ラ・ビ・アン・ローズ	東京都千代田区外神田1-6-7 秋葉原センタービル3F	Akihabara, Tokyo
19	@home Cafe本店	@home Cafe main	東京都千代田区外神田1-11-4ミツウビル4F~7F	Akihabara, Tokyo
20	M-fact Cafe	エム・ファクトカフェ	東京都千代田区外神田1-6-7 秋葉原センタービル5F	Akihabara, Tokyo
21	ぽんでぃしぇり ふろれある	Pondichery Floreal	東京都千代田区外神田1-6-7 秋葉原センタービル4F	Akihabara, Tokyo
22	Granvania	ザ・グランヴァニア	東京都千代田区外神田1-4-3秋葉原電波会館 2F	Akihabara, Tokyo
23	Candyfruit Strawberry	キャンディフルーツ☆ストロベリィ	東京都千代田区外神田1-8-4銭谷ビル地下1階	Akihabara, Tokyo
24	Pinky Cafe	ピンキーカフェ	東京都千代田区外神田3-10-5 T & K AKIBA BLDG 3F	Akihabara, Tokyo
25	幻橙館	-	東京都千代田区外神田 3-2-7 石塚ビル1階	Akihabara, Tokyo
26	びなぅ～おあ3号店	Maid Cafe Pinafore 3	東京都千代田区外神田3-10-12日加石油ビル3F	Akihabara, Tokyo
27	MaiDreamin さぁど	めいどりーみん さぁど	東京都千代田区外神田4-4-2 共益外神田第一ビル4F	Akihabara, Tokyo
28	MaiDreamin 電気街口駅前店	-	東京都千代田区外神田1-14-1 宝田中央通りビル2F・3F	Akihabara, Tokyo
29	シャッツキステ	Schatzkiste	東京都千代田区外神田 6-5-11長谷川ビル1階	Akihabara, Tokyo
30	Hand Maid Cafe L⇔R	ハンドメイドカフェ エルアール	東京都千代田区外神田3-15-1 Akiba Place 6F	Akihabara, Tokyo
31	萌えコン@カフェ	-	東京都千代田区外神田 1-8-4 銭谷ビル4階・5階	Akihabara, Tokyo
32	cafe月夜のサアカス	Cirque de la Lune	東京都台東区上野 5-1-6 ヤマトビルB1	Akihabara, Tokyo
33	いちごみるく	-	東京都渋谷区宇田川町13-9 KN渋谷2ビル8F	Shibuya, Tokyo
34	メイドのカンづめ	-	東京都町田市原町田6-8-13 サニーサイドビル B1F	Machida, Tokyo
35	MaiDreamin サンシャイン通り	-	東京都豊島区東池袋1-12-11 朝日会館ビル4F・5F	Ikebukuro, Tokyo
36	Wonder Parlour Cafe	-	東京都豊島区東池袋3-9-15	Ikebukuro, Tokyo
37	Honey Honey	ハニハニ	神奈川県横浜市西区岡野1-1-19庄司ビル2F	Yokohama, Kanagawa
38	Dear Cafe	-	神奈川県横浜市西区岡野町1-6-29 高橋ビル2階	Yokohama, Kanagawa

39	満足家	-	神奈川県横須賀市若松町1丁目15 濱田ビル1F	Yokosuka, Kanagawa
40	Sweet Tease	-	大阪府大阪市浪速区日本橋5-11-19ファイブ日本橋1F	Nipponbashi, Osaka
41	Cafe & Bar Arcadia	アルカディア	大阪府大阪市浪速区日本橋4丁目16-6	Nipponbashi, Osaka
42	フロンティア	Frontier	大阪府大阪市浪速区日本橋東1-4-15ルミエールジェムラ1F	Nipponbashi, Osaka
43	Cafe AZ	-	大阪市浪速区日本橋5-12-5 KS日本橋ビル6F	Nipponbashi, Osaka
44	e+twinkle-Zwei	Eトゥインクル・ツヴァイ	大阪府大阪市浪速区日本橋西1-1-18	Nipponbashi, Osaka
45	Candy Magic	-	大阪府大阪市浪速区日本橋3-8-24	Nipponbashi, Osaka
46	Maid Cafe Honey*Channel	-	大阪府大阪市浪速区日本橋西1-4-8-1	Nipponbashi, Osaka
47	Poco~Lv.1	ポコスターレベル1	大阪府大阪市中央区日本橋2-14-16 CLIO COURT難波EAST 1階	Nipponbashi, Osaka
48	Maid In Cafe	メイド喫茶メイドインカフェ	大阪府大阪市浪速区日本橋西1-7-27レディースグリーンガーデンB1F	Nipponbashi, Osaka
49	メイパ	-	大阪府大阪市浪速区日本橋5-18-24 日本橋Vビル9F	Nipponbashi, Osaka
50	Café Doll	カフェ ドール大阪	大阪府大阪市浪速区日本橋5-4-20 3F	Nipponbashi, Osaka
51	Maidolce	めいどるちぇ	大阪府大阪市浪速区日本橋5丁目1-15	Nipponbashi, Osaka
52	Cafe Andante	アンダンテ	大阪府大阪市浪速区日本橋4丁目3-14	Nipponbashi, Osaka
53	Mel Cafe	メルカフェ	大阪府大阪市浪速区日本橋4丁目9-9生玉ビル1F	Nipponbashi, Osaka
54	Cafe de ポルチ	Café de Porte/カフェ・ド・ポルチ	大阪府大阪市浪速区日本橋4-14-4	Nipponbashi, Osaka
55	学食アフィリアキッチンズ	Afilia Kitchen's & Café	大阪府大阪市浪速区日本橋4-7-26	Nipponbashi, Osaka
56	Milkcafe	-	大阪府大阪市浪速区日本橋5丁目18-21カービット日本橋2F	Nipponbashi, Osaka
57	CCOちゃ	-	大阪府大阪市浪速区難波中2-4-8	Namba, Osaka
58	Moe & Shandon	メイド喫茶モエシャンドン	大阪府大阪市中央区難波千日前14-14 2F	Namba, Osaka
59	メイドカフェ e-maid	-	大阪府大阪市浪速区難波中2-3-6	Namba, Osaka
60	めいどりいむ	Maidream	大阪府大阪市浪速区難波中2-4-8アインエステートビル5F	Namba, Osaka
61	まーめいど梅田店	-	大阪府大阪市北区神山町9-6 カーサ梅田2F	Umeda, Osaka
62	まーめいど心斎橋店	-	大阪府大阪市中央区宗右衛門町2-16アンドラビル2F	Shinsaibashi, Osaka
63	まーめいど京橋店	-	大阪府大阪市都島区東野田町3-7-15野村ビル5F	Kyobashi, Osaka
64	メイド喫茶 Fairytale	-	宮城県仙台市青葉区1番町2丁目7番3号サンモール日泉ビル B1F	Sendai, Miyagi
65	Cafe de R	カフェドアール	埼玉県さいたま市大宮区宮町2-115大畑ビル2F	Omiya, Saitama
66	Maidoll	メイドール	静岡県静岡市葵区伝馬町9-15リベルテ平野2F	Shizuoka, Shizuoka
67	M's Melody	エムズメロディ	愛知県名古屋市中区大須3-12-35グッドウィルモール地下1階	Nagoya, Aichi
68	Maid Cafe Charlotte	メイドカフェしゃるろっと	岡山県岡山市表町3丁目7-15 2F	Okayama, Okayama
69	めいぷりてい広島駅前店	Maypretty	広島県広島市南区松原町6-1-2F	Hiroshima, Hiroshima
70	めいぷりてい大手町店	Maypretty	広島県広島市中区大手町1丁目5-31	Hiroshima, Hiroshima
71	Candypop Cafe	-	和歌山県和歌山市美園町5丁目11-4和相商事駅前ビル2F	Wakayama, Wakayama
72	Maid Cafe 蘭	~Rel~	長野県長野市大字南長野新田町1464-3	Nagano, Nagano
73	After School Cafe	-	新潟市中央区東大通1丁目9-4 VISIONARビル 3F	Niigata, Niigata

#	Name of café	Website	Phone No.	Opening Hours
1	@ほぉ〜むカフェ ドンキ店	http://www.cafe-athome.com/	03-3254-7878	11:30 - 22:00 WD, 10:30 - 22:00 WE
2	ミア・カフェ	http://www.mia-cafe.com/	03-5818-3940	12:00 - 22:00 WD, 11:00 - 22:00 WE
3	Cafe Doll Tokyo	http://cafedolltokyo.com/top.html	03-5294-8811	12:00 - 21:30 M-Th, 12:00 - 23:00 F, 11:00 - 23:00 Sat, 11:00 - 21:30 Sun
4	Cafe Mai:lish	http://www.mailish.jp/	03-5289-7310	11:00 - 22:00
5	ぴなふぉぁ1号店	http://pinafore.livedoor.biz/	03-5295-0123	11:00 - 22:00
6	Cure Maid Cafe	http://www.curemaid.jp/	03-3258-3161	11:00 - 20:00 M-Th, 11:00 - 22:00 F-Sat, 11:00-19:00 Sun
7	Maid Station Cafe	http://maid-station.com/	03-3253-0033	12:00 - 22:00
8	Cafe and Kitchen Cos-Cha	http://www.cos-cha.com/	03-3253-4560	12:00 - 23:00 M-F, 11:00 - 23:00 Sat, 11:00-22:00 Sun
9	MaiDreamin 本店	http://maidreamin.com/	03-6905-7735	11:30 - 22:00 M-W, 11:30 - 23:00 Th-F, 10:30 - 23:00 Sat, 10:30 - 22:00 Sun
10	ひよこ家〜メイドCafe・居酒屋〜	http://www.hiyokoya.net/	03-5812-5909	12:00 - 15:00, 17:00 - 22:00 (- 23:00 F & Sat)
11	アキバ一丁目劇場	http://www.maidolcafe.com/	03-3254-3911	12:00 - 21:30 WD, 11:00 - 21:30 WE
12	JAM Akihabara	http://www.jam-akiba.com	03-3253-1855	12:00 - 23:00
13	Royal Milk	http://www.r-milk.com/	03-3253-7858	12:00 - 22:00
14	Filles メイド喫茶学院	http://filles.run.buttobi.net/	03-5209-0210	11:00 - 21:00 WD & Sun, 11:00 - 22:00 Sat
15	ぴなふぉぁ2号店	http://pinafore.livedoor.biz/	03-6206-8510	12:00 - 22:00
16	ほぼぷれ	http://www.popopure.com/maid/	03-3252-8599	11:00 - 21:00
17	MaiDreamin せかんど	http://maidreamin.com/	03-6206-9983	11:30 - 22:00 M-W, 11:30 - 23:00 Th-F, 10:30 - 23:00 Sat & Sun
18	Cafe la vie en rose	http://cafe-lavieenrose.sunnyday.jp/	unlisted	11:00 - 21:00
19	@ほぉ〜むカフェ 本店	http://www.cafe-athome.com/	03-3255-2808	12:30 - 22:00 WD, 11:30 - 22:00 WE
20	M-fact Cafe	http://m-fact.net/	03-6320-0052	12:00 - 21:30
21	ぽんでぃしぇり ふろれある	http://www.pondichery-floreal.jp/	03-6411-0507	11:00 - 23:00 M-Th & Sun, 11:00 – 05:00 F & Sat
22	Granvania	http://the-granvania.ciao.jp/index.htm	03-3251-5359	11:00 - 23:00 M-Th & Sun, 11:00 - 05:00 F-Sat
23	Candyfruit Strawberry	http://candyfruit-strawberry.com/	04-2724-1253	12:00 - 20:00 M-Th, 12:00 - 21:00 F-Sun
24	Pinky Cafe	http://www.pinkycafe.com/	03-3254-6777	12:00 - 22:00
25	幻橙館	http://gentoukan.com/	06-6646-5523	12:00 - 23:00
26	ぴなふぉぁ3号店	http://pinafore.jp/	03-6206-8605	12:00 - 22:00
27	MaiDreamin さぁど	http://maidreamin.com/	06-6355-3333	11:30 - 22:00 M-W, 11:30 - 23:00 Th-F, 10:30 - 23:00 Sat, 10:30 - 22:00 Sun
28	MaiDreamin 電気街口駅前店	http://maidreamin.com/	06-6211-2577	11:30 - 22:00 M-W, 11:30 - 23:00 Th-F, 10:30 - 23:00 Sat, 10:30 - 22:00 Sun
29	シャッツキステ	http://schatz-kiste.net/	048-607-7700	12:00 - 22:00
30	Hand Maid Cafe L⇔R	http://www.handmaid-cafe.jp/	unlisted	12:00 - 22:00
31	萌えコン@カフェ	http://moekoncafe.com/	unlisted	11:00 - 23:00
32	cafe月夜のサアカス	http://tukiyo.jp/index.html	03-3831-6114	11:30 - 22:00 WD, 12:00 - 22:00 WE
33	いちごみるく	http://ichigomilk.sakura.ne.jp	03-3780-9960	11:00 - 23:00
34	メイドのカンづめ	http://www.kanzumaido.com	04-2724-1253	12:00 - 05:00
35	MaiDreamin サンシャイン通り	http://maidreamin.com/	022-224-9788	11:30 - 22:00 M-W, 11:30 - 23:00 Th-F, 10:30 - 23:00 Sat, 10:30 - 22:00 Sun
36	Wonder Parlour Cafe	http://wonder-parlour.com/	03-3989-8224	14:00 - 22:00 WD, 12:00 - 22:00 WE
37	Honey Honey	http://www.honey2.jp/	045-323-0123	11:00 - 23:00
38	Dear Cafe	http://dear-cafe.jp/index.php	045-312-0038	12:00 - 22:30 WD, 12:00 - 22:30 WE

#	Name	URL	Phone	Hours
39	満足家	http://moe-maid.com/	046-824-3077	14:00 - 20:00
40	Sweet Tease	http://s-tease.com/	06-6643-1243	12:00 - 21:00 M-Th, 12:00 - 22:00 F-Sun (closed every 1st & 3rd W)
41	Cafe & Bar Arcadia	http://animesong-cafe.com/	06-6647-6030	12:00 - 22:00
42	フロンティア	http://frontier7.jp/m/	06-6643-9545	15:00 - 22:00 WD, 11:00 - 22:00 WE
43	Cafe AZ	http://ameblo.jp/cafe-az/	06-5586-6626	?
44	e★twinkle-Zwei	http://d.hatena.ne.jp/etwinkle/	06-6643-7887	11:00 - 22:00
45	Candy Magic	http://candy-magic.jp/	?	?
46	Maid Cafe Honey*Channel	http://honeychannel.jp/	06-6633-8820	12:00 - 22:00
47	Poco☆Lv.1	http://www.pocostar.com/	06-6643-6788	11:00 - 22:00
48	Maid In Cafe	http://www.maid-in-cafe.com/	06-6646-0236	12:00 - 23:00 WD, 11:00 - 22:30 WE (closed W)
49	メイパ	http://www.ham9.jp/i.cfm?i=meipa	06-6641-2005	13:00 - 22:00 (closed W)
50	Café Doll	http://www.cafedoll.com/	06-6631-8829	11:00 - 22:00 (closed W)
51	Maidolce	http://www.maidolce.com/	06-4396-8088	11:00 - 23:00 WD, 10:00 - 23:00 WE
52	Cafe Andante	http://cafe-andante.raindrop.jp/	06-6631-3111	12:00 - 21:00
53	Mel Cafe	http://www.mel-cafe.com/	06-6641-8555	12:00 - 21:00 WD, 11:00 - 22:00 WE
54	Cafe de ポルカ	http://cafedeporte.jugem.jp/	06-6634-1833	11:30 - 22:00 WD, 11:00 - 22:00 WE
55	学食アフィリアキッチンズ	http://afilia.jp/kitchens/	06-6634-5600	15:30 - 22:30 WD, 11:00 - 22:30 WE
56	Milkcafe	http://milk.penne.jp/	06-6646-5523	15:00 - 23:00 M-Th & Sun, 15:00 - 23:30 F-Sat
57	ＣＣＯちゃ	http://www.ccocha.com/	06-6644-5028	15:00 - 20:30 WD, 11:00 - 20:30 WE (closed every 2nd & 4th Tue)
58	Moe & Shandon	http://moeshandon.com/	06-6634-2266	14:00 - 22:00 (closed W)
59	メイドカフェ e-maid	http://e-maid.net	06-6649-0620	11:00 - 22:00
60	めいどりぃむ	http://www2.plala.or.jp/mai-dream/	06-6649-7759	11:00 - 22:00 WD, 10:00 - 22:00 WE
61	まーめいど梅田店	http://www.moebar.com/	06-6363-4555	11:00 - 23:00 M-Th & Sun, 11:00 - 05:00 F-Sat
62	まーめいど心斎橋店	http://www.moebar.com/	06-6355-3333	11:00 - 23:00 M-Th & Sun, 11:00 - 05:00 F-Sat
63	まーめいど京橋店	http://www.moebar.com/	06-6211-2577	11:00 - 23:00 M-Th & Sun, 11:00 - 05:00 F-Sat
64	メイド喫茶 Fairytale	http://fairy-tale.cc/	022-224-9788	11:00 - 20:00
65	Cafe de R	http://www.cafede-r.com/	048-607-7700	12:00 - 22:00
66	Maidoll	http://www.maidoll.jp/	054-205-8321	12:00 - 22:00 (closed Tue)
67	M's Melody	http://www.ms-melody.com/	052-249-9876	11:00 - 19:30 F-M (closed Tue-Thur)
68	Maid Cafe Charlotte	http://okayama-charlotte.jp/main.html	unlisted	11:00 - 20:00 (closed Tue)
69	めいぷりてぃ広島駅前店	http://www.maypretty.com/	082-261-6768	11:30 - 22:30 (-21:00 Sun)
70	めいぷりてぃ大手町店	http://www.maypretty.com/	082-249-1819	11:30 - 22:30 (-21:00 Sun)
71	Candypop Cafe	http://www.candypop.info/cafe/	050-1075-3743	15:00 - 22:00 (closed Tue)
72	Maid Cafe 麗	http://www.meido-rei.com/	026-226-6388	16:00 - 21:00 M-Sat, 13:00 - 19:00 Sun (closed Tue)
73	After School Cafe	http://www.afterschoolcafe.net/	082-249-1819	15:00 - 22:00 Tue-Th, 15:00 - 23:00 F-Sat, 11:00 - 20:00 Sun

APPENDIX 9
LIST OF CAFÉS BASED ON SUGGESTED TAXONOMY

Type A	Type B	Type C	Type D	Type E
12.3%	**19.2%**	**46.6%**	**13.7%**	**8.2%**
9/73	**14/73**	**35/73**	**10/73**	**6/73**
MilkCafe *M's Melody* *E-maid* *Cure Maid* *Granvania* *Hiyokoya* *Shatzkiste* *Tsuki no sākasu* *Wonder Parlour*	*MIA Cafe* *Cafe Mai:lish* *JAM Akihabara* *Gentōkan* *Sweet Tease* *Arcadia* *E twinkle-Zwei* *Candy Magic* *Honey*Channel* *Cafe Andante* *Mel Cafe* *Fairytale* *Maypretty 1* *Maypretty 2*	*Cafe Doll Tokyo* *Pinafore 1* *Cos Cha* *Royal Milk* *Pinafore 2* *Popopure* *La Vie en Rose* *M-Fact* *Pondicherry* *Pinafore 3* *Hand Maid* *Ichigo Miruku* *Kanzume* *Honey Honey* *Dear Cafe* *Manzokuya* *Frontier* *Cafe AZ* *Poco Star* *Cafe de Porte* *Maid in Cafe* *CafeDoll Osaka* *Maidolce* *Afilia Kitchen's* *CCOcha* *Maidream* *Mermaid Umeda* *Mermaid Sinsaibasi* *Mermaid Kyōbashi* *Cafe de R* *Maidoll* *Maid Cafe Charlotte* *Candypop Cafe* *Maid Cafe Rei*	*Akiba Ichōme* *MaiDreamin 2* *Candyfruits* *Filles* *Moekon@Cafe* *Maid Station* *MaiDreamin Ike.* *Meipa* *Moe et Shandon* *After School*	*MaiDreamin 3* *MaidDreamin 4* *@home Donki* *@home main* *MaiDreamin 1* *Pinky Cafe*