

**The Shifts in Japanese Women's
Perceptions of Beauty and Beautification Practices**

By

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ABSTRACT

There have been very few studies of shifts in perceptions of women's beauty and beautification practices. This thesis reports on a study of such shifts among Japanese women in Canada. The study used a qualitative method of Institutional Ethnography, based on ten interviews conducted between 2001 and 2002 with Japanese women who were born and raised in Japan and have resided in Canada for a minimum of two years. While these Japanese women's perceptions of what beauty is have changed little, they have lessened beautification practices since they came to Canada. The complex perceptions and practices surrounding beauty and beautification are associated with multiple interlocking and intersecting structures which organize pressures, expectations and advantages for women to pursue standards of beauty. In turn, women's perceptions and practices help to maintain and reproduce these structures. By accepting the status quo, women allow problems of gender inequality and White supremacy to remain.

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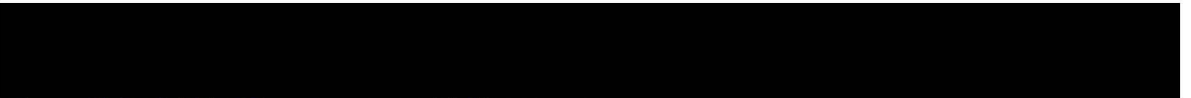

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the nine women that took time out of their busy lives in order to share with me their experiences.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Upon close analysis of perceptions of women's beauty and beautification practices, it becomes apparent that both men and women are enamoured with women's beauty. This phenomenon has seeped into every facet of society and has great bearing on social life from the private to the public and from economics to politics. Standards of beauty are, indeed embedded in the very social fabric of every society. It is astonishing that beauty standards which are socially constructed have such far reaching effects.

Since I came to Canada from Japan, I have changed the way I beautify myself and the way I think about my appearance. I have been asking questions of myself about women's beauty which I had never asked or considered before. Why did I stop reading fashion magazines? Why do I no longer beautify myself? Why do I envy the faces and body structures of my Canadian friends? Why do I have similar beauty perceptions as my Canadian friends even though we grew up in different countries? While trying to find the answers for these questions, I noticed that these questions were not private or subjective matters to dismiss.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore perceptions of women's beauty and self-beautification practices to provide analysis of how the lives of Japanese women in Canada are socially organized by using one of the qualitative methods of Institutional Ethnography. In doing so, I hope to contribute to the sociological study of racialized women's beauty in the context of various social structures. As Sewell (1992) said:

Structures are constituted by mutually sustaining cultural schemas and sets of resources that empower and constrain social action and tend to be reproduced by that action. Agents are empowered by structures, both by the knowledge of cultural schemas that enables them to mobilize resources and by the access to resources that enables them to enact schemas (27).

Standards of beauty in North America are an example of what Sewell calls “cultural schemas.” They are Euro-centric. Facial features of these standards are similar to typical European features such as big eyes with double eyelids, tall-slim nose, and thin lips. Yet Asians often have slanted eyes with single eyelids, and Africans often have a wide nose with thick lips. Thus, appearances of Asian and African women are often very different from the prevailing standards in the West. These standards are racialized and contribute to maintain White supremacy in the realm of beauty. Because women with appearances which are close to the standards often have more opportunities for employment and chances to attract the opposite sex, the standards of beauty in North America often disadvantage Asian and African North American women. As new residents in Canada, Japanese women could bring their original standards of beauty and could question and challenge North American standards of beauty.

It is increasingly important for women to study this subject and understand that by accepting prevailing standards of beauty, women help to reproduce problems of White supremacy regarding beauty and gender inequality. Even though these standards have largely affected women’s lives, there are not many scholarly works that focus on this subject as if it is of little importance. Smith (1993) is one of the few scholars who have analyzed racialized standards of beauty in the West. In a world whose population is increasingly mobile, these dominant standards will continue to affect larger and larger populations of women. As the rate of migration increases as it has in North America,

many women will suffer from these racialized standards in every aspect of their lives financially, socially and mentally. In addition, as women age they suffer from prevailing standards which value youth. As long as women believe in the idea that beauty is important for women, they will continue to accept discrimination and insults as valid assessment. This study is meant to encourage women to question these oppressive standards.

Overview

African North Americans live in a society where people of European origin dominate, and Japanese people live in a society where Japanese people dominate. Although they do not live in similar environments, both groups currently share similar beauty standards which value features similar to European features. African Americans have complex history of accepting Western standards of beauty and also resisting them in order to promote their self-esteem and solidarity. Yet, their efforts have mostly failed. On the other hand, Japanese society as a whole has never resisted Westernization of standards of beauty even though Japan had largely different concepts of beauty before Westernization. Through interviewing ten Japanese women and analysing the shifts in their perceptions of beauty and beautification practices from their standpoints, I noticed that their reasons for shifting or for not shifting were more complex than just resistance. Since they came to Canada, they have not shifted the idea of what type of women they think is beautiful because they had already internalized Westernized standards of beauty in Japan. Most of my interviewees accepted Western standards of beauty as they were biologically constructed. Yet, These women have shifted their beautification practices

because they noticed that there were differences between Japan and Canada in degree of expectations, pressures, rewards, advantages, and disadvantages for beautification practices. All of them have scrutinized and made decisions to lessen beautification practices in Canada even though how much and how often they beautify themselves varies.

These women's perceptions and practices are socially organized in their everyday lives by social structures. Even though these women are intelligent and creative, the intertwined multiple structures of racism, capitalism and gender relations in each country put women in a position to willingly or unwillingly beautify themselves. In turn, these women's beautification practices reproduce structures. It is possible but difficult for women to resist these structures because women are encouraged, pressured and rewarded. Through accepting prevailing beauty standards, women reproduce problems of gender inequality and White supremacy regarding beauty and maintain the status quo.

Outline

Because research on beauty concepts and beautification practices across racial lines has mostly been confined to African Americans, I report it in Chapter Two. I outline the complex history of African-American women's beauty as well as their perceptions of beauty and beautification practices. I discuss the effects of historical events that have shaped those women's beauty concepts and practices. Some of the important events in this context are: Civil Right movements during the twentieth century. In addition, I illustrate reasons why their resistance has little effect.

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In Chapter Three, the transformation of unique Japanese beauty concepts to Westernized standards since the nineteenth century is described. I also explain how current Japanese women are exposed to the Westernized concepts of beauty.

In Chapter Four, I explain that the chosen methodology is more useful/effective for my study than other methodologies because it is important to examine women's everyday lives and to find out how they are systematically organized. I clarify why I chose the respondents for my study. Problems with Japanese culture and language during interviews are illustrated and the settings/places for interviews are depicted. The procedure for analyzing data is outlined.

In Chapter Five, the ten women that I interviewed for this study are introduced and their experiences regarding beautification practices and perceptions of beauty are described. Their reactions to Euro-standards of beauty in the Japanese mass media are reported. I focus on how these Japanese women perceive a disproportionate number of White people in TV advertisements and fashion magazines in Japan, and what kind of facial features these Japanese women prefer. I then report what they think about the advantages for beautiful women in Japan and Canada, mostly concerning employment opportunities and popularity among men. I report the self-evaluation of beauty in which Canadian or Japanese people evaluate their beauty more highly, and the shifts in beautification practices since they came to Canada which is the essential point of this chapter.

In conclusion, I examine more closely the respondents to propose reasons why, although the idea of what type of women they think beautiful has not shifted, their self-beautifications practices have. I explain how Japanese women's everyday lives are

influenced by social structures. Lastly, I bring to attention suggested areas for further research.

Chapter 2:

A Historical Overview of African American Women's Beautification Practices

African American women have been struggling with prevailing standards of beauty in North America. While beautification practices helped African American women to gain financial stability, these practices hindered their solidarity to fight against discrimination. Since elements of the standards are Euro-centric, such as whiter skin, slim nose and thin lips, African American women have been excluded from beauty competitions. Because women who are close to the standards have been rewarded, African American women have often had disadvantages. In history, African American women have both conformed to and resisted standards of beauty. I will illustrate these contradictions with a historical overview.

I focused on African-American historical background of their perceptions of beauty and beautification practices because there was a lack of scholarly documents on Asian American women's history of beauty concepts.

For African-American women, self-beautification practices came to be important as a strategy for coping with the economic and social strains of living in a racist society. Even after the Civil War (1861-1865), African Americans in the South suffered from unemployment, economic difficulty and violence from people of European origin (Jones, 1985; Giddings, 1984). According to Giddings (1984), in the North, a laundress or cook could earn \$1.5 to \$2 a day plus carfare and meals but in the South it took a week to earn the same amount of money in the 1910s. Therefore, many sought escape from the

South to the North. At the same time, factory owners in the Northern states wanted to hire African American workers. In order to be employed and maintain their economic independence, numbers of African American women tried to conform to Euro-centric standards of beauty by bleaching¹ their faces, putting powder on to have lighter complexion and straightening their hair (Peiss, 1998). This conduct was necessary for African American women because many Euro American owners only hired African American women with lighter complexion and straightened hair. Thus, lighter skin complexions and straightened hair meant more work opportunities and a better social life. Moreover, African-American men also judged women on the basis of Euro-centric standards of beauty (Peiss, 1998; Mama, 1995). This meant that White emulation was necessary in order to attract men.

Some African-American leaders encouraged African American women to conform to the standards of beauty in order to enhance the good images of African American women (Peiss, 1998). In the beginning of the twentieth century, these leaders tried to promote solidarity and their pride by creating new images of beautiful African-American women and denying the negative stereotypes of darker skinned kinky haired black women (Peiss, 1998). (See Appendix 1) They tried to show the universal beauty of Blackness to American society. Ironically the ideal woman's feature was quite similar to that of Euro-American women. Therefore, the more these leaders sought universal African American beauty, the more they failed to accept the uniqueness of African American women's appearances. Consequently, this quest for universal African American beauty helped maintain the supremacy of White-centric standards of beauty.

Moreover, many African-American women suffered from anxiety and internal conflict due to the necessity of conformity to the standards of beauty and the necessity to resist for African American solidarity. After the Civil War, skin color and hair texture became racial and political issues (Peiss, 1998). According to Peiss (1998), new movements for African American solidarity increased in the 1910s and 1920s. During this period, Black journals, such as Crusader and The Messenger blamed women who straightened hair, bleached or put powder on their faces in order to establish new aesthetic values by affirming the beauty of dark-skinned women with traditional hair. These magazines also blamed the beauty industry. However, in these publications, while writers often blamed black women for pursuing White aesthetic values, they allowed African American entrepreneurs to advertise many beauty products whose sole purpose was to enhance the beauty of African American women by making them look whiter (Peiss, 1998). (See Appendix 2) Advertisers tried to defend their products and themselves by creating a distinction between emulating White-aesthetics and beautifying, and they encouraged beautifying (Peiss, 1998). They insisted on a universal African American image which was similar to Euro-centric standards of beauty. In the 1920s, cosmetics and toiletries, including bleaching and straighteners, occupied thirty to forty percent of African American newspaper advertisements and in a few cases as much as fifty percent (Peiss, 1998). In the same decade, bleach creams and white powder advertisements of Euro-American owned companies emphasized social climbing and Anglo-Saxon superiority (Peiss, 1998). There were advertisements for both Euro and African Americans but these products were largely sold to African American women. On the

other hand, by the mid 1920s, sun-tanning became acceptable for Euro-American women (Peiss, 1998). Yet, this tendency did not bring about acceptance of dark skinned people.

However, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, use of hair straighteners and face bleach by African Americans declined as many associated it with racism. Social movements in the 1960s made African American women and men rethink and recategorize their aesthetics as a political issue. Euro-centric standards of beauty were challenged by the idea of the counter culture that Black is beautiful. African American men began to admire the beauty of African American women without hair straightening. From the late 1960s to 1970s, most African American men and women accepted Afro Hair styles. Yet, accepting Afro hair styles did not mean that African American women stopped beautifying or lost their interests to attract men. The beauty industry continued to sell products to straighten their hair and also to maintain Afro hair. Women with Afro hair often tried to attract men with the use of cosmetics and fashion. Under increasing pressures from anti-racist African Americans, composition of the mass media changed. Until the late 1960s, models with blonde hair and light skin were mainly used in the mainstream fashion magazines (Peiss, 1998). In 1974, the first black model appeared on the cover of Vogue, one of the mainstream fashion magazines.

However, according to Lakoff and Scherr (1984), as anti-racist movements became weaker, this affirmation of blackness became weaker. Hence, the Afro, which was a physical manifestation and symbol of African American resistance to White supremacy and White aesthetics, was absorbed and commodified by the fashion and beauty industries that the Afro was meant to resist (Walker, 2001). Commodification of the Afro weakened the political meaning of Afro hair. The idea of the counter culture that Black is

beautiful has also declined. Many African American women resumed straightening their hair and having lip reduction operations. While many African American women pursued prevailing standards of beauty to be accepted in society, these women also felt guilty by doing so. Their feelings were torn between wanting to resist and wanting to accept standards of beauty. Consequently, some of them suffered from self-hatred (Lakoff & Scherr, 1984). This political movement in 1960s and 1970s at least helped broaden the western standards of beauty, and consequently, some ethnic women came to be accepted as exotic beauties even though Euro-centric characteristics are still the dominant ideal of beauty publicly admired in contemporary society (Lakoff & Scherr, 1984).

Conclusion

The history of racialized women's perceptions of beauty and self-beautification practices in the West is very complex. These practices and perceptions have helped to give women financial stability by obtaining jobs and to enhance the 'good images' of racialized women in America by their conformity to standards of beauty. However, this conformity has also brought about anxiety and internal conflict due to the necessity to conform to standards of beauty while also resisting them. Whether it was simply beautification or emulation of others, racialized women who tried to achieve standards of beauty or those women who were already close to standards of beauty have been rewarded. However, racialized women who could not, or chose not to, achieve these standards of beauty have often suffered economic and social difficulties. Peiss (1998) articulates the problem of racialized women's practices:

“cosmetics were never far removed from the fact of White supremacy, the goal of racial progress, the question of emulation.” (p. 203)

Since the Civil War, African American women have tried to take pride in their beauty. However, the supremacy of the European aesthetic has never disappeared in North American society. As long as racialized women find advantages in Euro-centric aesthetics, these emulations/beautifications will continue.

In the next chapter, I will explain the westernization of Japanese women's beauty standards.

¹ Bleaching in this case is making burn the surface skin by putting cream on the face. Then, the surface skin comes out, and looks white with the second surface skin. According to Peiss (1998) P.210

Chapter 3:

The Westernization of Japanese Women's Beauty Standards

Japanese women's beauty standards have been influenced by the Japanese government's decisions to welcome American culture, primarily through the mass media. Before the Meiji Restoration, which started in 1868, relatively loose and ambiguous concepts of beauty existed. These concepts were very different and far from the current standards of female beauty in Japan. The characteristics of those traditional concepts of beauty were often easily achievable by Japanese women and were mostly affected by the system of patriarchy. However, after the Meiji Restoration, those concepts were westernized and standardized by the mass media. In this chapter, I will illustrate how traditional concepts of beauty were transformed to Westernized standards of beauty, and how widely these standards of beauty are accepted in current Japan.

Due to the influence of Chinese aristocratic practices, it became the custom for Japanese aristocrats to put white powder on their faces by the end of the eighth century. Consequently, white faces became the representation of a higher class and beauty because only aristocrats could afford to buy expensive white powder (Murasawa, 1992: 25-30).

In the thirteenth century, a patrilineal and patriarchal society gradually developed, replacing the matrilineal system which had been predominant. Accordingly, the way that

women applied cosmetics shifted to include the expression of women's role to be obedient to their husbands and their husbands' families.

After this century, covering the face with white powder became the Samurai wives' etiquette. This was done to hide the wife's natural face from her husband and her husbands' family. The powder was applied to the face before the husband and his family woke up because women's natural faces were thought to be ugly. After the thirteenth century, many women plucked or shaved their eyebrows entirely and drew eyebrows on the forehead as a symbol of being wives or mothers. (See Appendix 3) This custom of plucking eyebrows continued until the beginning of the Meiji era. Murasawa (1992) speculates that because eyebrows conveyed people's feelings, such as anger or/and unwillingness, this custom may have been practiced among Samurai wives to hide their emotions. Moreover, a small mouth became more and more favoured after the thirteenth century (56). Murasawa (1992) presupposes that a small mouth was favoured because it represented less assertiveness towards their husbands and their families. By the end of the Heian period, married women started to colour their teeth black (35). Murasawa (1992) presumes that in Japanese feudal society, blackness was a symbol of loyalty because black was stable color unchangeable by the addition of any other colors. It represented a woman's loyalty to her husband under all circumstances even after his death (Murasawa, 1992: 83). (See Appendix 4)

Before the Showa era (1926-1989), almost all Japanese women wore the *kimono* which looked good on a rather fat woman who had small curves. Long black hair was favoured until the end of Showa era. In the Edo era (1603-1867), women put their hair up at the front to show the beauty of their forehead and at the back to show the beauty of

back of their neck (Murasawa, 1992: 68, 80). (See Appendix 5) That is, unique concepts of female beautification practices existed. These concepts were easily achievable by Japanese women. Some of these practices were not necessarily seen as attractive. Before the Showa era (1926-1989), parents decided who their children would marry so that women did not have to attract men by their appearances. Furthermore, most women's work was unpaid work in the household and on the farm so that the value of a woman was determined by her ability to be productive. Therefore, even though some of the features were seen as beautiful or favourable, women's beauty had relatively little value before the Meiji Restoration.

However, after the Meiji Restoration, traditional Japanese concepts of beauty were strongly influenced by Western standards of beauty. According to Elliot and Fleras (1992), the West was enthusiastic in conquering, colonizing and exploiting overseas territories in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in order to gain foreign markets and resources. Capitalists in the West looked for investment opportunities, cheap labor, and inexpensive resources. After 1771, Western countries, such as Russia, England, The United States, Netherlands and France had tried to persuade Japan to accept extra-territorial rights and freedom of worship in Japan. Finally in 1853, the United States succeeded in forcefully persuading Japan to open its ports. This force gave opportunities to the opponents of the Bakufu (Japanese government in Edo era) to criticize its inability to stand up against the Western powers, eventually weakening the feudal Bakufu, and this government was overthrown (Hane, 1992: 42-83). Even though the threats of the Western capitalists initiated the overthrowing of the Bakufu, the West did not colonize Japan. In order to compete with the West and maintain its independence as a country,

Japan had to quickly adopt the ideology of Westernization which included science, imperialism and capitalism. The new Meiji government swiftly started to adopt Western science by employing Western scientists. According to Ohta, almost all university instructors immediately following the Meiji Restoration were Westerners, and Japanese instructors even spoke in European languages. Most textbooks, even for Japanese history or mathematics, were written in European languages. To enter and graduate from universities with higher marks, students entered prep schools, which taught in European languages only. Therefore, for many students writing and reading in European languages were preferred over the Japanese language. It was under these conditions that many Japanese leaders went to university and were overly exposed to Western science, imperialism, capitalism and White supremacy.

These Japanese leaders institutionalized Western aesthetics which included the superiority of white people's appearances and fashion for Japanese people, and consequently, Japanese people started internalizing Western standards of beauty. Between 1870 and 1874, the Meiji government established Western uniform for the military, navy, postmen, train workers, and policemen¹. In 1871, the Meiji government passed the regulation of short hair for men and prohibited the traditional Samurai hairstyle. In 1873, the Meiji Emperor publicly adopted this new Western hair style. In the same year, the Meiji Empress stopped coloring her teeth black and discontinued plucking her entire eyebrows and drawing eyebrows on her forehead, largely because Western scholars viewed this custom as savage. In 1887, the Meiji Empress recommended that women wear Western clothes.

This organized westernization of fashion and ways of makeup by the government and by the imperial family reinforced the establishment of Westernized appearances in Japan, and enabled corporations in the beauty industry to advertise and sell their products. According to Murasawa (1992:122), a magazine which was called *Oubei Saishin Biyouhou* (the latest Western way of makeup) was published in 1908 (20 years after the Meiji Restoration) and it advertised cosmetics, and proclaimed that Japanese eyes were defective or inferior to those of White people. This magazine even degraded Japanese facial features by describing Japanese eyelids as swollen eyelids (Murasawa, 1992: 122). In 1931, another cosmetics magazine which was called *Shufuno Tomo* (Friends of housewives) articulated, “Everybody hopes to have big round eyes” (Murasawa, 1992: 122). This market pressure to use cosmetics was reinforced by the traditional Japanese patriarchal ideals that women should hide and fix their “ugly” faces before their husbands and husbands’ family woke up. From the end of the Taisho era (1912-1926) to the beginning of the Showa era (1926-1989), foreign movies were introduced. Accordingly, Western clothing instead of *Kimono* and the wave hairstyle by perm and relatively short hair became increasingly popular.

However, after 1936, the government started to put pressure on Japanese women not to beautify themselves at all because, as a part of preparation for the Second World War, the government wanted people to get ready for the lives which lacked commodities (Murasawa, 1992: 142). After that War, American culture, such as free selection of a marriage partner and Western standards of beauty influenced Japanese women’s beauty standards more than ever before. After the defeat in 1945, Japan was occupied by the Allied Forces for seven years. According to Hane (1992: 341), Japan’s largest city,

Tokyo, lost 57 % of its dwellings, and Osaka, the second largest city, had lost about 60 % in 1945. U.S. bombing of Japan destroyed not only the transportation system, telephone lines, power plants, and other utilities, but also 30% of industrial capacity, 80% of its shipping, and 30% of its thermal power. Many city dwellers died even after the war because of food shortages. In contrast to this desperate condition of the Japanese, American soldiers who were posted in Japan had ample money, housing, transportation, clothing, and food. These differences and the defeat of Japan by the U.S. gave the Japanese an image of the West as powerful, rich, advanced and desirable.

Statistics reflected these good images. In 1951, the city of Tokyo conducted a survey among its citizens, asking which nationals were closer to Japanese (Kurihara,1982: 224). According to this research, the closest nationals were American, French and British people in that order. That is, the most favored people by Japanese citizens right after the war were all their former enemies. This shows how most Japanese people did not feel hostile toward former enemies. Hence, it is understandable why the Japanese people at that time willingly took in some elements of Western cultures and aesthetics as better or more advanced. It could be surmised that these positive images and feelings would have gradually dissipated due to the Japanese economic growth. However, this positive image did not cease even after the growth. For example, Kawatake and Sugiyama (1997: 287) surveyed 2,989 Japanese high school students aged 14-17 in 1995 with the question: “which country do you have a good impression of?” The result was France, Britain, Italy, Spain, Japan, Sweden, and the US in that order. That is, the younger Japanese generation continues to have a good impression of Western countries.

With this positive impression of the West, Japanese people have been exposed to products and the mass media which promoted favoured images of European appearances. Most Japanese girls play with dolls which have European facial features, and no longer play with the dolls which have Japanese faces with black hair. The first Barbie dolls were imported from the US after the war but their mature faces and sexy bodies were unpopular in Japan. Therefore in 1967, a Japanese company started to market a Japanese version of Barbie dolls called Rika which had a European infant-girl look, according to Murasawa (1992). (See Appendix 6) Since then, instead of traditional Japanese dolls which have typical Japanese facial features and black hair, the Westernized dolls have become popular among young Japanese girls. Four million of Japanese Barbie dolls called Jenny were sold over 3 years in 1982-1984 (Murasawa, 1992: 205). This phenomenon demonstrates that European infants have been perceived as cute, and this perception has permeated Japanese girls' minds.

Western children's stories and picture books are also popular among Japanese children. According to a Japanese statistical data book², in 1997 a study was conducted and asked 5,024 Japanese people: "what main person in a children's book do you like?" (1009) According to this research, Cinderella was the most favoured, and Snow White was the second. Twenty out of the top thirty children's stories were Western ones. In those books, White girls and boys are often depicted as heroines or heroes.

Western movies are imported to Japan and more favoured than Japanese movies. According to a Japanese Yearbook³, 333 western movies were on air in Japanese theatres while 278 Japanese movies were on air in Japanese theatres in 1997 (765). People in Japan spent about 45,955 million yen (C\$551,460,000) on the Western movies and

about 32,567 million yen (C\$390,804,000) on Japanese movies in 1997. Considering that the prices of Japanese and Western movies are usually the same, these data show how popular Western movies are in Japan. Needless to say, White women and men are often portrayed as heroines or heroes in Western movies.

Even in Japanese animations which are produced in Japan, heroines and heroes are depicted with European facial features even if they have Japanese names. A recent example of this phenomenon is “Dragon Ball.” The main character has black hair and is short in normal situations but when he becomes the hero, he has blonde hair and becomes tall.

Japanese TV programs which include political and economic news put emphasis on the US and use a lot of broadcasting time to inform the Japanese viewers about the US rather than about Japan’s neighbouring countries. According to a study conducted by Kawatake, Sugiyama and Shibuya (1997: 54), news coverage in Japanese television on Korea is 7.3%, China 9.2% and on the US 35%. Since broadcasting time on Asia is relatively short, focus of information tends to be on negative elements, such as crime, disasters and accidents. On the contrary, TV programs about the US include positive elements, such as popular culture compared to those of Asian countries.

Even though 90% of TV advertisements are for Japanese companies, TV advertisements in Japan often include Western elements (Hagiwara, 1997). According to the study conducted by Hagiwara, 19% of TV advertisements use foreign people and/or places; however, if foreign languages and/or music are included, the percentage of use of Western elements increases to 64.9%. The same study shows that among foreign people used in the advertisements, 78% are White, 3.2% are Black and 9.3% are from the

Middle East, South America, or Asia. The foreign places depicted within TV advertisements are 30.1% in North America, 32.9% in Europe, and 12.4% in Asia.

In Japanese women's fashion magazines, White models are often used. Morohashi (1993) studied the race composition of female models in women's fashion magazines⁴. According to this research, even though only 30% of *NonNo*'s (one of the most popular fashion magazines among high school and university female students) advertisements were sponsored by foreign (non-Japanese) corporations, 39.3% of *NonNo*'s models were White and 9.35% were bi-racial of White and Japanese.

Therefore, with this disproportionate level of exposure to Western influence in Japan, it is difficult for Japanese women to avoid being affected by the appearances of Western people.

With these positive impressions of the West and exposures to Western culture, Japanese women's beautifying practices are becoming more and more Westernized and standardized. Japanese women often desire to have European-like facial features, skin and hair color. According to a Japanese statistical data book⁵, 982 female students were surveyed about their unsatisfied parts of body, and the result indicates that they wanted to have slimmer thighs, flatter stomachs, taller noses and larger & rounder eyes with double eyelids (242). According to Yamashita (1991), 60 % of Japanese people have single eye lids. This indicates that they do not prefer typical Japanese facial features.

Many Japanese women want to have whiter skins. According to a Japanese statistical data book⁶ a survey was conducted in 1998 by mail-in nationwide survey and 2,000 women were asked their preferences between whiter skin and suntan tanned brown skin. The response were summarized in Table 1

Table 1 Preference of Skin Color

women	Choose suntan brown skin	Choose white skin
Teens	16%	84%
Twenties	17%	83%
Thirties	20%	80%
Forties	26%	74%
Fifties or older	42%	58%

Josei no kurashi to seikatsu data shu (1999) p.428

This indicates that the younger the women are, the more they prefer whiter skins. Among the women who prefer whiter skin, 45% said that they did not want to have blotches and freckles and 18% said that whiter skin is more beautiful, elegant and feminine.

Moreover, black hair is no longer the most popular. According to a Japanese statistical data book⁷, in 1997, hair colour preference was researched in Tokyo area in a survey of 1,150 women. According to this research, 59 % of women aged 19-23, 42% of women aged 24-29 and 49% of women aged 30-34 had their hair coloured. That is, about half of the younger generations colour their hair or have their hair coloured. Most if not all of these women had no grey hair so these young women may not prefer their natural hair colour (black).

Conclusion

Japanese women's concepts of beauty have been continuously shifting. Dramatic shifts were brought about during the Meiji Restoration and after the Second World War. These two political developments led to Westernization and introduced a Western

capitalist market system. As a result, Japanese traditional concepts of beauty were transformed to Westernized standards of beauty. These standards have become widespread in Japan through the mass media which are a product of the market system.

Globalization of Euro-centric standards of beauty has influenced Japan without provoking much nationalist resistance among the Japanese people. Even current young high school students desire Westernized standards of beauty, such as big eyes with double eyelids and tall nose. Historically, African Americans have suffered from unfair treatments from White people. Therefore, resistance to the standards of beauty for African Americans was not only about resistance to Euro-centric standards but also resistance to racism. Since Japanese people are dominant in Japan and rarely have experiences of unfair treatments from White people, they do not have much resentment against White people. Thus, Euro-centric standards of beauty hardly become a political issue in Japan.

In the next chapter, I will explain a methodology I have chosen and why I used it.

¹ The military and navy in 1870, postmen in 1871, train workers in 1872, policemen in 1874

² *Anketo chousa nenkan* (1998) part 2 Tokyo: Namiki Shobou (questionnaire data book)

³ *Asahi nenkan* (1999) Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha (Asahi yearbook)

⁴ The content analysis was done for 3 magazines such as *Shufu No Tomo* <weekly women's magazine>, *NonNo*. <young fashion magazine—one of the most sold women's fashion magazines> and Japanese version of *Cosmopolitan*. *Shufu No Tomo* use 6.9% of Caucasian models and 3.4% of half between Caucasian and Japanese models. Japanese version of *Cosmopolitan* use 53.1% of Caucasian models.

⁵ *Anketo chousa nenkan* (1998) part 1 Tokyo: Namiki Shobou (questionnaire data book)

⁶ *Josei no kurashi to seikatsu data shu.*(1999) Tokyo: shokuryou ryuutu jyouhou senta (women's lives data book)

⁷ *Anketo chousa nenkan* (1998) part 1 Tokyo: Namiki Shobou p.435 (questionnaire data book)

Chapter 4: Research Method and Design

In this chapter, I will discuss why I chose a methodology¹, how interviewees were selected, what problems were found in the process of interviewing, and how the data were gathered, organized, and analyzed.

The choice of methodology

To study perceptions of women's beauty and self-beautification practices in order to examine how the lives of Japanese women in Canada are socially organized, I followed the framework of "the standpoint of women" as described by Dorothy Smith (1987). Standpoint theory is a critical epistemology developed by feminist scholars, such as Collins (1991), Haraway (1988), Harding, (1986), (1987), Hartsock (1983) and Smith (1987), (1990), (1992a), (1992b), (1999). Initially, this perspective was created to conduct research which aims to achieve a better understanding of women's lives. Yet, it has been utilized to achieve better understanding of marginalized people's lives. Since much mainstream social research has been conducted from the positions of dominant groups, social research may have omitted the information which could threaten the positions or the power of the privileged. To alter the status quo, feminist researchers have claimed the need to change how social research is conducted. Smith (1987) says that to help improve women's lives, feminist sociologists should not use research methods which ignore or trivialize women's experiences or treat women as simply subjects from whom to gain data. According to Harding (1987) standpoint theory accepts women's subjective accounts as legitimate knowledge. By explicating how knowledge remains in the hands of dominant groups which are sustained by unjust systems, standpoint theory

serves to weaken the power of the privileged. For this kind of research, an investigator discloses her or his standpoint such as her social position and values. Therefore, unlike conventional research which claims impartiality and mystifies the researcher's position and values, standpoint research explicates the researcher's standpoint in order to let readers examine her research. Thus the standpoint researcher stands as "a real, historical individual with concrete, specific desires and interests" (Harding, 1987: 9). The major criticism of standpoint theory from a positivist perspective is that it loses objectivity because the research is conducted and gathers knowledge from a particular social location. However, a positivist researcher also has a social position and values; therefore, the research by any researcher cannot be totally objective either. Questionnaires are usually constructed by researchers who may intentionally or unintentionally manipulate interviewees' answers. The other criticism of standpoint theory is from a postmodern perspective. Lemert (1992: 63-72) argues that standpoint theorists just simply substitute knowledge from marginalized groups with knowledge from dominant groups. Collins (1997) says that to weaken the power of unjust systems is the main point of standpoint theory. Collins (1997: 381) blames postmodernists for playing a language game and depoliticizing the potentially radical content of the standpoint theory, saying "oppression is not a game, nor is it solely about language. For many of us, it still remains profoundly real."

Institutional Ethnography which I used for this study was created by Smith (1987) in order to pursue standpoint theory. Institutional Ethnography is a research method which allows researchers to investigate disempowered groups' everyday lives,

and to examine relations between these groups and certain intersectional social structures, a term I prefer over that of “institutions.”

Unlike conventional ethnography, institutional ethnography allows not only observing and interviewing group members but also recollecting work experience, using archives and analyzing text. Rather than just observing what occurs among the group members, Institutional Ethnography engages in investigating and explicating complex social relations in which everyday lives of disempowered groups are coordinated within systems for maintaining power of the privileged. I was restricted to the interview method because this method was available to me. An institutional ethnographer looks for patterns in the relations which occur in multiple sites (Smith, 1987) but does not essentialize or generalize the values and experiences of all members of a group, contradicting the postmodernist, Riger (1992), who blames standpoint theorists for essentializing all members of a group who share the same values and experiences.

Standpoint theory using Institutional Ethnography makes sense to me because my objective for this study is to improve Japanese women’s lives in Canada by explicating how their lives are organized. Without understanding Japanese women’s activities and perceptions from their standpoints, it is difficult to explicate why these women are in a position to reproduce disadvantageous perceptions and activities. I also agree with standpoint theory regarding the researcher declaring her position. I am a Japanese woman and I care about Japanese women’s situation in Canada because it is my own situation. I believe that the knowledge that I have gained from my everyday life is an advantage for this study because I have basic knowledge of what they are talking about which leads me

to certain questions and observations which may not be forthcoming from a researcher with a different social and epistemological position.

Selection of Respondents

The research population comprises ten Japanese women including myself who have been living in Canada for at least two years. These women were selected for interview by a snowball method, screening out those who have not been in Canada for more than two years. I interviewed these Japanese women because they were considered more likely to have had long-term serious relationships and they have friendships with Canadians. I assumed that if their relationships were long-term and close, their Canadian partners would be more open with the interviewees about their perceptions of Japanese women's beauty. Further, because of my experience, I suspected that some women took a few years to shift their self-beautification practices. Because older generations may have perceived women's beauty and have beautified themselves differently from younger generations, I included a fifty-five year old interviewee and three interviewees in their forties even though my interviewees are mostly in their twenties or thirties.

I initially asked six Japanese female friends to be interviewed. Then, I asked some of them to introduce their friends to be my participants. I did not have much difficulty in finding nine Japanese women. This face-to-face interview method allowed me to establish a certain amount of rapport with the informants, and thereby obtain a more accurate account of their experiences than would be produced, for example, by a mail or telephone survey.

According to Miller and Glassner (1997), a researcher cannot obtain a mirror reflection of the social world; however, it is possible to access and interpret people's experiences and social world through interviewing. These authors say that depending on who the interviewer is, an interviewee would give a different story. For example, if the social distance is closer between the researcher and the interviewee, such as the same nationality, gender, generation, and class, it is easier for an interviewee to trust the interviewer and understand the questions. I had an advantage as an interviewer because the social distance between my interviewees and me is very close, as we share the same nationality, gender and are mostly in the same age group. This closeness may have helped avoid informants feeling nationalistic and defensive. Moreover, with this rapport, my informants introduced me to other participants.

Oakley (1981) found problems in traditional research criteria while she was interviewing several hundred mothers including a pregnant stage over a period of some ten years. According to Oakley (1981), traditional research criteria can be summarized in three points: no questions are asked by interviewees, no feeling of closeness to interviewees, and no effects on interviewees' lives. That is, firstly, researchers should ask questions and gain answers but not answer questions which are asked by interviewees. Secondly, interviewers should be friendly enough to gain data but should not be too friendly. Thirdly, interviewers should not affect participants in any way even after the interviews. These criteria were designed to avoid research bias. However, through her own long-term research, Oakley found problems in these traditional criteria of interviewing. When she wanted to have rapport with interviewees, she had to answer interviewees sincerely. To continue this rapport, she had to care about, be honest with,

sometimes physically help and mentally comfort the interviewees. In this process, she says that it is unavoidable not to affect interviewees' situations and/or thoughts. I agree with Oakley that a researcher needs to be honest with interviewees and care about them, especially if the research purpose is to improve the lives of the disempowered. It may be possible that just asking research questions may change the interviewees' future. My research questions are regarding their beauty. My interviewees may not have thought deeply about this topic. But by focusing on this subject, I made them think about it profoundly. This process may have changed their beautification practices. It may be unavoidable not to change participants' lives at all after the interviews. While I was interviewing, my participants often asked me why I was interested in this topic and what I thought about this topic. I honestly answered those questions because I find that striving only for objectivity would tend to interfere with the rapport between me and the interviewees, and rapport would produce better understanding of their lives.

Problems with the research

I wished to also conduct focus group discussions to enable respondents to freely talk about my topic with other respondents. However, while I was interviewing these women, I suspected that focus group discussions may not work for them. In Canada, class discussions are often encouraged so that many Canadians are used to talking in front of people and some do not hesitate to voice different opinions. Yet in Japan class discussions are often discouraged so that Japanese people are not used to talking in front of people. Moreover, Japanese women are culturally encouraged to conform to others; therefore, they may hesitate to voice contradictory opinions. That is, even if some of

them have different opinions, they are not likely to oppose other people's opinions or they may agree with what other people say. Furthermore, Japanese women are often encouraged to be modest so that they may be very embarrassed if I insist that they discuss particular subjects such as being praised by other people including their partners, friends or family members in front of other women. Actually, one interviewee said that it was embarrassing to say what her husband praised about her appearance even when she was alone with me. In addition, they are not willing to talk about private matters in front of other people. One interviewee said to me a few days after the interview that she was not sure how much private matter she should have divulged and how much she should have kept to herself. She was not forthcoming even to me. Therefore, I do not expect these women to talk about their private matters with other women.

The Japanese language itself is one of the problems that I faced when I interviewed Japanese women. One problem is that for some Japanese women, not putting on makeup does not mean not putting on any makeup. Some of the interviewees said that they did not put on cosmetics but they actually did. For some women, putting on cosmetics means putting on heavy makeup, and not putting on cosmetics means putting on slight makeup. This was very confusing for me throughout my interviews, and is a weakness in the research.

Another Japanese language problem is when I insisted that they talked in Japanese because I thought they would feel more comfortable, they were very quiet and many of them gave me no more than "yes or no" answers or short answers. It may be because they are culturally encouraged to be quiet. However, when I met the same interviewees on another day and talked in English, they talked more than on the first interview day. One

of the interviewees said to me that, “English is a second language for me, so when I talk in English, I feel I am wearing a mask. So, I can freely talk about my private matters.” Thus, my assumption was wrong. They may have talked more comfortably about their private matters if I asked them to speak in English.

The other Japanese language problem is that their meaning of beauty includes more elements than that of beauty in North America. Not only were fashions, faces, body structures included as parts of beauty concepts but intelligence, manners and family traits were also recognized as beauty elements.

Since my interviewees knew that I would analyze their comments in a sociological context, some of them who were academics were very conscious about racial topics. And some of these women sometimes made comments that were contradictory to what they said before. For example, one woman said that she likes Caucasian eyes which have double eyelids, and she feels inferior in relation to those eyes. However, when I showed her one picture which contains Asian, Black and White models, and then asked her “which models do you think the most beautiful?” She answered one Caucasian and one Asian model who had single eyelids.

Setting

The interviewees suggested the place where they wanted to be interviewed. They decided according to their convenience and/or comfort. Six out of nine women wanted to be interviewed at the University because they live close to the University or had classes to attend. Two of them wanted to be interviewed at their houses because they felt comfortable at home. One came to my apartment to be interviewed because my

apartment is close to downtown, and she came to my place on the way to downtown for shopping.

Data Analysis

I transcribed the tapes myself in Japanese. Some interviews were fairly short, about 40 minutes and some were long, about 120 minutes. Since I was not used to typing in Japanese and it was not the most exciting job, it took quite a long time to transcribe them all. I am fortunate that I transcribed all of the conversations in Japanese. Japanese is my first language so it was easy to read, understand and analyze. Moreover, whenever I needed to go back to Japanese transcripts, I did not miss any comments by the interviewees. Often, important comments lost meaning when I translated them into English. Since Japanese and English are totally different languages, many words and phrases are difficult if not impossible to translate directly. Rather than translating the words, I spent time ensuring the coherence and accuracy of the translation by translating the intended meaning of the interviewee. However, when I went back to the transcripts and found other meanings in the comments, my translation was altered once again. After translating and analyzing some of these transcripts, I often found many questions which I failed to ask. Hence, I asked some of the interviewees to meet me once again in order to complete my interviews and clarify. At times, I called some of the interviewees for clarification, taking notes while they responded. This helped me to build more trust with my interviewees. Some of the interviewees preferred to answer me by E mails. This saved a lot of time. I interviewed myself after analyzing other interviewees' comments and somehow understood what the most important questions were. In this way, I could

interview myself only on the important points. The experience of interviewing myself gave me opportunities to think about these questions from the interviewees' point of view.

I organized the data and information having to do with the research in the following way. I prepared 10 envelopes in each of which I put each person's transcript, questions which I missed to ask, memos of what I thought and notes of what they said on phone, by e mail and/or later talk. I had each individual file labeled with the number of the respondent, and the transcriptions with pseudonyms. I did this in part for the sake of protecting the respondent's anonymity but also because, by labeling the transcripts I did not mix them up when I analyzed the data. In addition, in order to protect their anonymity, I altered some of their names, marital statuses, ages, occupations and some of their majors in university. In this way, I tried not to miss the points or not to make confusion while protecting anonymity.

After I started analyzing the data, I realized that gathering responses for the same questions from the interviewees did not work in my research. Japanese women's beauty concepts and beautifying practices were not separate topics. They were very interconnected. Instead, I prepared summaries of each person's interview, including the main points made by each interviewee directly from Japanese transcripts and translated into English. After reading each person's transcript a few times, the main responses in each interview became clear to me. Then, I made a table. (See Appendix 7) On the top of each column, I wrote numbers and pseudonym names and on the left of each row, I wrote the main questions I asked. Then, I filled in all cells with one sentence or words to clearly see the commonalities, differences and relations between the cells. In addition, I made the

spaces in the margins in the right side of each row to write about the commonalities and differences between interviewees. I also made margined spaces at the bottom of the each column to write those points made by the interviewees which intersected or were connected with social structures. While organizing the table, I noticed that I did not ask some questions from some of the women. In order to remedy this situation, I again called or e-mailed some of my interviewees to ask the questions. I highlighted with yellow if the interviewees' comments in regards to a subject and/or question were virtually the same. I used orange highlighter to mark answers that were highly overlapping, and I marked with green highlighter those women's answers which were approximately half overlapping. Because of the color highlighting, this table clearly showed the tendencies of my interviewees' thoughts and practices. After completing this table, I divided interviewees' comments according to those similarities. I was careful not to ignore the slight differences among the similarities.

Appendix 8 presents a set of questions. In the next chapter, I will try to show the tendencies and patterns of shifts in Japanese women's beautification practices and perceptions of beauty.

¹ I will make clear the definition differences between method, methodology and epistemology by using definition of Harding, S (1987) pp.2-3

A research method is “a technique for (or way of proceeding in) gathering evidence. One could reasonably argue that all evidence-gathering techniques fall into one of the following three categories: listening to (or interrogating) informants, observing behavior, or examining historical traces and records.”

A methodology is “a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed; it includes accounts of how ‘the general structure of theory finds its application in particular scientific disciplines.’ for example, discussions of how functionalism (or Marxist political economy, or phenomenology) should be or is applied in particular research areas: are methodological analysis.”

An epistemology is “a theory of knowledge. It answers questions about who can be a ‘knower’ (can women?); what tests beliefs must pass in order to be legitimated as knowledge (only tests against men’s experiences and observations?); what kinds of things can be known (can ‘subjective truths’ count as knowledge?), and so forth. Sociologists of knowledge characterize epistemologies as strategies for justifying beliefs.”

CHAPTER 5: The Respondents

Introduction

To pursue the framework of Institutional Ethnography, a researcher starts from investigating actual people's everyday lives. In this chapter, I will explore how ten Japanese women have shifted or failed to shift their perceptions of beauty and beautification practices since they came to Canada. I will seek the differences and similarities in their perceptions and practices through analyzing their comments about reactions to Euro-centric standards of beauty presented in Japanese mass media, preferences of beautiful women in Canada, perceptions regarding the advantages of beautiful women in Japan and Canada, self-evaluation of beauty, and possible shifts in beautification practices.

The following is an introduction to the ten women that I've interviewed for this study. I would not assume that the women who I interviewed are average Japanese women. Eight out of ten are graduates of North American universities. Seven out of these eight are graduates of both North American and Japanese universities. Two out of ten are graduates of only Japanese universities. One has finished her MA and five are currently MA students. They are all determined to become financially independent. Three have children, two of these three mothers are working at schools as teachers, and the third mother is staying at home and taking care of her family but intends to work outside of the house as soon as her last child goes to school. The rest (seven out of ten) are all students and ready to work as soon as the opportunity presents its self. Most of them hope to have

a job which requires them to speak both Japanese and English. These women have been experiencing language difficulties and culture shock. Yet they have been successfully accomplishing some of their goals, such as finishing their degrees and/or raising children in North America. In the introduction of the interviewees, I have included details of their socialization to show how they have been exposed to Western culture in Japan because it is necessary to know about socialization in order to understand how and why Japanese women have or have not shifted their concepts of women's beauty and their own self-beautification practices since they came to Canada. In order to protect their anonymity, I altered some of their names, marital statuses, ages, occupations and majors in a university to the certain degree that this alteration does not affect meaning of this study.

Yuki

Yuki is a thirty-nine year old woman who married a Canadian man two years ago. She worked as a secretary in Japan. She has a degree in anthropology from a Japanese university and has a degree in political science from a Canadian university. She is currently a graduate student majoring in political science. She has been in Canada for seven years. When Yuki was a child, she played with a stuffed dog and a Japanese version of Barbie doll, which had a European infant face. Her favourite animations on TV were ones in which the main characters had faces similar to European girls¹. She often looked at Western picture books, such as Snow White, Cinderella and other books written by Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen. After she grew up, she saw many Hollywood movies. Yuki describes what type of women she perceived as beautiful when she was in Japan. "Tall, but not too tall, slim but not too skinny, faces with big

eyes and tall nose.” Yuki’s mother checked her clothing every morning and criticized it before Yuki left home for work.

Kana

Kana is a twenty-nine year old woman who married a Canadian man a few weeks before I interviewed her. After graduating from a Japanese university majoring in English for two years, she came to Canada to obtain a degree. Her major was, at that time, visual art. After finishing this degree, she went back to Japan to teach visual arts and stayed there two years. But she decided to come back to Canada to re-enter the same university in Canada and is currently majoring in computer science. Altogether, she has been in Canada seven years. She has never worked in Canada. Since Kana was a child, she has been exposed to Western culture. She played with Japanese versions of Barbie dolls and looked at picture books titled Snow White, Cinderella, and Curious George series, which was her favourite. She read books written by Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen. She also liked picture books in which Japanese children were pictured². Her favourite TV program was a historical period play³. She watched animations⁴ on TV which were produced in Japan but the appearances of the main characters (heroes or heroines) were White people or looked like White. The fashion magazines which she read when she was a university student in Japan used White models predominantly. The main conversation with her friends while they were looking at the magazines centered around clothing, models’ figures and clothing fads. According to her, “cute” means that facial features are different from traditional Japanese faces. She says: “regarding to appearances, the person who was extremely popular in high school

had a face which was very similar to White people. She (the popular girl) had big eyes⁵ and double eyelids⁶.” Kana’s family has neither criticized nor praised her appearance.

Sayoko

Sayoko is a forty-four year old woman who has never married. After graduating from a Japanese university majoring in English for two years, she worked at a travel agency as a secretary and in a publishing company as an editor until she came to Canada at the age of thirty-three. She graduated from a Canadian university about 3 years ago majoring in history. Now, she is a graduate student in the Department of History. She has been in Canada for eleven years. She has never worked in Canada except as a teaching assistant in the university she attends. When she was a child, she played with an American version of Barbie dolls. She liked stories by Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen, and especially liked Little Sea-Maid by Andersen. Snow White and Cinderella were her favourites too. TV programs which she watched when she was a child were animations. Some of these animations were made in the West, such as Popeye the Sailor⁷. Her favourite movies were science fiction movies from Hollywood, such as Star Wars. The fashion magazines which she read when she was in her late teens or early twenties used a lot of White models. Sayoko’s family has not either criticized or praised her appearance.

Shouko

Shouko is a thirty year old woman who married a Canadian man last year. After graduating from a Japanese university where she majored in English for two years, she

became a sales clerk at a famous department store in Japan. Right before she came to Canada at the age of twenty-five, she quit her job. She finished her BA last year in Canada and is currently a graduate student in the department of economics at a Canadian university. She has been here for five years. She is teaching Japanese to Canadians and also a teaching assistant in the university she attends. When she was a child, she watched Japanese animations⁸ on TV in which some of the main characters had European infant faces. She preferred playing outside with her brother to reading books inside of the house. She did not like Barbie dolls. After she grew up, she often saw Hollywood movies, and did not like Japanese movies. She did not look at fashion magazines. Shouko's family neither criticized nor praised her appearance.

Sayuri

Sayuri is a forty year old woman who married a Canadian man five years ago. After graduating from a Japanese college majoring in English, she worked at a bank as a clerk in Japan. She came to Canada when she was thirty. She entered a Canadian university majoring in geography, and currently she is a graduate student majoring in gcography. She has been here for ten years. She has never worked except as a teaching assistant in Canada. When she was a child, she played with a Japanese version of Barbie dolls. She had books of Snow White and Cinderella but she did not like the story of Snow White. She liked American TV programs, such as Wacky Races and Bugs Bunny and liked Western movies, such as French, Italian and Hollywood movies. She especially liked Robert De Niro. She looked at fashion magazines which did not use White models. Sayuri's family has not either criticized or praised her appearance.

Chikako

Chikako is a fifty-five year old woman who was married to a Canadian man thirty one years ago in Japan. She worked as a bank clerk in Japan after she graduated from high school. She came to Canada when she was twenty-five. She studied visual art in a Canadian university and became a teacher in an elementary school in Canada. She has been in Canada for thirty years. The Second World War was finished just two years before she was born, and at that time, American occupation was in effect. Western dolls or an American version of Barbie dolls were not sold in Japan, and a Japanese version of Barbie dolls were not yet made. Western picture books were not translated yet, and TV was not widely spread in Japan. However, she was exposed to Western culture through movies in the theatres. She recalls that she liked Western movies.

“I often saw French movies. I don’t remember who gave me but I often got free tickets for Western movies. I liked Western moves. I especially liked French movies... Those movies were very popular at that time. I sometimes saw Japanese movies but I preferred Western movies.”

According to her, Japanese inferior feelings in relation to White people were dominant among Japanese people at that time. Chikako’s family has neither criticized nor praised her appearance.

Tamaki

She is a thirty-seven year old woman who married to a Canadian man in Japan thirteen years ago, and she came to Canada ten years ago. She has two daughters. Both of them were born in Canada. After she graduated from a Japanese university majoring in education, she became a teacher in a Japanese kindergarten for three years. Then, she went to the US to become a teacher in a kindergarten there. As soon as she came back

from the US, she became an English instructor for children in a private school in Japan. Afterward, she worked as a manager of an art gallery in Japan for three years until she came to Canada. She has been concentrating on taking care of her family since she came to Canada. Now, she wishes to do something more in addition to raising children when her younger daughter goes to school. When she was a child, she did not play with Barbie dolls at all. She rather preferred to play outside with her brother. Tamaki's mother read picture books for her, such as Aesop Fables and stories by Brothers Grimm. She watched Japanese animations⁹ in which most of the main characters did not have European faces. She watched a lot of Hollywood movies in order to improve her English. Tamaki's family has not either criticized or praised her appearance.

Etsuko

Etsuko is a thirty-five year old woman who never married. After graduating from a Japanese university majoring in English for two years, she became a secretary in an office. She came to Canada when she was twenty-eight and studied English for one year. After brushing up on her English, she studied linguistics in a Canadian university. After graduating, she went back to Japan and worked in an office as a secretary for two years. She realized that in order to get better employment, she needed to get some form of specialized training or skills. So, she came back to Canada last August. She is an undergraduate student majoring in business since last September. She has stayed in Canada for total of five years. She liked local stories of some countries. She also looked at Western picture books, such as Cinderella and Aesop's Fables but they did not make an impression on her. She watched many Japanese animations¹⁰ on TV in which some of

the main characters have European faces. She did not play with Barbie dolls at all. She had read fashion magazines quite a lot till the beginning of in her twenties. She liked foreign movies when she was in Japan. She said that she did not notice that she liked Hollywood movies but she thinks she saw a lot of them. Etsuko's mother often praises Etsuko's eyes with single eyelids since her mother thinks eyes with single eyelids look more intelligent than eyes with double eyelids.

Harumi

Harumi is a twenty-five year old woman and has never married. She entered a graduate school in Canada right after she graduated from a Japanese university in 1999. Her major is linguistics. She has been in Canada two and half years. She is the youngest among my interviewees and the only person among my interviewees who has never worked full time in Japan. She has never worked in Canada either except as a teaching assistant. When she was a child, Harumi looked at picture books written by Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen but her favourite ones were those which the main characters are Japanese girls. She played with a Japanese version of Barbie dolls and Kewpie dolls. She watched Japanese animations¹¹ on TV in which some of the main characters are White children. Harumi liked fashion magazines which used White models. Harumi's father has been fussy about Harumi's appearance. Since she was a child, he sometimes made her use a stationary bike at home and made her do push-ups.

Mari

Mari is a forty year old woman who married a Canadian man fifteen years ago. After graduating from a Japanese university, she worked as a secretary in Japan. She married a Canadian man when she was twenty-five, and the next year she immigrated to Canada. Currently, she works as a history teacher in a high school. She has a daughter who is 10 years old. Mari has been in Canada for fourteen years. She has BA and MA degree in history from a Canadian university. When she was a child, Mari played with a Japanese version of Barbie dolls. She looked at picture books written by Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen. She especially liked a picture book titled Caroline and Her Friends. She watched a lot of animation on TV¹². Some of the main characters had European features. The fashion magazines she read did not use White models at all or just few White models. She saw a lot of Hollywood movies. Mari's family has not either criticized or praised her appearance.

The commonality among these ten women is that since childhood they have all been exposed to the mass media which promoted favourable images of European appearances. These exposures to the West or Westerners are not unusual in Japan, as I demonstrated in Chapter 3.

In the following section, I report how my respondents react to Japanese mass media.

Reactions to White-standard Beauty in Japanese Mass Media

As I demonstrated in Chapter 2, many African American women in the West have historically been overwhelmed and resisted the beauty concepts which promote the idea that the characteristics of Whiteness, such as long straight blonde hair, blue eyes, light

color skin, certain shape of lips & nose and certain body type are the most desirable (Lakoff & Scherr, 1985: 270). On the contrary, Japanese people have welcomed Euro-centric standards of beauty. People from Western countries residing in Japan including non-European descendant Westerners are less than 0.1% of whole population (*Nihon no Toukei*, 1999). Yet, about 12% of TV advertisements in Japan use White people (Hagiwara, 1997). This disproportionate number of White people in TV advertisements in Japan seemed acceptable to my interviewees.

Just a few years ago, Shouko noticed that TV advertisements¹³ in Japan use many White models quite often.

“I did not notice before I came to Canada. But I noticed after I came here and then went back to Japan for a visit... When I lived in Japan, I did not think it was weird to see White people on TV in Japan. Here (in Canada), it is totally understandable to have White people on TV. It does not make sense to see White people on TV in Japan.”

Even though she felt that way about seeing White people on TV, it does not mean that she does not understand why these models are there. She explains why Westerners are on TV in Japan.

“If I have to say with plain words, Japanese people perceive White people, Americans or the West as stylish.”

After Yuki came to Canada and stayed for a while, she also noticed that there were many White models on TV advertisements in Japan.

“I did not feel weird that many White people were on Japanese TV when I was in Japan. After I stayed here (Canada) for a while, I realized that Japanese TV programs and advertisements use a lot of White people even though there are not many White people in Japan. But at that time, it was too ordinary for me to recognize this phenomenon as weird.”

Yuki's explanation is similar to Shouko's regarding this phenomenon.

“It may be because young people think that White people are cool.”

Chikako witnessed first hand the contrast of wealthy Americans and poor Japanese people right after the Second World War. After she came to North America she noticed that a disproportionate number of White people are on TV in Japan and told me her opinion of why this phenomenon exists in Japan.

“Japanese people are very attracted to White people. That kind of feeling still exists in Japan. Japanese people have a beauty concept that blonde hair, tall, and typical White people’s faces are the elements of beauty. People still have this concept. So, White people are used in TV commercial.”

Yet, Chikako guesses that this phenomenon is fading.

“I think older generations have stronger feelings (of White appearances are better than Japanese). It’s getting less and less. Young Japanese people are taller than before. People often change hair colour now. Their makeup is better now. I think young people feel less inclined to perceive that White people’s appearances are better.”

Chikako thinks that appearances of younger people are more similar to Western people so that younger generations are more confident about their appearances. However, younger people do not seem to be more confident about their appearances. Younger generations are also exposed to the mass media including fashion magazines, which use White models and favour those White models’ features. Two youngest women among my interviewees, Kana and Harumi admire these White models in the mass media.

Kana says, “I thought that it was good to use White models (for fashion magazines) because body-figures of White models were better than Japanese models.” Harumi liked fashion magazines which used White models. “I was really conscious about eye-makeup. So, I carefully looked at how models put makeup on their eyes. I liked big eyes. White models had very nice eyes.”

Sayoko also felt,

“it is not surprising. It is ordinary to see White models in Japanese magazines. They have very good body-figures... Since I was in Japan, I have perceived that beautiful people are those who look like White people.”

A disproportionate number of White people are in Japanese advertisements.

However, while these women were living in Japan, none of them noticed that a disproportionate number of White people were used in TV advertisements¹⁴. Three of these women have noticed this phenomenon after they came to Canada and stayed for a while, and then felt odd to see a disproportionate number of White people in Japanese advertisements. None of my interviewees has felt a need to resist the Japanese mass media use of White people. These Japanese women suspect the reason for the phenomenon is that Japanese people perceive that White people's appearances are more beautiful than those of Japanese. They have never questioned their perceptions that big eyes with double eye-lids and tall noses are better. Young generations of Japanese females are also exposed to the mass media including fashion magazines which use many White models and favour those White models' features. That is, just having a perception that Western people are more beautiful does not make Japanese women feel angry enough to resist the prevailing models. Since Japanese women do not meet many Western people and are not discriminated against in Japan unlike African Americans, they are not interested in asserting pride in their physical features.

Preferences about women's beauty in Canada

Since these Japanese women came to Canada, they may have experienced some difficulties adjusting, such as loneliness, language mistakes, manner differences and/or discrimination. These difficulties in Canada may have raised their consciousness and

affected the beauty concepts of these participants similar to the experiences of African American women. Yet in this section, I will illustrate how their preferences of beauty which are Euro-oriented have not shifted since they came to Canada. Before the interview, I prepared a picture (See Appendix 9) which shows several models including two Asian, two Black and seven White women. All of them are slim. Both Asian models have slanted eyes with single eyelids and are young. One of the Black women has facial features which are similar to Europeans', such as tall nose and thin lips. Another one has wide nose and thick lips. Six White women look in their twenties, and one White woman looks in her fifties. I asked all interviewees which models in the picture they think is the most beautiful. Half of interviewees, Yuki, Shouko, Chikako, Etsuko and Mari chose White models only. Tamaki, Sayuri and Harumi chose both White and Asian models. Kana chose a White model and Black model whose facial features are similar to Europeans'. Sayoko chose only the black model whose facial features are similar to Europeans'. Yet, Sayoko who chose only a black model says that she would have chosen a different model when she was younger.

“When I was younger, I thought that White people were more beautiful than anybody else, I would have chosen the upper side (in the picture) of White models. But now, I don't think so. So, I chose this black model.”

It means that she is conscious about skin color. She has shifted her favourite skin color for women, not because her location changed but because of her mature age or some experiences in Japan. Yet her preference regarding facial-features has not changed. She thinks that big eyes with double eyelids are elements of beauty.

I also asked all of them what they would have answered if I asked them the same question when they were in Japan to see if they have shifted their idea of women's beauty

since they came to Canada. All of them said that they would have chosen the same model(s).

This illustrates that even though all of my interviewees said that big round eyes with double eyelids were elements of beauty, few of them also chose Asian models' appearances with slanted eyes with single eyelids. Moreover, one of the interviewees was very conscious about skin color. This reaction may be because some of them misunderstood that I judged their degree of racism by their choice of White models. These interviewees may have perceived that they have to select Asian or Black models.

The Advantages of Beautiful Women in Japan

Even though these Euro-centric standards remain in their perceptions of women's beauty, if beauty were not important elements in their lives and if they did not perceive that beautiful women have advantages, standards of beauty would not affect these women much. In this section, I will illustrate how Japanese women perceive the advantages of beautiful women in Japan and in Canada.

Almost all the women I interviewed said that beautiful women have certain advantages in Japan. Sayoko who had worked for more than ten years in Japan explains why beautiful women have advantages in Japan. Sayoko's definition of the advantages is a very practical one, such as saving money and getting employment.

“I really do (think that beautiful women have advantages in Japan). What kinds of advantages?beautiful women attract men. Women who attract men do not need money. What do you mean by that? Think! She attracts men. So, men pay for whatever she wants. So, she can save money. I see. Do you think beautiful women have advantages on getting hired too? Of course! The people who have positions to hire new employees are almost all men, right? So, men hire beautiful women? Of course! Why not? Do you think beautiful women have advantages even after entering a company? I think so. Appearance is always very important till we get to know each other very well. Often, first impression affects relationships between people. First impression is depending on appearance, right? It means that beautiful appearance helps in obtaining good impression. Accordingly, beautiful people obtain advantages. The company, which I entered right after I graduated at university, may be a good example. The final interview was with five male executives. And each executive decided to hire two of his favourite girls as his assistants. So, ten girls were hired altogether in that year. I worked in the section of an executive who favoured me till I quit the job. You know, life is like that.”

Chikako thinks that beauty is advantageous for women in increasing their social status through getting hired by promising companies, and attracting promising men there and marrying.

“I think so (beautiful women have advantages) In what aspect? There is a good example. Employers hire beautiful women. If all women who come to a job interview have the same ability and education, then, employers would take beautiful women over others. I had a very beautiful friend who was my classmate in high school. When she went to a job interview at the Toyota Car Company, she was hired as a receptionist. she married a man who became an executive in that company later. So, my friends and I agree that her employment and consequently marriage was an advantage of beauty.”

Harumi sees advantages of beautiful women but does not see advantages on promotion. She has never worked in Japan but this is her image of a work place there.

“They have advantages in every point. They (beautiful women) get hired, and men ask those women to go out with. How about promotion? I am not sure about promotion. But personality would affect promotion more than beauty. I don't think that promotion depends on only woman's face.”

Tamaki thinks that beauty helps in getting attention.

“I think so (there are advantages if a woman is beautiful). For example, when those women go to bars or karaoke bars, they are popular. When they go to downtown, people look at them. How about an aspect of work? I think that bosses treat beautiful women nicely. In general, it is better to be beautiful than to be ugly.”

Kana thinks that beauty helps not only in gaining employment but also in terms of inclusion.

“Beautiful women have advantages (in Japan). For example, they have advantages on getting hired. And..when only three people can join a group, only beautiful women are asked to join...”

Shouko thinks that it is good enough if women meet the minimal standards for facial features in order to get hired but have to be careful about fashion and feminine behaviour. She worked in the service industry where almost all are women and bosses are also mostly women.

“Of course they (beautiful women) do have (advantages). Appearance is very important. If you do not have good appearance, you cannot have certain occupations. Do you think beautiful women have advantages when they get hired? Well, rather than being beautiful, being clean or just achieving acceptable level of beauty would be more important. Each person has particular taste. But it is important to have appearance which is in the acceptable level in Japan. Women who are in that level or better have advantages. How about promotion? I don't think that appearance affects promotions. Appearance may have an effect as far as being hired but not to be promoted. Promotion depends on her ability. Till women get hired, they have to be careful about appearance, clothing and action. What do you mean by action? For example, there is a female way of sitting in Japan. It is important for Japanese women to know how to do it.”

Shouko's bosses and co-workers were almost all women. This fact may have affected her perceptions that beautiful women may not have advantages after they were hired.

Etsuko thinks that beautiful women have advantages in getting hired but not in promotion. According to her, promotion does not depend on ability to work; it depends on ability to play a feminine role, such as supporting men.

“if a woman’s appearance is beautiful, she can give other people good impression. If there were women who have similar personalities, a beautiful woman would get advantages because she can give other people a good impression. You mean when she gets hired? Yes, when women get hired, beauty may be important. How about promotion? Is it depending on ability to work? Women’s case is different. Rather ability to work, women may have advantages if they have the ability to care other people and know how to support men. If women have too much ability, other people may not like her.”

Mari points out everyday advantages of beautiful women in an office.

“She can be forgiven easily when she makes mistakes. Bosses may think she is cute, it is okay.”

Yuki sees the advantages of self-confidence, personality and ambition in a male dominated society.

“I think beautiful women can get special attention, especially from men. And this attention affects women’s self-confidence. And this high self-confidence affects her personality and ambition in a positive way. With this positive personality and ambition, she gets even more advantages. There is a good circle. Not all beautiful women have high self-esteem though. Anyway, they have a lot of chances to get hired because men who are usually bosses in male dominant society like in Japan and Canada hire beautiful women as more valuable. Beauty is not everything, but it affects people’s lives a lot”

On the other hand, Sayuri does not think that beautiful women have advantages in Japan.

“I don’t think (beautiful women have advantages when they get hired or promotion.) How about when they were in school? They may be popular among boys but that’s about it.”

Even though they agree that beauty is an important means to attract men, most interviewees told me they believe that only having a beautiful appearance is not enough to attract men in Japan. Women have to be submissive and dependent.

“I think that good looking women with not strong personality are popular in Japan. I have a quite strong personality as a Japanese woman, so I was not really popular there.” (Yuki)

“Popular women among men are modest, girl-like... What do you mean girl-like? A woman who is not too forward, good at listening, dependent and physically fragile (is girl-like).” (Kana)

Sayoko says, popular women among Japanese men are lady-like.” She explains the meaning of lady-like, “A woman who acts like a child, feeble and needs to be protected”

“(women who were popular among Japanese men were) women who did not oppose what men said but had a personality which was very cheerful. It may depend on men though.” (Tamaki)

“Traditional housewife type.....Rather than appearance, being friendly and ordinary is important. Does ordinary mean ordinary clothing? Including clothing. She should not be flashy and not put too much cosmetics. But some men like women who put cosmetics. So, I am not sure. Anyway, I think women who are not eccentric are more popular.” (Etsuko)

Yet, Shouko has a completely different idea.

“Rather than traditional obedient type, women who have career would be more popular because current TV dramas often use career women characters so that these dramas affect people quite a lot.”

Some women distinguish ‘cute’ women from ‘beautiful’ women. And then, they claim that ‘cute women were popular in Japan.’ ‘Cute’ means each person is different but there are commonalities, such as a woman whose body is not sexy, looks friendly and approachable.

“I think that cute women were popular... Rather being beautiful, friendly but good looking to the certain point is popular. A woman who is pleasant and easy to talk to would be important too. What do you think there is a difference between being cute and beautiful? In my image, a beautiful person is not approachable. Does face matter? Ycs. Does shape of eyes matter? Ycs.” (Sayuri)

“even though funny women were popular among boys in a junior high school, domestic and traditional types of women were popular among adult men. Does a traditional type of woman mean obedient to men? Yes. especially, male bank workers at that time were very traditional. So, those men disliked women who had own opinions. How about you? I was disliked (laugh). So, appearance was not the most important issue to be popular but domestic and traditional types were the issue. Right. I had a friend who was very lady-like, beautiful and had a soft personality and whiter skin. She was very popular. So, she was beautiful too. Yes, she was, but she was rather cute. What is the difference between cute and beautiful? Beautiful women could be cold and unfriendly. But she was always smiling. My impression of her eyes was smiling eyes. She was kind and very popular.” (Chikako)

“small, cute and dependent women were popular... If men want to date, then, men would choose small and cute women.” (Mari)

Most of interviewees believe that there are advantages for beautiful women, such as being popular among men and/or getting hired. However, being beautiful is not enough to be very popular among Japanese men. Most of these interviewees said that a cute, which means friendly and appreciable, submissive, dependent, and not sexy, person is popular in Japan. In addition, some of these interviewees perceived that they are not submissive enough to be popular among Japanese men. Then, how do these Japanese women perceive the advantages of beautiful women in Canada?

The Advantages of Beautiful Women in Canada

My interviewees have experiences, impressions or information that beautiful women in Canada have advantages too. Those advantages are almost the same as those in Japan, such as more employment opportunities, attention, and popularity among men.

“If you are beautiful, then, Canadian men ask you out to dinner but if you are ugly, they do not even ask you to go out for a cup of coffee. Canadian men around me are usually academics. They may be more focused on intelligence than other men. But I don’t think Canadian academic men are only attracted to women’s intellect. They definitely see women’s appearances too. Do beautiful women have advantages in gaining employment? The degree would be different depending on which industry you are in. But it is a matter of degree.” (Yuki)

(they have advantages in) “getting hired or when they want to get attention from people. For example, when students have presentations in a class, they can get attentions easily if they are beautiful women. They do not need to be good at presentations to get attentions if they are beautiful.” (Kana)

“they should not get advantages (just because of their beauty) but many beautiful women obtain advantages from men. When a beautiful woman goes to a bar, she gets free drinks from men. Men are kind to them. Men often talk to beautiful women. In any case, they have advantages. How about aspects of work? Those women get hired. But I am not sure about that here because those bosses who are nice to beautiful women may be sued. Bosses in Canada may treat everybody equally. But for small things, I think that men prefer beautiful women.” (Tamaki)

“when they get hired (they have advantages.) Even in a school, beautiful women give a good impression. We never know people’s personalities upon the first meeting. After knowing a person for a long time, it happens that we realize how nice the ugly person is. But before knowing each other, we evaluate other people based on appearances.” (Etsuko)

“I think beautiful women have advantages. How about promotion? I am not sure because I have not worked here but I guess that it is same as Japan.” (no advantages on promotion) (Shouko)

“Beautiful women in the service industry may have a lot of advantages, such as employment opportunities or work condition. If personalities and abilities are the same, employers would employ more beautiful women. But professional women, such as university instructors may not have many advantages.” (Harumi)

Chikako adds promotions to the list of advantages. Yet, she says that it depends on the job. She has never worked in the business world in Canada but she has an image or knowledge of advantages of beautiful women in the business world.

“To be hired, especially in a job where beauty is needed, beautiful women have advantages. But if the job does not require beauty, then I don’t think they have advantages. How about promotion? I have not worked in the business world but I think beautiful women have advantages. The beauty may help quick promotion. There is a problem of sexual harassment in Canada and Japan. Bosses usually harass beautiful women, I guess. So, in that sense, they may have disadvantages. But in the matter of promotion, beautiful women may have advantages. I really do not want bosses to give advantages to women just because of beauty though.”

Even though Chikako thinks beauty is quite an important element for women to have a good life, she does not want her daughter to pursue the standards of beauty. She opposes giving her daughter Barbie dolls.

“My daughter liked to play with stuffed animals. Rika (a Japanese Barbie doll) was sent by my relatives in Japan but she did not play with it. She was not interested in the doll. My husband bought toy cars and trains for her, and she often played with those. I did not buy Barbie dolls because I did not want my daughter to be a woman like Barbie. I think that Barbie insults women. I purposely bought a doll which was quite fat and far different from Barbie. The doll had a very round face. The name was Raggedy Ann. It was popular at that time. Did feminist movement affect the doll shape? I don’t think so. It was there before Barbie was produced.”

Sayoko says that beautiful women have advantages on all matters.

“I think they have advantages in all aspects. I often hear that employers hire beautiful women and if you are fat, you never get hired. Do you think that beauty matters on promotion too? I think so. Do you think an employer gives promotions to a more beautiful woman if two people are both good workers? I think that it is the same all over the world.”

Sayuri thinks that beautiful women have more advantage in Canada than in Japan.

“It is possible. It may be even stronger than Japan. Which aspect? Here, men say ladies first. But that depends on the woman’s appearance. My husband (Canadian) is kind to beautiful women only.... He often says that the woman over there is fat or something. I suspect that Canadian people are fussy about appearance.”

Mari admits to some advantages of beautiful women in Canada but she thinks that beautiful women are less advantageous in Canada compared to in Japan.

“I am a teacher. So, I am not sure if beautiful teachers have advantages or not. I think that they need abilities to work. Having only a sexy body does not help a teacher’s career, I guess. But in ordinary settings, beautiful women may have advantages, especially if they have a male boss. Do you think that it is easier for beautiful women to be employed if the boss is a man? Yes, I think so. But if the boss is a woman, beautiful women may have harder time. In Canada, there are many female bosses. Yes, it is difficult for them to live in Canada if they are just cute. In Japan, women are not expected to have abilities to work. They are expected to be there and do something men ask them to do. So, being cute is enough there but not here.”

Most interviewees perceive that being popular among men is one of the advantages of beautiful women both in Japan and Canada. However, they perceive that the types of women Japanese men like and Canadian men like are different. The two youngest women among my interviewees, Kana and Harumi, think that a skinny body is favoured in Japan but it is not enough in Canada.

“The largest difference between Japan and Canada is figures. If you are skinny, your figure is perfect in Japan but you have to be fit to a certain degree in Canada. You have to have a good balance, and have distinct curves in your body. Many women are sexy here.” (Kana)

Harumi also thinks that women who have fit body shapes are popular among Canadian men.

“Canadian men like a woman who is fit but not skinny. A woman’s body should have roundness. Women often have round bodies, don’t they? For example, breasts, shoulders, stomachs and bottoms should have roundness. It does not matter if some of the parts are big or small. Women’s bodies should be round but fit. I would call it healthy body. How about face? Women who have good smiling faces.”

Etsuko and Sayoko think that Canadians have different tastes from Japanese people about beautiful women. They think that exotic appearances may be advantageous.

“I think that Canadian people may think some people whose appearances are different from Caucasians are beautiful just because they are different.”
(Etsuko)

“my ex-boyfriend was a Canadian who has rarely seen Japanese people. When I traveled with him and whenever he saw an authentic Japanese face, which has single eyelids, extremely wide interval between eyes and is similar to Ukioe¹⁵, he said ‘she is beautiful.’ (Appendix 10) I was very surprised.”
(Sayoko)

Sayuri and Tamaki point out that Canadian men like sexy women.

“Sexy women are very popular (in Canada). Actually, I was quite surprised about that (since in Japan, sexy women are not very popular).” (Sayuri)

“a person who has her own opinion....A person whose appearance is sexy (is popular). When I see them, I feel ‘wow.’ Are you talking about clothing? Rather than clothing, their eyes and mouths are sexy. Rather than having big breasts, women whose actions are sexy are popular....and active, friendly, can do sports well, smart... are attractive as a partner.” (Tamaki)

Kana and Etsuko includes blonde as a characteristic of popular women.

“popular women are sexy, have large breasts, large bottoms, slim legs, beautiful blonde hair, beautiful teeth, beautiful skin or have confidence in herself.” (Kana)

“Canadian men say something politically correct (ig. Asian women are beautiful too) to me. But I would say they like blondes.” (Etsuko)

Mari points out blondness and also a sexy body.

“Canada? Blonde and this kind of body figure (she gestured the figure with her hands and the meaning is a figure which has curves.) like Barbie dolls. And a woman who clearly says something she thinks.” (Mari)

Shouko includes fashion model figures.

“a good body figure like fashion models may be popular (in Canada). Women with big breasts may be popular. Do you mean that women who have curves in their bodies are popular? Yes.” (Shouko)

Yuki includes being tall as a characteristic of popular women.

“I think that Canadian men like funny, kind, smart, slim, tall and beautiful women.” (Yuki)

Rather than appearance, Chikako thinks that women with pleasant personality are more important elements to be popular among men in Canada.

“I think that pleasant people are very popular. Especially, the people who can talk and have interesting stories are popular maybe because I have many intelligent friends, and I often go out with them. People who do not talk and are just beautiful are not popular. Do you mean that personality is more important than appearance? That’s right.”

Tamaki and Mari who have children noticed that Barbie dolls in Japan and Barbie dolls in Canada represent the standards of beauty in each society.

“I think that Barbie in Canada and Rika (a Japanese version of Barbie doll) in Japan are beauty symbols for men. For example, Barbie and Rika are different. But both of them have men’s favourite body figures in each society. Barbie has the body/figure that North American men like. Rika is the type Japanese men like. Rika is not sexy, rather cute. But Barbie is sexy. I would not describe Barbie as cute.” (Tamaki)

“Barbie has a sexy body even though she is a doll for little girls. Especially, this (she gestured the figure with her hands and the meaning is a figure which has distinct curves). I think that this Barbie is something Western people think is beautiful. And Japanese Rika is cute. Rika does not have this (this meaning is distinct curve of breast). The face has big eyes, and it looks infant. Barbie’s beauty and Rika’s cuteness are not opposite but they are types which Japanese and Western people seek as ideal. Rika looks like a 10 year old. Yes, her image is very cute. Barbie looks like 18 years old. But very small children here play with Barbie. I really do not understand why Barbie is attractive for them. But maybe, they want to be a woman like Barbie. Barbie is not at all beautiful for us (for Japanese women). If I use a bad word to describe, it would be like a woman who works in the sex industry. But if you seriously observe what types of women are popular among Canadian men, they are like women in the sex industry. They show their cleavage (she gestured widely opened collar with her hands). We (Japanese people) feel it is too much expose but people here do not perceive the way Japanese people may perceive. Many women here want to be like that and many men want to go out with those sexy people. For example, a woman in Star Trek on TV wears like this (she gestured clothing made of one piece spandex with her hands). I thought this is it. This type of women is often on TV. These women are women who people desire to be or desire to be with. We don’t see women like this in Japanese TV programs. Actresses on Japanese TV dramas are cute.” (Mari)

Most women I interviewed say that beautiful women have advantages in both countries. Most of them say that beautiful women have more advantage in employment opportunities, attentions and popularity among men in both countries.

However, between in Japan and Canada, the type of beautiful women is different, and popular personality among men is different.

Table 2: Ideal Beauty and Personality

	Japan (Rika type)	Canada (American Barbie type)
beauty	Skinny Child-like cute face	Fit and curved sexy bodies Tall height and blonde hair Sometimes exotic works.
Personality	Friendly Dependent Submissive Supportive	Independent Good at entertaining

Most of my interviewees perceived that women who are popular among men in Canada have some traits which most Japanese women do not have, such as curved, fit and sexy bodies, tall height and blonde hair even though few of these women also point out that exotic appearances may be advantageous in some respects. On the contrary, in Japan, women are not expected to have those elements but rather being cute skinny and having a submissive and dependent personality is the key to popularity. As two of my interviewees who are mothers of daughters articulated, Barbie dolls may represent an attractive woman/girl in Japan and Canada. All mothers of my interviewees do not have a good impression of Barbie dolls, especially Western Barbie dolls.

There is another aspect I should mention. Even though Japanese women's perceptions are already Westernized in Japan to the certain degree, their perceptions are not totally Westernized. For some women, it is not easy for them to adopt more Westernized perceptions in Canada. For example, Mari adopted the idea that big eyes, and a tall nose are elements of beautiful features but she could not adopt the more Westernized idea that a very sexy woman is also beautiful. My interviewees actively observe, compare and evaluate women in each country.

Self Evaluation of Beauty

Since most of these interviewees do not have a dependent personality and do not have blonde hair and curved bodies, their self-evaluation of their popularity both in Japan and Canada may not be too positive. I asked these women which people evaluate their own beauty more highly, Canadians or Japanese. I expected most of the women that I

interviewed to say that they are better evaluated in Japan than in Canada because there is no expectation to have a European face and/or body and no racism against Japanese women in Japan. However, only four women said that they are better evaluated in Japan than in Canada. The other six women said that they are better evaluated in Canada than in Japan. In this section, I will try to show their reasoning and how they vary.

Yuki, Sayuri, Shouko, and Sayoko perceive that Japanese people evaluate their beauty more highly than Canadians. The praises of their beauty by their Canadian husbands or boyfriends do not seem to affect their own evaluation of their beauty in Canada.

Yuki's Canadian husband often praises her beauty. However, this praising does not convince her to think that Canadian people better evaluate her appearance than Japanese people. In Canada, she does not feel that her appearance is valued as much as in Japan. There are complex feelings related to racism and ageism in Canada and Japan respectively.

“He (her husband) praises my appearance, intelligence and personality almost everyday. I am not sure if he really thinks about that everyday or not. I guess, he praises me because praising his partner is his custom. Even if this is his custom, I don't feel bad, actually, I feel good to be praised by him...but here, I am just an Asian. Since Canadian people think that blonde people are very beautiful, I am not valued much here. But this does not mean that Japanese people evaluate me much better than Canadians now because I am middle aged; hence in Japan I am not valued as an attractive woman.”

Sayuri's Canadian husband often praises her appearance too. Yet, it does not mean she thinks that Canadians evaluate her beauty more highly than Japanese do.

“Here, people see me as one of the Asians. But in Japan, people see me individually.” You mean that people here put you in a category of Asians, and they do not see you individually. Right. Do you mean that Canadian people do not highly evaluate Asians’ appearance? Right. Sometimes they recognize beautiful Asian women, but the rate is very low.”

Unlike Yuki, Sayuri is clear that Japanese people better evaluate her beauty than Canadians. Shouko’s and Sayoko’s partners (both are Canadians) do not praise their appearances but they make comments about Japanese women. Shouko’s husband often tells jokes about her and Japanese women’s appearances.

“He teases me by saying that my legs are short. He says that Japanese girls’ legs are short when he sees Japanese girls walking in downtown”

Shouko agrees with her husband, and she evaluates appearances of Canadian women more favourably than those of Japanese women.

“Canadian women have well proportioned bodies. Japanese women’s bottoms are not fit, and their legs are short. Japanese average height is shorter than Canadians. Accordingly, Canadians have better proportioned bodies than Japanese.”

Yet, rather than having negative perceptions as an Asian in Canada, her main reason why she is evaluated more highly in Japan than in Canada is that she beautified herself more in Japan.

“Maybe Japanese people evaluate my appearance better. In Japan, I felt a lot of pressure and accordingly, I beautified myself a little bit more in Japan than here. Appearance can be improved if we make efforts.”

Sayoko thinks exotic faces are favourable in Canada so that some Japanese women are seen as beautiful; however, she believes that she is not in the exotic category and perceives herself as unattractive for Canadians.

“Canadians like an Asian face which is an authentic Japanese face¹⁶ or a typical White people’s face. We may be surprised their taste. So, a person like me would be very ugly in this society because I am neither similar to White people or an authentic Japanese person. You are beautiful. No, I don’t think so. It may be what Japanese people perceive but it is not what Canadians perceive. I think my face is not valued here. Is that so? I think so.”

These four women believe that their appearance is valued less in Canada than in Japan. All of these four women perceive that Asian beauty is not well valued in Canada; accordingly, they perceive that their appearances are not well valued here. On the contrary, more than half of my interviewees say that they are considered to be more beautiful in Canada than in Japan. Their reasons vary. Even though Kana and Tamaki say that Canadians evaluate them better than Japanese people, they do not perceive any positive or negative sign from Canadian people, such as being admired or criticized for their appearances. Yet, they feel negative signs from Japanese people, which is why they perceive that Canadian people evaluate them better. Kana’s and Tamaki’s husbands praise their appearances quite often but these praises are not the reason why they feel more positively about their appearances in Canada.

“Rather than that (being praised by her husband), I do not feel negative reactions from people here. I compared my appearance with main stream people, such as actresses or models (in Japan). But here, I do not compare with those people anymore.” (Kana)

This means that Kana who is the second youngest interviewee, compared herself to Japanese models and felt that her beauty was less than theirs. But she does not compare herself to western models and actresses in Canada because she feels they are too different. Therefore, she is less anxious about her appearance in Canada.

Tamaki does not feel her beauty is valued in Canada but thinks that she would not get criticised in regards to her fashion which is one of the beauty elements in Canada.

“when I was in Japan, people may have been highly evaluating me regarding my Americanized fashion sense. But if I go back to Japan now and wear clothing that I wear here, I would be out of date. Fashionable Japanese people here always severely criticize Canadian fashion sense. In the same way, my fashion sense, which is very Westernized would be badly criticized in Japan. But it does not mean that Canadian people praise my fashion sense. I am just average here.” (Tamaki)

That is, Tamaki perceives that her fashion sense, which is one of the beauty elements, is out of date in Japan but it is average in Canada. Therefore, she feels Canadians may better evaluate her beauty.

Etsuko and Mari perceive positive signs from Canadians. Etsuko thinks Canadians would evaluate her beauty better than Japanese people even though her ex-boyfriend did not praise her appearance, and she perceives that Canadian men like blonde women. She says “I am a foreigner here. So they may give me a plus point out of curiosity.” It means that she perceives that exotic women are also seen as favourable in Canada.

On the other hand, Mari thinks she fits in Canada more than Japan in regards to beauty. “My tall height is good here. It fits here.” She also felt uncomfortable about the demands from Japanese society, especially the demand to beautify herself the way women in her age-group are supposed to.

“Japan has clear-cut categories. I mean that you are expected to behave your age. If you do not fit this category, you are seen as a weird person. And I did not fit into these categories in Japan. But Canadian people do not confine themselves in categories. So, I feel more relaxed here.”

Chikako and Harumi say that Canadians better evaluate them because Canadians praise them more than Japanese people. However, both women somehow doubt if Canadians really mean it. Therefore, they are not really sure.

“North Americans praise people directly and quite a lot. Japanese people praise but do not praise directly. People here are really good at praising. But it does not mean that they really mean it. Praising may be courtesy. I am not sure but I feel people here better evaluate me than Japanese people.”
(Chikako)

“Well, I am not sure which national better evaluates me but Canadian people praise me more than Japanese people. Japanese people do not praise till they have some alcohol. They do not talk about what they really think till they get drunk enough. Japanese boys do not directly praise but rather, they point out my bad points...” (Harumi)

However, Harumi doubts when Canadian men praise her.

“many Canadian men go out with Japanese women because they want to have sex with Asian women. There are many Canadian men who pursue Asian women. Many Asian women are deceived. Many Japanese women do not realize that they are deceived but it often happens. I try to be careful about it. Whenever a Canadian man says ‘you are beautiful,’ I always think ‘what do you want?’”

That is, even though Chikako and Harumi doubt what Canadian men say, they still perceive that Canadians better evaluate them than Japanese people.

Only four of my interviewees said that they are better evaluated in Japan than in Canada. Most of these four women felt Asian beauty is not well valued in Canada. The other six women said that they are better evaluated in Canada than in Japan. However, these better self evaluations in Canada are not affirmative but rather complex for most of these women. The second youngest interviewee compared herself to Japanese models and felt her beauty was not appreciated in Japan. But she does not compare herself to Western models and actresses in Canada because she feels they are too different. Therefore, she has less negative feelings about her appearance in Canada. One of the women perceives that her fashion sense, which is one of the beauty elements, is out of date in Japan but it is average in Canada. Therefore, she feels Canadians may better

evaluate her beauty. Another woman perceives that some Canadian men like exotic women even though she thinks that Canadian men favour blond women over others. One feels good about her beauty because some of her beauty characteristics fit in Canada, such as being tall. Yet, she thinks that Canadian men favour shapely bodied women whom she thinks different from her. Two of the women feel their appearances are valued more in Canada because they get praised more often by Canadian people than by Japanese people. Yet they are not sure what Canadians really think.

Shifts in Beautification Practices

With these complex perceptions in their minds, Japanese women have shifted their beautification practices. In this section, I will try to illustrate the shifts in these women's beautification practices and their reasoning.

All women I interviewed say that Japanese people spend more money and time on cosmetics and fashion than Canadians. Some of them point out that Japanese people love to buy expensive brand cosmetics and clothing. In this consumerist environment, all of these women may have felt more pressured to beautify themselves in Japanese society than in Canadian society. These experiences in both countries have affected the beautification practices of these women. Eight out of ten interviewees have been university students both in Japan and Canada. These eight women went to a Japanese university first. Except Harumi, all women had worked in Japan before they came to Canada. In order to see how their perceptions have affected or have not affected their shifts of self-beautification practices, I wrote a short description of the perceptions for each interviewee.

In the following section, I will illustrate two cases: considerable shifts post relocation and moderate shifts post relocation.

Considerable shifts post relocation

Yuki, Mari, Harumi, Chikako and Sayoko beautify themselves in Canada considerably less than in Japan.

Yuki

Yuki has considerably shifted her self-beautification practices since she came to Canada. She believes that beautiful women have advantages in both countries, such as more employment opportunities, attention and popularity among men. She thinks that women who are popular among Canadian men have blonde hair, a kind personality and are funny, smart, slim, tall and beautiful. Yuki thinks that Japanese people better evaluate her appearance than Canadians because she thinks that Canadian people do not value Asian appearances.

Yuki was never interested in spending a lot of money on beautification in Japan. “Japanese people buy expensive brand clothing and brand cosmetics. I did not buy them but people around me did and wore a lot of expensive brand name products.” Even though she did not spend a lot of money on her beautification, she beautified herself in Japan much more than in Canada. When Yuki was a university student in Japan, she put on cosmetics, such as foundation, lipsticks and eye-makeup. Moreover, she cared about fashion more. She says, “I certainly dressed up more than I do here. I often wore skirts. I never wore jeans with sneakers to go to school, I believe.” When Yuki worked in Japan, she continued to care about fashion but she was against brand names. “I tried to be

fashionable. But I was against brand name products.” Instead of using money on fashion, she used money for sports.

“When I was in Japan, I really loved skiing. I worked the whole year so that I could go skiing. Accordingly, my resources for fashion were limited so, I didn’t spend much money on fashion or cosmetics, and I felt it was a waste to spend money just for designer names.”

Yuki cared about her appearance in Japan for a variety of reasons.

“It was quite normal thing to do. Japanese women put on cosmetics when they go out. I liked to be attractive, and I wanted some kind of attention from people. I liked it when people said to me I was beautiful. Compared to now, I had money to spend on fashion and cosmetics. I felt ugly when I did not put on cosmetics. I put on cosmetics all the time when I worked. It was my everyday custom. I did it even on the weekends.”

That is, beautification was something that made her feel good, brought her attention and she felt it is something most Japanese women did. Moreover, once putting on cosmetics became her custom, she could not do without it. If she did not beautify herself, she felt she was ugly. Furthermore, she worked so that she could afford to buy whatever she wanted. However, since she came to Canada, she has been wearing casual clothing. She says, “I usually wear jeans, T shirts and sweater. Nothing special.” She stopped putting on cosmetics about one year ago. There are several reasons why she decided not to care about her beauty.

“I felt really good not having to care about my appearance in Canada. The reason I put on cosmetics till one year ago was that it was just my custom. Since I was a child, I was always told to be beautiful or cute by my mother. But in Canada, many people around me do not put on cosmetics, specially students. So, I do not feel pressured to put on cosmetics or be fashionable. I enjoy the freedom from the pressures to be beautiful. My husband does not seem to care. So, it is good. But for Christmas parties or that kind of formal occasion, I put on cosmetics and try to be fashionable. Why did you decide not to care about your beauty? Maybe because I took feminist courses here, putting on cosmetics is troublesome, and I did not feel it’s necessary. I am busy with

studying too. I cannot afford it either. Many of my friends do not put on cosmetics. These circumstances may have affected me.”

That is, she felt pressures to beautify herself in Japan, and people around her beautified themselves too. However, in Canada, those pressures mostly disappeared, and those surrounding her in the university do not beautify themselves much. Moreover, her husband seems not to care. So basically, she does not feel pressured to beautify herself in Canada. However, this does not mean that there are no pressures on her to do so. She feels frustrated when people do not take seriously women’s intelligence and/or ability to work but only consider women’s beauty.

“People see beautiful women as valuable. Many people do not care how much education you have or, what kind of job you have if you are a woman. What they care about is the beauty. Of course, there are some people who think other things are more important but I do not think there are many of these people. Outside of university, I often get comments about my appearance but not my education or my job. For example, my mother in law does not care about the struggles and sacrifices I have made to keep up graduate studies as an international student and get a teaching job. She does not even mention it. What she says is “you should go to this beauty salon, you should change your eyebrow shape, you should wear skirts.” These things are very important for her. I cannot blame her. But I just want a little recognition of my abilities and accomplishments”

Yuki is not only dealing with frustration due to outside pressures but she is also dealing with internal conflicts. She feels that she is against beautifying practices but she feels she should beautify because she feels if she does not beautify herself, she will lose possible benefits and/or advantages in society.

“I know that I have conflicts in my mind. I have been studying feminism and I really think that society should not judge women based on their beauty. Women should oppose this kind of society. On the other hand, I feel I have to conform to society through putting on cosmetics and being fashionable because otherwise, I may lose a lot of benefits. We need money to sustain ourselves. To get money, we have to conform to society to a certain degree. It is ironic and sad. But what can we do?”

Therefore, she feels she will beautify herself again soon. However, conforming to society is not the only reason.

“maybe I feel like I need some kind of change in my life. I have been a student for too long. I am looking for a real job in Canada, and I know that cosmetics can help me to get a job. And recently, I have been feeling like I should please my husband. He says that I don’t have to do anything. But I want to be attractive to him.”

That is, somehow Yuki thinks or knows that her husband would be more attracted to her if she beautified herself even though he has never asked her to beautify herself.

Yuki has shifted her self-beautification practices considerably less because mostly, she feels less pressures in Canada. For her, self-beautification was a normal thing to do in Japan. Yet, she was relieved not having pressures to be beautiful for society and/or family. Even comparing her university lives, she beautifies less in Canada. However, she feels that she has to beautify herself in the future to be more loved by her husband and not to lose benefit from society even though she has internal conflicts.

Mari

Mari beautifies herself considerably less in Canada than in Japan. She thinks that beautiful women have advantages in both countries but less in Canada. She thinks women who are popular among Canadian men have blonde hair and sexy curved bodies. She perceives that Canadians better evaluate her appearance than Japanese people because some of her beauty characteristics fit in Canada, such as being tall.

When Mari was a university student in Japan, she put on cosmetics for various reasons. Mari started putting on cosmetics when she became a university student in Japan. She explains why she started.

“It was because I could not do it (put on cosmetics) at all when I was a high school student (high school students were forbidden to wear makeup). Did you put on makeup everyday? I think whenever I went to the university, I did. Did you feel pressures from your friends? Not really because my friends were not very conscious. But, there were some people who cared. There were many kinds of people.... I put on foundation, lipsticks and eye-makeup. At that time, blue eye-shadow was very popular. I put cosmetics on because other people did it and I thought that cosmetics helped me to be more attractive. And I enjoyed the newly found freedom to put on cosmetics. When I was a high school student, I was not allowed to put on cosmetics. So, I enjoyed that freedom as a university student.”

She wore expensive brand name products at that time.

“At that time, some people were fashionable and they were into Comusare Mode fashion. Some were into Pink House fashion. Some were into Surfer fashion. Some were into JJ fashion (JJ is a name of fashion magazine which advertise quite formal clothing). I was into JJ fashion because my mother bought those clothing.”

Mari dressed up when she was in Japan. She says, “When I was in Japan, I always went out with formal clothing.” When Mari worked in Japan, she put on cosmetics. The reason that she put on cosmetics in Japan was in response to the large pressures from her male co-workers.

“I put on foundation, lipsticks and eye-makeup. It is true that I put on cosmetics to be attractive. But there was also an expectation from my male co-workers. They were quite picky about female co-workers’ beauty. Women had to be beautiful. Women’s beauty was taken for granted.”

That is, Mari beautified herself in Japan because she enjoyed the freedom which allowed her to put on cosmetics when she was a university student. She felt that cosmetics aided her in looking more attractive. Furthermore, Mari perceived pressures from her male co-workers when she was working at the office. However, she has shifted her beautification practices since she came to Canada. Mari has been dressing casually in Canada.

“I am not embarrassed if I wear clothing which was popular 10 years ago here, but I would be embarrassed in Japan.....I completely changed (the way I dress). When I was in Japan, I always went out with formal clothing. But now, look at me. Now, I am careful not to be too formal. Because if I wear the suits which I wore in Japan, coworkers ask me ‘are you going to be attending a marriage ceremony?’ really”

The use of cosmetics is also less.

“I put on less cosmetics now. Why? Because people do not put on much cosmetics here so, if I put on cosmetics in Japanese fashion, then, I may be out of place and won’t fit in. When I put on cosmetics in Japanese fashion, my coworkers asked me “are you going to attend a marriage ceremony?”. So, I put on less makeup now.”

That is, the reason is that casual clothing fits her work place; moreover, she does not feel pressures to beautify from Canadian society. However, this does not mean that she completely stopped beautifying herself in Canada. Currently, Mari puts on a light foundation and lipstick.

“because of my age, nowadays, my face does not look healthy without cosmetics. I look dead. I put on foundation because I want to hide my blotches. The reason why I don’t put on eye-makeup is because it is troublesome.”

Even though she does not feel pressured from Canadians to put on makeup, she puts on cosmetics because she feels she is aging.

Mari felt pressured by her male co-workers in Japan to beautify herself. She feels more relaxed and less pressured about self-beautification in Canada. Accordingly, she beautifies herself considerably less in Canada. Even comparing her university lives, she beautifies less in a Canada. However currently, she puts on more foundation because she feels she is aging, and she feels she needs to do something with it.

Harumi

Harumi also beautifies herself much less in Canada than in Japan. Harumi perceives that beautiful women are advantageous in both countries but these advantages are restricted depending on the job. She perceives that women who are popular among Canadian men have fit bodies and are shapely. She thinks Canadians better evaluate her appearance than Japanese people.

Harumi is the youngest among my interviewees, and was the most enthusiastic in pursuing standards of beauty in Japan. Since Harumi was a child, her father has been worried about Harumi becoming fat.

“When I was an elementary school student, I did not exercise much. So, my father often warned me that if I didn’t exercise, my legs would be fat, and he made me exercise on the stationary bike at home saying “it is ugly if you get fat.” He made me do push ups too.”

When Harumi was a high school student, she puts on cosmetics and cared about what she wore everyday.

“I was very conscious about beauty. I went on a diet, grew my hair long and put on cosmetics even if I was late for school. The school rules forbade makeup. But I ignored the rules and put natural makeup. I did not go to school if my hair was not perfect... I cared about all the clothing that I wore. I even wore brand name socks. I bought new clothing each time I went to a live-concert. When I was a high school student, wearing T shirts and jeans was the fad. Whenever I saw clothing on TV advertisements, I tried to buy it. There was a TV commercial which said “Heins’ white is refreshing.” I bought Heins’ T shirts and wore them. I was really slim at that time I weighted 46.7 kilograms. The jeans looked good on me because I was very slim. I wore short pants too. So, you pursued the fad. Yes. I was always looking for something which looked good on me. I would have spent the whole day to buy one pair of jeans.”

Harumi continued to put on cosmetics when she was a university student in Japan.

“How did you put cosmetics on? When I was in Japan, I put on eye-shadow, and I used three kinds of colors. I felt inferior because my eyelids look swollen. So, everyday, I tapped my eyelids many times, massaged my face, exercise my face by moving my mouth, and pulling my nose up to make it taller. Actually, my grandmother pulled my nose up every night saying “your nose is too short....I even put cosmetics on while I was listening to lectures. I guess my instructors disliked me. I manicured in a class. I had my ears pierced and coloured my hair after I became a university student because it was prohibited in my high school.”

She cared even more about clothing when she was a university student than she did when she was a high school student.

“my university friends were very fussy about brand names. Some people said to me that I looked dirty because I wore Fiz (a brand name) which I liked right after I became a university student. So, other students did not wear that kind of clothing? No. They wore even pumps. Do you know about T42? It is one of the brand names. No, I don't. This brand sells cute and conservative clothing. I liked this brand. I liked brands which were in the magazine, *Bansankan*. I liked bargain of Rope (a brand name). So, there were many fashionable people in your university. Yes, that's right. Of course, there were students who were not into it but students around me were quite fashionable.”

That is, she was encouraged to care about her appearance by her family, and she was very willing to buy expensive brand name clothing and beautify herself in Japan. She felt she did not look good if she did not put cosmetics on. However, since she came to Canada, Harumi has shifted the way she puts on makeup.

“Now, I only put cosmetics on my eyelids. I rarely use three kinds of colors on my eyelids anymore. I rarely use foundation either. How about using lipsticks? Getting less, especially when I come to school. Then, you use lipsticks when you go out? Yes. I do. I don't use perfume anymore although I used to use it everyday. Do you feel pressures to put on cosmetics here in Canada? No, I don't at all.”

Harumi has gradually shifted the way she dresses up.

“As a Japanese TA, I thought that I needed to show how a Japanese instructor would dress in a Japanese university. So, I put on cosmetics and wore nice clothing. But now I go to university by bike and I have gotten used to being a TA. Now... I wear jeans..... How about when you attend classes? I wore nice clothing at the beginning. But now, I wear jeans.

Harumi has also shifted her idea and practice to shape her body.

“Just being skinny is not enough (in Canada). You mean that in Japan, being skinny is enough but in Canada, it is not enough. That’s right.....The effort to become a beautiful woman for Canadians is exercising. For Japanese women, it is dieting (get slim). I shifted my idea and practice.”

However, Harumi did not completely fix her idea. She shifts her idea depending on society she is situated in.

“Still now, every time before I go back to Japan, I feel a pressured to be slim. And while I am in Japan, I feel I have to be slim. How about when you come back here from Japan? I feel like going to gym.”

Harumi’s mother also encourages her to put on cosmetics.

“Whenever I go back to Japan, my mother says that I should put on cosmetics because if I don’t, I don’t look good.”

Even though Harumi thinks beautiful women do not have much of an advantage to be hired as university instructors, she would put cosmetics for the future interviews for a university instructor job because she needs to look intelligent.

“I’ve heard that the first impressions are very important and that as soon as a person opens the door of the interview room, almost immediately the decision to be hired or not is made. If I want to be a professor, I need to put on cosmetics to look intelligent.”

When Harumi buys clothing, she also wants to look intelligent. She says, “Now I am in the world of academics. So, I think I have to look intelligent. I buy clothing if it helps me to look more intelligent.”

That is, in Japan, she beautified herself much more than in Canada. Her friends in Japan were very conscious about pursuing standards of beauty. She felt pressured from her family too. However, after she came to Canada, she did not feel pressured by Canadian society to beautify herself. She has gradually discontinued beautifying herself. Even comparing her university lives, she beautifies less in Canada. However, this does not mean that Harumi will not beautify herself in the future. She says that she would beautify herself and try to look intelligent for her future job interviews.

Chikako

Chikako also beautifies herself far less in Canada than in Japan. She believes that beautiful women have advantages in both countries, such as more employment opportunities. She thinks that popular women among Canadian men are women who can tell interesting stories. Chikako thinks that Canadian people better evaluate her appearance because she perceives that Canadian people praise her appearance more.

She did not go to university in Japan and worked at a bank right after she graduated from high school.

“At that time, I could spend a lot of money on beautification. Sales people of cosmetics companies, such as MaxFactor or Kanebo, came to my work place to sell their products. I used Kanebo’s products. Did you use foundation, lipsticks, and eye-shadow? I did not put on eye-shadow... only foundation, lipstick and check rouge. I tried to put on eye-shadow and eye-liner after I came to Canada. Did you put on cosmetics everyday when you worked in Japan? Yes, I did. Were you asked to do so by your employer? No, but everybody did so, if I did not, people may have thought that I was strange. Did you feel pressured to wear nice clothing because other people were fashionable? Could be, but rather than that, I preferred to be creative and wore my own combination of clothing. So, I wanted to buy or make clothing by myself.”

That is, Chikako put cosmetics on because it was the norm in Japan and she liked to be creative with clothing. However, after Chikako came to Canada, and started going to a university and an art school, she shifted her beautifying practices. She stopped beautifying herself.

“At that time, we (Chikako and her husband) were poor. It was just after he graduated from university and started working. We needed money for other things. I really could not afford to beautify myself. I noticed the change in the way I dressed and beautified myself from time when I worked in Japan.... I was really busy at that time. I studied and had a daughter too. Other students did not put on cosmetics either.”

That is, due to the lack of time and money, she could not beautify herself just after coming to Canada. Currently, Chikako has adopted the Canadian way of beautification.

“I started putting on eye-line and eye-shadow after I came to North America...I wash my face, put cream on, put foundation, put powder and draw eyebrows. I sometimes put on lipsticks but not always because it disappears anyway at the end of the day. Since I came to Canada, I have started putting on eye-makeup. Why did you start doing it? I just wanted to try. Many Canadian women do not put foundation but they put eye-makeup. They don't even put lipsticks but put eye shadow. This practice may have affected me.”

She bought expensive brand cosmetics in Japan but now, she does not use those brand cosmetics.

“I buy only cheap cosmetics. Whenever I go back to Japan, I buy a lot of the Chifure products (which are one of the cheapest cosmetics in Japan). It suits my skin. My daughter laughs at me saying that ‘you only buy cheap cosmetics’. But I want to use cosmetics products that are good for my skin and don't want to spend a lot of money on cosmetics. I cannot afford either.”

Chikako feels good about not having any pressures from society but she also feels good to be fashionable. Now, she can afford to buy clothing.

“They (the ways of dressing up in Japan and Canada) are totally different. For example, in Japan, when people go out, it does not matter where they go, they always make themselves beautiful. They wear something nice to go out. But in North America, there is no such a custom. Clothing in North America is very casual. My mother has told me that I have changed and wear casual clothing now. What do you think about what your mother said? I think it is good. I feel relax about that point. But I sometimes feel like wearing beautiful clothing. I cannot afford to buy everything I want to but I earn money by myself now but only enough to buy one or two clothes. I try not to wear jeans when I go out. But I have to be conscious of what I wear because I don’t want to be too dressy or too casual. It depends on who I am seeing on that day. If I am meeting dressy people, then, I wear dressy clothing. If I am meeting casual people, then, I wear casual clothing. I believe that it is courtesy.

Chikako also expresses complex feelings about aging and its effects on her appearance. She says,

“My concerns about my appearance currently differ from when I was younger. When I was younger, I often looked at mirror and cared about my hair. But already I am old. I cannot do anything about it. Yet, the older I get, the more I don’t want other people to think that I am old....but my appearance does not get younger. So... well, I cannot do anything about it.”

That is, in Japan, Chikako beautified herself much more than in Canada. She beautified herself in Japan because it was the norm to do so. Moreover, she liked thinking about coordination of fashion. After she came to Canada, she did not feel much pressured to beautify and she felt good about it. Now, she is working and earning income in Canada and she buys clothing more often than when she just came to Canada. She adjusts her self-beautification depending on who would be coming to the meetings and/or parties. She feels a need to do something about her aging.

Sayoko

Sayoko's case is quite unique. I put her in this category because at least compared to when she was a student in Japan, she beautifies herself considerably less as a student in Canada. She significantly shifted self-beautification practices when she changed her job in Japan. She believes that beautiful women have advantages in both countries, such as more employment opportunities. She thinks that women who are popular among Canadian men have characteristics of typical European people or of Japanese people¹⁷. She thinks that Japanese people better evaluate her appearance than Canadians because her facial characteristics are far from those popular types in Canada.

When Sayoko was a university student in Japan, she put cosmetics on, including foundation, lipstick and eye-makeup. The reason was "It was because my school was in downtown Tokyo. So, most students were fashion conscious, and putting cosmetics on was common among them. So, it was natural for me to put makeup on." When she was a university student in Japan, she was fashion conscious. She said, "I wore trendy clothing and/or clothing with brand names. Most students did it too." Sayoko talks about the way Japanese women pursue the standard of beauty.

"When I was a university student, surfer fashion was very popular and everybody wore blue eye shadow even though the color did not suit the Japanese women. ... In Japan, women try to imitate what other people do. They wear similar clothing too. But this total conformity does not exist in Canada...."

When Sayoko worked in the travel agency, she applied cosmetics, including foundation, lipstick and eye-makeup. The reason was

“I had to. Was there a written rule? No, it wasn’t written. But there was an enormous pressure from the company. How about clothing? Pants were forbidden...”

Sayoko felt pressured to spend money on expensive brand products in Japan. “Co-workers in the travel agency were competitive in regards to clothing and brand names. They competed by buying the products which were seen as the most fashionable at that time.” Sayoko resisted wearing or buying clothing which other people had but she still bought expensive brand products which were not the most common among her co-workers. She says “I was determined to differentiate myself. For example, if one of them bought Louis Vuitton then I bought the other brand.”

She talks about the Japanese brand tendency comparing to Canadians.

“I think that Japanese people spend much more money on their beautification than Canadians. How about time? Time too... Japanese people use very expensive cosmetics but Canadian people do not have this custom. People here, even adult women, use cheap cosmetics which are sold at London Drugs... Japanese people are fussy about cosmetics. They often say that I have to use Chanel’s lipsticks or have to use Christian Dior’s eye shadows. I guess that they think expensive cosmetics make them beautiful.”

Even though she was very eager to be fashionable when she worked at a travel agency, she completely changed her beautifying practices when she worked at a publishing company as an editor. In that company, some of her co-workers were Australians who were European origin.

“The publisher did not have any restrictions. We had complete freedom of what we wore. So, I wore clothing which I did not wear in the travel agency. Did you wear jeans in publishing company? Yes, I did. I wore clothing I wear now... Very casual. I did not put on cosmetics at all. It may be a reaction to too much restriction in the travel agency.”

That is, she experienced some Western work environment even though she was in Japan. In Canada, as a student, she does not beautify herself. But in the future, she may.

“I don’t put cosmetics on at all. Never? Never. You don’t put on cosmetics even occasionally? Never ever. Why? No use to while I am a student. I may do that when I get a job here.”

Sayoko expresses her complex feeling about being Asian.

“Asians in general do not look better than White people anyway. So, it is no use to make any effort. And if we wear nice clothing, we may be out of place and won’t fit in Canada, especially on campus. So it may be better not to do anything.”

That is, compared to when she was a student in Japan, she beautifies herself considerably less as a student in Canada. She shifted her beautification practices considerably when she changed her job in Japan. Therefore, there is very little beautification difference between when she worked as an editor and right now. She perceives that it is no use making any effort to beautify herself in Canada because an Asian’s appearance does not look better than Whites anyway.

Moderate shifts post relocation

Sayuri, Etsuko, Kana, Tamaki and Shouko have moderately shifted their self-beautification practices since they came to Canada. Sayuri, Etsuko and Kana cared about their beautification in Japan, and they continue to do so in Canada. Tamaki and Shouko did not beautify themselves much in Japan and still do not in Canada.

Sayuri

Sayuri beautifies herself slightly less in Canada. She believes that beautiful women have more advantages in Canada than in Japan. She thinks that popular women among Canadian men are women who are sexy. Sayuri thinks that Japanese people better evaluate her appearance because she thinks that Canadian people do not value Asian appearances.

She started putting on cosmetics (lipsticks and eye-shadow) when she was in a Japanese college.

“I was curious about how to put a makeup on because I was not allowed to put on makeup until I became a college student. It was my experimental period.”

Sayuri wore fad clothing when she was a college student in Japan. She says, “When I was a college student, 'Trad (traditional)' fashion was popular, so I wore a (polo) shirt and a skirt or culottes with high socks and Trad shoes.” She was brand conscious and bought Trad brand such as New Yorker and Brooks Brothers. It was because

“The clothing that I wore was not so expensive. I could buy them by my allowance. In addition, I was working at a clothing store near my school as a part-time worker, so I was told by the manager at the store that I had to wear decent clothing.”

When Sayuri worked in a bank, she put cosmetics (lipsticks and eye-shadow) on because “We were told by a boss at the training period for new employees that we should put makeup on. We had to look like clerks in a bank.” (In Japan, bank clerk is a quite prestigious job.) However, it does not mean that she felt unpleasant pressures from company or her coworkers.

“Rather than a feeling pressured, I yearned to be like my senior co-workers who earned a lot of money and bought a lot of good clothing. I did not feel it

was a pressure. Did you buy a lot of clothing like your senior co-workers did? Yes I did. What kind of clothing? It was famous brand clothing.”

Contrary to Yuki and Chikako, Sayuri does not feel good about the more relaxed environment in Canada.

“Japanese people are more fashionable than Canadians... In Canada, people wear only T shirts and jeans. In Japan, we don’t see people who wear T shirts and jeans outside.... I am trying not to be like Canadians.... I try not to wear T shirts and jeans.”

Even though Sayuri cares about clothing, Currently, Sayuri does not put cosmetics on except for when she gets some kinds of stimulus, such as seeing beautiful people in movies.

“I rarely put cosmetics on. One reason that I sometimes put makeup on is to make myself recognize that I am in a formal situation. To go to school and study is a casual setting for me, so I do not want to put makeup on, besides, I do not get stimulus by going to school. When I see beautiful women in movies, I sometimes get stimulus and feel I should beautify myself more. Yet, in the summer time, I put cosmetics because I don’t want to get suntan.”

However, she currently feels some kinds of need to care for her appearance.

“Since I came to Canada, I gained a lot of weight. I sometimes do sailing. Accordingly, the number of my freckles and blotches has increased. So, I am wondering what I should do with them.”

That is, she beautifies moderately less in Canada. She wore brand clothing in Japan. In Canada, she still cares about her fashion to a degree that she does not wear jeans and T shirts like Canadians do. Even comparing her university lives, she beautifies less in Canada. Currently, she does not put cosmetics on except in stimulating situations and summertime but she feels she has to put cosmetics on in order to do protect her skin from freckles and blotches.

Etsuko

Etsuko also beautifies herself slightly less in Canada. She believes that beautiful women have advantages in both countries, such as more employment opportunities. She thinks that women who are popular among Canadian men have blonde hair or are exotic. Etsuko thinks that Canadian people better evaluate her appearance than Japanese people because she thinks that exotic women are seen as attractive.

When Etsuko was a university student in Japan, she only puts on lipstick. She says, “I did not know how to put cosmetics on. I remember that once my friend gave me a foundation. But I did not know what to do with it.” At that time, she wore something her friend recommended. Etsuko says,

“I wore basically tight jeans and short skirts. It was because my friends said that I should show my legs. Did you like them? No, actually, I did not feel comfortable with them. Tight jeans are not relaxing. And I worried if I showed my underwear when I wore short skirts. I felt insecure. But those short skirts were very popular at that time.”

When Etsuko worked in an office in Japan, she put cosmetics on, such as foundation, lipsticks and eye-makeup even though it was not a written rule. She says, “in addition to conformity to other women, I felt unbalance if I did not put cosmetics on because I wore a uniform which was very outstanding. So, I put cosmetics on to create balance between my face and uniform.” She also says “I thought that I looked better when I put cosmetics on. It was the proper and polite thing to do.” Yet, she was not very willing to pursue faddish clothing.

“By looking at my friend who bought a lot of clothing, I felt I should also buy one item of clothing every month when I started working. But basically, I was not interested in fashion so I stopped doing that soon. My family often teased me because I wore my sister’s clothing. I felt it was a waste of money to buy clothing. My family often said, ‘buy your own clothing!’”

Etsuko was not conscious about brand fashion either. She says,

“brand clothing was too expensive and I could not afford to buy. I was not interested in expensive brand clothing.”

When Etsuko came to Canada to be a student the first time, she put cosmetics on continuously. She says “putting cosmetics was natural for me. I got used to seeing my face with cosmetics.” Yet, she sometimes tried to change the way she was putting cosmetics on a little bit.

“my Japanese friend here said that it (using foundation) is not good for our skin. Skin cannot breathe if we do. I don’t know if it is true or not. But there are many Japanese women here who do not put on foundation. So, I thought I should give a shot.”

She brought clothing from Japan, and she did not buy clothing in Canada because she did not have income anymore. She says, “I wore something I wore in Japan. But I tried to chose something like students wore but not too casual because I was not teenager anymore.”

When Etsuko went back to Japan after graduating from a Canadian university, she started buying clothing which was very comfortable.

“I put on cosmetics, such as foundation, lipsticks and eye-makeup. I did not change my hair color or put blue eye-shadow which was very popular in Japan. I did not follow the fad of fashion. I looked for something good on me and comfortable. But as I get older, I focus on showing who I am. When I choose clothing, I pick up something I feel comfortable or good in. Before, I pursued fad of fashion but now, I wear something I feel good in.”

Even though she wore comfortable clothing in Japan, they were still formal compared to clothing she wears now.

“When I was in Japan, I wore more formal clothing. But recently, I often wear informal skirts which I buy at a second-hand shop. I did not wear skirts

which did not have liner or clothing which shows straps of bra in Japan. But, I don't care those things in Canada and I wear them."

After she came to Canada again, she has been continuously putting cosmetics on.

"For me, putting cosmetics on is quite natural thing to do. It is something I do everyday except days which I do not go anywhere and nobody visits me. One reason why I put cosmetics on is to feel ready to do something. I look better when I put cosmetics on than when I don't. I think that I look more attractive and healthier when I put cosmetics on."

However, she has slightly diminished her beautification practices.

"When I was in Japan, I put on foundation almost everyday but I sometimes do not put foundation on nowadays."

Contrary to Yuki's feminist point of view, Etsuko perceives that women wearing no cosmetics are arrogant.

"When I see women who do not put on cosmetics, I feel they are weird. I may be brainwashed. Some women are okay without cosmetics but for some women, it is better to put on cosmetics. They may have beliefs about beautification. I feel they are arrogant."

That is, before Etsuko came to Canada for the first time, she followed fashion to a degree but was not interested in brand fashion. After she came to Canada for the first time, she beautified herself a little bit less than in Japan. She wore something students wear but not too informal. After she went back to Japan, she started buying clothing which she felt comfortable in, and she was not interested in the latest fad. After coming to Canada for the second time, she beautifies herself continuously but less formally. Even comparing her university lives, she beautifies less in Canada.

Kana

Kana also beautifies herself slightly less in Canada. She believes that beautiful women have advantages in both countries, such as gaining more attention. She thinks that women who are popular among Canadian men are sexy, have large breasts, large bottoms, slim legs, blonde hair and beautiful teeth, skin and have self-confidence. Kana thinks that Canadian people evaluate her appearance better than Japanese people. When she went to the university in Japan, she did not beautify herself much. She only put on lipsticks and wore jeans or very casual clothing on weekdays even though she saw many female university students who beautified themselves.

“I belonged to a martial art club in the university and practiced martial art almost everyday. I did not want to get my martial art uniform dirty with cosmetics, and I did not want to make other people’s uniforms dirty either. When I did not go to the club, I went to the pool to teach swimming. So, there was no point in putting on cosmetics those days. My friends did not put cosmetics on either.”

But when Kana went to downtown on the weekends, she put on a foundation and lipstick, and wore something nicer.

“I wanted to fit the environment because other girls in downtown put cosmetics on and wore fashionable clothing. And I wanted to enjoy the occasion to go to downtown with fashionable outfit.”

When Kana came to Canada in 1994 as a university student, she put on lipsticks and eye-makeup but no more than that.

“When I was studying here before, usually I didn't put on makeup, except for putting on lipsticks and drawing (darkening) the eyebrows. I didn't because I did not really know how to put on makeup, Close friends around me did not put heavy makeup either. So I did not feel comfortable to put on makeup. I did not want to spend money on beautification either. I was not particularly interested in drawing attention from male classmates by putting on makeup. I did not believe that doing such a thing would attract men so easily. I did not put on heavy makeup, but I always checked if I looked all right... pleasant

enough. Say, if my face color was paler than usual, I tried to put some cheeks or lighter color of a lipstick so that I did not give a bad impression to people and so I did not feel too self-conscious all day.”

Kana did not dress up when she was in Canada the first time. There are multiple reasons.

“In Canada, I was dressing more simply and casually. It was because I had no spare money to buy neat clothes and keep up the trend. I had no idea what was "trendy" in Canada. It was not very clear. Students were quite casual here. And dressing up too much would have made me look out of place in the classroom. I didn't like that. I wanted to feel comfortable in the classrooms.”

Kana talks about why she wanted to pursue the fad in Japan at that time and does not in Canada.

“The fad of fashion influenced me during conversations with my friends and seeing visual exhibition, such as show cases. For example, when I went to downtown in Japan, I saw many young women who pursued the fad. They had similar clothing and similar haircut. So, if I did not pursue this fad, I would have felt that I was out of place and would not have fit in the crowd. But Canada does not have this kind of unified fad.... I compared myself to models to a certain degree in Japan because the models and actresses I saw there were also Japanese.... But here (Canada), models and actresses appear to be mostly Hollywood stars, to me. I do not have to try to be like them. They are totally physically different from me. It would be strange if I applied makeup like them or dressed like them -- our body structures are different. Skin and hair and eye colors are different. I feel clearly that they are them, and I am me. I enjoy looking at them sometimes, very objectively, but I do not juxtapose myself by beautifying myself like them. They have their own ways to dress up, which are different from mine. Japanese models and actresses can be a good reference to improve my looks or ways of dressing....I am not sure if these (White) models' clothing is good on me because they are very different from me.”

When she was in Japan, she read fashion magazines which used Western models. That is, she did not feel Western models as very different people who were not useful to refer their appearances in Japan. She said that “it was good to use White models because body-figures of White models were better than Japanese models” as I noted in the section of Reactions to White-standard Beauty in Japanese Mass Media. However, she does not

read fashion magazines in Canada because she feels too different to compare. This may demonstrate that she perceived that appearances of White models were achievable in Japan but somehow she does not perceive that they are achievable in Canada anymore.

When Kana worked as a teacher in Japan after graduating from a Canadian university, she put cosmetics including lipsticks, eye-makeup and foundation. The reason was, "because all the other teachers put on cosmetics." She chose clothing depending on time, place and occasion. She says: "it's depending on TPO. When we had meetings or ceremony, I wore nice clothing, and usually, I wore casual clothing for the class." She was not very brand conscious. She says: "I cared about the material. So, if brand products used good material, then, I bought brand stuff."

Currently, she is once again a university student in Canada. Her beautification practices have become a habit. She also wants to please her husband.

"Now, I wear little bit more cosmetics whenever I go out (than she was here before). It is probably because I was doing so when I was in Japan, and this is becoming my morning habit. Also, because I have a partner now, I want to look nice when I go out with him -- to look healthy and happy. I like being and look healthy and happy with him, because he and his friends very honestly make some comments when I do so (put cosmetics and wear nicely or neatly)...." I put makeup on when I am invited by somebody. Simply because, I would like to look nicer and also like to enjoy the "occasion." I take into consideration the occasion and the people who will be there around me."

Yet still she beautifies herself a little bit less in Canada compared to she was in Japan last time.

"I did not change the way I put cosmetics on or the amount of cosmetics I use. In everyday setting in Japan and Canada, I just put sun-protection, lipstick and do something on my eyebrows. But when I worked in Japan, I had a lot of occasions for which I needed to beautify myself more, such as joining parties,

going to restaurants, women's meetings, conferences and excursions. So, I had to put more cosmetics on than usual and had to wear formal clothing. So, I would say that I put cosmetics more in Japan than now. The clothing I have now is the same as what I had in Japan. But what I wear is different because some of the clothing is too formal to wear and I don't have occasions to wear those clothing here. I mostly wear casual clothing here. In my case, self-beautification depends on time, place and occasions. I am affected by the environment which I am situated in or the people around me. I beautify myself more formally on an occasion in which I am surrounded by Japanese people than by Canadians."

She says that she would change her self-beautification practices in the future if she gets hired in Canada. Kana would wear nice clothing to fit the environment. "I will see other people first, and try to fit in with them."

That is, when she was a university student in Japan, she followed the fads on weekends but she did not follow the fads after she came to Canada. When she worked in Japan after staying in Canada, she put cosmetics on everyday. She continues to beautify herself in Canada because beautification is already her habit and she believes that beautification help attract her husband but to lesser degree. Even comparing her university lives, she beautifies less in Canada. She does not pursue standards of beauty in North America because she perceives that White models are very different from her. Yet she would beautify more if she needed to fit into a particular environment in the future.

Tamaki

Tamaki beautifies herself slightly less in Canada. She believes that beautiful women have advantages in both countries, such as popularity among men. She thinks that popular women among Canadian men are women who are sexy, active, friendly, smart and can do sports well. Tamaki thinks that Canadian people better evaluate her

appearance because she thinks that her fashion, which is one of the elements of appearances, is out of date in Japan but not in Canada.

When Tamaki was in Japan, she did not pursue standards of beauty there. She wore casual clothing but this does not mean that she was not interested in fashion. She proudly wore jeans and T-shirts which were made in America.

“I have loved jeans since I was very young. I was interested in the West. I often directly bought things from America by myself. At that time, there was a fad to have a backpack. But backpacks were not very available in Japan at that time. So, I was satisfied with getting those from America. Now Japanese people (in Japan) can easily buy T-shirts made in America. But at that time, it was not easy to buy. So, I was satisfied with wearing American T-shirts.”

Tamaki did not care what other people said about her fashion.

“My will was very strong. So, I did not care what other people said about my fashion, especially, after I grew up. I wore things that I liked when I met friends. Even if those friends were into other kind of fashion, I did not follow them. Yet, when I worked, I wore something suitable for work.”

Tamaki was not even interested in fashion magazines. “There was a magazine called *An-An*. My friend often bought them. I looked at them. But I never intended to mimic the fashion...I was not into brand fashion either.” She talks about the fashion tendency of Japanese people.

“My Canadian friends are not fussy about brand. They wear clothing fashionably even if those clothing are inexpensive. They do not focus on label (brand names). But Japanese women are fussy about brand. So, they have many brand clothing. They think they are fashionable if they wear brand clothing. It does not matter if the clothing looks good on them or not. But women here focus on being stylish not on brand names. I think their (North American) fashion is very stylish.”

When Tamaki was a teacher in a kindergarten, she did not beautify herself much.

“I started putting cosmetics on when I newly became a teacher in a kindergarten. I did it for a while but since I did not have enough time to put cosmetics in the morning, and some students whose mother did not put cosmetics on did not feel comfortable to be with me if I put on cosmetics. Moreover, people who I was always with were all kids. So, naturally, I put on less and less cosmetics. So, I ended up putting cosmetics on only when I met my friends on weekends... At work, I usually wore training pants.”

Yet, when Tamaki worked as an English teacher for small children in a private school, she put on lipsticks.

“I put a lipstick when I was an English teacher. I often met the principal and students’ parents. Those parents expected better appearance of English teachers than that of kindergarten teachers. So, I could not wear training pants anymore. I cared about my outfit.”

When Tamaki worked as a manager in an art gallery, she tried to care about fashion.

“I adjusted my fashion to customers but I wore clothing which were easy to work in, such as jeans and other pants because that work required a lot of physical work.” She continued to put lipsticks on but not eye-makeup or foundation. The reason why she did not put foundation on was simply that she did not like to do so. She says, “I saw many Japanese women put foundation on and made their face really white. And the face color was different from their necks. I thought that it was odd and unbalanced.”

Her husband does not mind if she does not beautify herself.

“in my everyday life, I do not put cosmetics on at all. My husband does not like cosmetics. Since you don’t like putting cosmetics, it is good for you. Right. He says that it is okay if I put only lipsticks. When I put cosmetics on, he praises my appearance but even if I do not, he still praises me. He never asks me to care my own appearance... I am embarrassed to say this but he praises me. Oh, I am embarrassed. (what does he praise about?) Everything. For example, if I have my hair cut, then, he praises my hair style. He praises my fashion. He says ‘today’s your fashion is good’ he does not say that everyday but... sometimes. He praises the color of my lipsticks. In the morning, he praises me anyway even if I did not wash my face.”

For her husband who always praises her, she feels the need to put cosmetics on to be beautiful even though she does not like putting on cosmetics, and he does not want her to put on cosmetics.

“I am already old. The only thing that I can do for my face to make my face look beautiful is to put on makeup. My husband looks at me as a woman even if I get much older. So I want to fulfill his expectation.”

Tamaki wants to shift her beautifying practices in the near future because aging bothers her even though she is still in her thirties.

“I am getting older. I feel that I have to put cosmetics on because my age is close to 40. 20’s is the most beautiful time in women’s lives. Skin itself has brightness. So, I did not have to put cosmetics. After I became 30... because I focused on raising children, I thought there is no use to put on cosmetics. Now, only younger daughter is at home. The other one is in school. So, I have time to look into a mirror. When I see a mirror, I sometimes feel I really need to put cosmetics on. I sometimes think I am really getting older. I feel I should better to take a cosmetics class. When I go to a beauty salon, I see magazines and check the fad of clothing. You did not care much before. Right. I was young, single. I could buy whatever I liked. I wore something in my way. But after I married and focused on raising children, the money which I could use freely diminished. I cannot care about my hairstyle as much as I did before, and I cannot buy as many clothing as I did before. I try to buy my children’s clothing instead of my clothing. I am far from fashionable. I want to decide what I will do before my younger daughter goes to school. At the time, I want to buy clothing and cosmetics for myself. I want to put cosmetics on too. Life before marriage is very different from after marriage”

That is, she had never been interested in pursuing the fad of fashion in Japan. But, because of the job she had, she had to care about her fashion to a certain degree. Thus she beautifies herself little less in Canada. Since she came to Canada, she has been wearing casual clothing which she likes. Yet recently, she feels the need to beautify herself to attract her husband and hide the effects of aging.

Shouko

Shouko beautifies slightly less in Canada than in Japan. She believes that beautiful women have advantages in both countries, such as more employment opportunities. She thinks that popular women among Canadian men are women who have figures like fashion models and women with big breasts. Shouko thinks that Japanese people better evaluate her appearance than Canadians because she beautified more in Japan.

Shouko is the only person who worked in the service industry among my interviewees. Yet, she did not even look at fashion magazines in Japan. When she was a university student there, she did not put cosmetics on at all. She says, "I dislike doing it and felt troublesome." She did not follow the fad of fashion either. She says, "I was not interested in and did not have the money to spend for that." When Shouko worked in a department store in Japan, she put cosmetics on because there was a rule which required her to do so. But in her private life, she did not beautify herself much even when she went out to downtown in Tokyo where most women dressed up.

"Putting on makeup was necessary for my job. But I went out without any makeup when I was not working. I basically do not like putting on cosmetics. Did your bosses asked you to put cosmetics? Yes. There were lessons to put makeup in the training term. So, did they instruct you on how to put on cosmetics? Right. Yes, they did. Did you feel that your co-workers were very fashionable? Yes, I did. We had to tie our scarf (for uniform) by ourselves. But I could not do it well because I did not wear scarves in my private live. I wore jeans all the time. So, my co-workers often helped me to tie scarf. How about co-workers' clothing when they were off? It was depending on the person. Some people were fashionable and some were not. Did you feel pressured about clothing from your co-workers? No, I did not. But I felt it from my bosses. They often suggested that I should use more red lipsticks."

Shouko felt what beautification practices were expected in Japan but she does not feel that way in Canada.

“I don’t feel much pressure here (Canada). For example, in Japan, we (women) are expected to put on cosmetics after we become the certain age. And if we do not beautify ourselves, we think that other people think we are ugly. And we think that we should put cosmetics because other people do. But here, it is not a big issue if we don’t put on cosmetics. When I was in Japan, I often wore jeans with brand names. But here, I wear jeans until they wear out.”

Currently in Canada, Shouko sometimes puts cosmetics on but it depends on her feeling on that day.

That is, basically she has not been very willing to beautify herself. But at least in Japan, she beautified herself when she worked. Even comparing her university lives, she beautifies less in Canada because she did not wear jeans till they got worn out in Japan but she does in Canada.

Summary

There are differences among Japanese women I interviewed. Yet, there are also similarities. There is a lack of shift in what type of woman they think is beautiful. Yet there are shifts in beautification practices after they came to Canada.

My interviewees do not resent the disproportionate number of Western actresses, actors or models in the Japanese mass media. They accept this phenomenon as normal in Japan. They did not even notice the existence of this phenomenon while they were in Japan. Both older generations and younger generations perceived the characteristics of European people, such as big eyes, tall nose, and long legs as better than characteristics of Japanese people, and they still see things the same way in Canada.

Most women I interviewed say that beautiful women have advantages in both countries. The advantages are in employment opportunities, attentions and popularity

among men in both countries. However, between in Japan and Canada, the definition of beautiful women is different, and the type of woman who is popular is different. Most of my interviewees perceived that women who are popular among men in Canada have some traits which most Japanese women do not have, such as curved, fit and sexy bodies, tall height and blonde hair even though few of these women also point out that exotic appearances can be advantageous. On the contrary, in Japan, the interviewees claim that women are not expected to have those elements but rather being a cute, skinny and having a submissive and dependent personality is the key to popularity.

Since my interviewees think that popular Western features are often different from those of Japanese women, I suspected that their self evaluation of their appearances may not be too positive in Canada. However, only four of my interviewees said that they are better evaluated in Japan than in Canada. All of these four women felt Asian beauty is not well valued in Canada. The other six women said that they are better evaluated in Canada than in Japan. However, these better self evaluations in Canada are not affirmative but rather complex for most of these women. The second youngest interviewee compared herself to Japanese and Western models in order to improve her appearance in Japan. But she no longer compares herself to Western models and actresses in Canada because she feels they are too different even though she did not feel this difference in Japan. Therefore, she has less negative feelings about her appearance in Canada. One of the women perceives that her fashion sense, which is one of the beauty elements, is out of date in Japan but it is average in Canada. Therefore, she feels Canadians may better evaluate her beauty. Another woman perceives that some Canadian men like exotic women even though she thinks that Canadian men favour blonde women

over others. One feels good about her beauty because some of her beauty characteristics fit in Canada, such as being tall. Yet, she thinks that Canadian men favour shapely bodied women which excludes her. Two of the women feel their appearances are valued more in Canada because they get praised more often by Canadian people than by Japanese people. Yet they are not sure what Canadians really think.

With these complex perceptions in their minds, Japanese women have shifted their beautification practices. Five women beautify themselves considerably less in Canada. Most of these five women felt beautifying themselves in Japan was the norm, and they felt that they would be unattractive if they did not beautify themselves. Moreover, they beautified themselves in Japan because they wanted to fit into the environment, to fulfill expectations, and to enjoy dressing up. One interviewee said that it is no use for Japanese women to beautify in Canada because the appearances of Japanese women are inferior to those of Canadian women. Furthermore, in Japan these women wanted to enjoy their newly found freedom to beautify themselves because when they were in high school, beautification was strictly forbidden by their school rules. On the contrary, in Canada, their classmates, colleagues and friends rarely beautify themselves, and they have grown accustomed to not doing so. In addition, they do/did not have money to spend on cosmetics or fashion because some of them are (were) students. Yet, four of these five women go/went to university both in Japan and Canada, and all of these four women beautify themselves considerably less as students in Canada compared to when they were students in Japan. Thus, being a student in Canada is not only the reason why they beautify less in Canada. These reasons could be summarized by differences in pressures, expectations, encouragements, rewards and advantages.

Five of the participants beautify themselves moderately less in Canada. Two of these five women basically did not like beautification to begin with and that has remained unchanged for the most part. Beautification practices for the other three women became customary in Japan and they continue to beautify themselves and enjoy doing that but they beautify themselves a little less because of a feeling of weaker pressures, encouragements and advantages in Canada.

Most of these ten women, including these who do not currently beautify themselves, want to beautify more in the future. Some of them perceive that they need to beautify themselves because they want to attract their husbands more even though their husbands do not ask them to beautify. Moreover, aging bothers them. Furthermore, they believe that beauty helps to obtain employment.

In the next Chapter six, I will try to explore and conclude reasons why Japanese women experience these differences and similarities.

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- ¹ Mahou Tsukai Sally (witch Sally) and Acco Chan.
- ² Pictures drawn by Iwasaki Chihiro (Japanese artist for picture books)
- ³ Toyama No Kinsan
- ⁴ Heidi, Konan, and Witch Sally
- ⁵ the word “Big eyes” is often used by Japanese people, and is one of the characteristics to describe women’s beauty. To qualify to be called big eyes, they should not be slanted eyes.
- ⁶ Double eyelids is one of the important points for Japanese people to describe beautiful eyes.
- ⁷ She watched Oba Q too (main character is a ghost)
- ⁸ Sazae san, Heidi, A dog of Franders
- ⁹ Example..Which Sally, Osomatsu kun, Minashigo hacchi, Reinbo man (this is not animation)
- ¹⁰ example. Heidi, Marco, Candy-Candy and Yamato, Mitsubachi Hacchi, Taiga masuku, Three nine, Gandam, witch Sally (Mahou tukai Sally), Acco chan, Majokko Megu chan
- ¹¹ example. the Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Anne of Green Gables, Gorenger
- ¹² examples, Oba Q, Witch Sally, Tetsujin 18 gou, Acco chan, Merumo chan, Kaibutu kun, Paman,
- ¹³ One of the Japanese TV channels called NHK is paid by viewers directly so that this channel does not have any commercial advertisement. Therefore, it is possible for Japanese people to watch TV programs in Japan without seeing any advertisement.
- ¹⁴ One of the Japanese TV channels called NHK is paid by viewers directly so that this channel does not have any commercial advertisement. Therefore, it is possible for Japanese people to watch TV programs in Japan without seeing any advertisement.
- ¹⁵ Ukieo are paintings developed in the Edo Period (1603-1867), most of which became widespread as woodblock prints. Beautiful women were often depicted. Sayoko’s image of Ukieo is probably these beautiful women at that time. Look at appendix 10.
- ¹⁶ She perceives that authentic Japanese face is with slanted eyes while they have further distance between them
- ¹⁷ slanted eyes with single eyelids and far distance between eyes.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

To pursue the framework of Institutional Ethnography, a researcher goes further than simply exploring women's everyday lives. In this section, I will discuss social structures, and scrutinize how these women's everyday lives are organized through explicating how several social structures shape women's perceptions of beauty and beautification practices. I will illustrate how women make decisions in regards to beautification practices in accordance to their perceptions which are deeply influenced by interlocking and intersecting social structures. With this understanding of social structures regarding women's beauty, I will investigate why there are similarities and differences among women I interviewed. The similarities are: a lack of shift in what type of woman my interviewees perceive is beautiful, and a shift in their beautification practices after they came to Canada. The differences are: how much and how often they beautify themselves and how they perceive their appearances. I will explain these phenomena through using my interviews, some statistical data, newspapers and other scholarly literatures. In addition, I will generate some suggestions for future research in this area.

Smith (1982) uses the word "institutions" instead of "social structures" to explain how women's lives are organized. However, this word "institutions" is predominantly used to investigate texts. Since my study is not based on texts, I will not use the word "institutions." Rather, I use the word "social structures" to explain how women's lives are organized. The word "social structure" or "structure" has been used exclusively by social scientists without having a commonly accepted definition, and it remains

elusiveness. In order to avoid confusion, this terminology should be clearly defined. In this paper, I use the definition of “social structure” developed by Sewell (1992) as I mentioned in Chapter One.

Structures are constituted by mutually sustaining cultural schemas and sets of resources that empower and constrain social action and tend to be reproduced by that action. Agents are empowered by structures, both by the knowledge of cultural schemas that enables them to mobilize resources and by the access to resources that enables them to enact schemas (27).

Sewell sees cultural schemas as capable of being put into practice. A resource is whatever can be used to enhance or maintain power. Humans can also be a resource. Physical strength, dexterity, knowledge, and emotional commitments can be used to enhance or maintain power.

According to Sewell (1992), sociologists tend to distinguish “structure” from “culture”. Structure is thought of as hard, material, primary and/or determining while culture is thought as soft, mental, secondary and/or derived. On the other hand, anthropologists do not clearly distinguish structure from culture and understand that structure is the realm of culture. Sewell (1992) makes clear in his definition that his usage of structure is different from either sociological or anthropological usage. He also makes clear that structure does not mean a rigid constraint system which determines human action, and it does not remove human agency. Structure is not static. It is inferred from a process of social interaction. Cultural schemas and sets of resources mutually support one another in the actions of agents. Even though structure has a pattern which generates more or less perfect reproduction, structure shifts over time.

Sewell (1992) explores the possibilities of social change by utilizing abilities and knowledge of agents. Agents have knowledge to apply schemas to new contexts. Agents

also have knowledge to reinterpret situations or mobilize resources. Agents are creative, have feelings, intentions and skills; therefore, each agent may react and/or interpret resources differently. Depending on their social positions relating to gender, ethnicity, class, social prestige, wealth, occupation, generation, sexual preference or education, the kinds of knowledge of schemas which agents have are diverse, and the amount of resources agents can access varies according to their circumstances. Thus, each agent has different possibilities for transformative action. Thus, by means of transpositions of schemas and remobilizations of resources, agents can reconstruct or create new structures.

Sewell (1992) says that agents can exercise some degree of control over the social relations in which they are involved. Thus, agents have an ability to transform those social relations to some degree. Structures empower agents to act with and against other people. Agents can be individual but the transpositions of schemas and remobilizations of resources should be collective in order to resist existing power. Since agents have abilities to coordinate others' actions with their own, make the plan to act collectively, persuade and coerce others, it is possible for agents to collectively resist existing power.

Sewell's definition of social structures enables me to explain why there are similarities and differences among my interviewees' perceptions of beauty and beautification practices. There are similarities because social structures put pressure on women to behave in certain ways. Social structures which organize these cultural schemas and practices around beauty are heterosexual dominance, patriarchy, racism and the market system, including the mass media. This phenomenon is described in a

diagram. (See Appendix 11) People occupy social positions within these interlocking and intersecting social structures but none of these structures is necessarily or always subordinate to another. One structure may be more powerful than another in certain situations. Strength of structure shifts over time.

Within a context of heterosexual dominance, women are often encouraged to be feminine by family members, friends, and the mass media in order to attract men. Patriarchy limits women's opportunity to pursue careers and shapes types of occupations women desire to engage in. Human Development Report 2001 shows women's situations in Japan and Canada.

Table 3 Gender Inequalities

country	Women in Government at ministerial level (as % total) 1999	Seats in parliament held by women (as % of total) lower house	Seats in parliament held by women (as % of total) upper house	Female legislators, senior officials and managers (as % of total)	Female professional and technical workers (as % of total)	Ratio f estimated female to male earned income
Canada	24.3	20.6	32.4	35	53	0.61
Japan	5.7	7.3	17.8	9	44	0.43

Human Development Report 2001 p.214, p.226

This table shows that women in both Japan and Canada are having difficulties in obtaining certain political and economic positions. In patriarchal and heterosexually dominant societies, marriage is often an important strategy for women to maintain or gain social status and financially stable lives (Wolf,1991; Faludi, 1991). Therefore, women try to achieve the standards of beauty to attract their partners. Most of my interviewees stated

that attracting men is one of the advantages of being beautiful. Moreover, some of the married women desired to beautify themselves to keep attracting their husbands even though their husbands never demanded that these women beautify. Many of the women I interviewed think that beautiful women have advantages in employment opportunities because employers are usually men.

Even if women are hired in patriarchal society, the job is often offered in the service industry¹ where meeting the standards of beauty is often a requirement. Even though the beauty and fashion industries offer jobs for women, female workers in these industries often try to achieve the standards of beauty by using and buying cosmetics, diet foods, cosmetic surgery and clothing. Women who have obtained well paying jobs often work as models, actresses, or TV newscasters for which beauty is a requirement and serves to maintain the prevailing norms of beauty. (Wolf, 1991).

Racism maintains White supremacy regarding beauty and may produce an inferiority complex among women in racialized minority groups. These racialized groups internalize Euro-centric standards of beauty in the West, and their perceptions of both Whites and people of color reinforce and reproduce an idea of White women as the standard of beauty. Many African American women straighten their hair (Mama, 1995; Bryan et al., 1985), and many Asian women have cosmetic surgery on their eyelids² to pursue Western standards of beauty. Some of my interviewees clearly perceive that Asian appearances are not well valued in Canada. One of my interviewees said that she has an inferiority complex about her single eyelids which Japanese women often have. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, even though African Americans have tried to resist standards of beauty, they could not continuously ignore these standards.

In the market system, corporations create and maintain needs for products and services, such as cosmetics, diet foods, clothing and cosmetics surgery (Wolf,1991; Faludi,1991). One way to promote those needs is through mass media advertising. Since entertainment is deeply connected with the market system, TV commercials and shows, radio, movies and magazines are used to create taste and advertise mass products (Adorno,1989). In order to sell mass products, they engage in intensive marketing campaigns to promote standards of beauty using the mass media. Consequently, the mass media influence standards of beauty. According to Smith (1993), when people evaluate appearances of themselves or others, they use standards of beauty as a beacon to evaluate their location and proximity. Some of my interviewees want to beautify themselves for their husbands even though their husbands praise their appearances. This reason may be because they may perceive that they are not beautiful enough compared to prevailing standards of beauty.

The mass media in Japan may be more influential. There are no data to compare Japan and Canada in regards to how people trust the mass media but there are data among 23 countries including Japan and America. According to a Japanese statistical data book³, about 68 % of Japanese people trust what TV claims while about 29 % of American people trust what TV claims. Moreover, the same study indicates that about 72% of Japanese people trust what newspapers and magazines claim while about 28 % of American people trust what newspapers and magazines claim. Even though some of my interviewees did not see fashion magazines at all, some said that they actually read fashion magazines and referred to these magazines as a source of guidance on clothing and cosmetics.

The mass media are used to spread the Euro-centric standards of beauty not only in the West but also in non-Western countries. People from Western countries including non-White Westerners residents in Japan are less than 0.1% of whole population according to a Japanese data book⁴. Yet as noted earlier, according to Hagiwara (1997), about 12%⁵ of TV advertisements in Japan use White people. Nevertheless, none of my interviewees even noticed this disproportionate number of Western people in the mass media in Japan. After coming to Canada and staying for a period of time, three of my interviewees compared TV advertisements in Canada and Japan, and they finally noticed the phenomenon as remarkable. All of these three women suspected the reason of this phenomenon. They said that Japanese people have positive images/feelings about the appearances of White people. Fashion magazines in Japan also use a disproportionate number of White models as I mentioned in Chapter Three. My interviewees did not feel uncomfortable by this phenomenon but rather welcomed it. Some of them accept the beauty of their Euro-American models as superior to that of Japanese models. That is, these Japanese women have been exposed to Western beauty standards already in Japan through the mass media and have had positive images/feelings of White people or at least their appearances.

Corporations which are advertising their products through the media also influence the content of the media (Wolf,1991; Faludi,1991). Because nearly all these media need financial support from advertisers, they cannot ignore these pressures. For example, if there are advertisements for cosmetics, cosmetic surgery, diet merchandises, hair products, and clothing in a women's magazine, the contents of this magazine probably include suggestions of how to put on cosmetics, lose weight, get hair done and

coordinate clothing. Many girls take their values about personal appearances and attractiveness from magazines where explanations about beauty are offered by journalists whose companies seek profit by increasing cosmetics or clothing sales (Wolf,1991).

Another way to promote the need for these products and services is through medicalization of women's beauty (Wolf, 1991; Faludi,1991). Since many people believe in advanced technology, the beauty industry uses the technology to problematize their beauty. For example, even though aging is a natural unavoidable process, it is treated as a disease, and many cosmetics companies identify and problematize aging. Aging is not something doctors or drugs, including cosmetics, can stop. Therefore, the more aging is problematized, the more women keep buying cosmetics even though cosmetics does not maintain or bring about youth. In fact, half of my interviewees worried about losing their beauty due to aging.

Computer graphic technology is the other way to promote needs for these products and services (Wolf,1991). Pornographic and other pictures in magazines contain pictures of women's bodies which are graphically enhanced or reduced by computer graphic technology and conform highly to the standards of beauty. However, real human bodies are often highly diverse. Therefore, many women often deepen their low self-esteem and feel ashamed for not to be able to meet the standards of beauty. They keep buying products and services from the beauty industry. This desire may be proven by consumerism. In Japan, people spend a lot of money on getting "nice" and young looking appearances. In 1983, people spent 290,000 million yen⁶ for healthy food including medicine to get slimmer, 20,000million yen⁷ for health machines, 20,000 million yen for beauty machines, and 200,000 million yen⁸ for beauty service (this does

not include plastic surgery.) (Morohashi, 1993: 143). Moreover, a Japanese statistical data book⁹ shows that young people are also unsatisfied with their bodies and facial features. This study was conducted in Japan and asked 553 female and male high school students: “are you satisfied with your appearance?” and the result was that sixty-three percent of them were not.

Social structures such as heterosexual dominance, patriarchy, racism and the market system, including the mass media, shape women’s perceptions of beauty and beautification practices.

However, without agents’ decisions, self-beautification cannot be put into practice. Women are agents who make decisions during ongoing processes in their everyday lives. They make decisions on how much and how often they beautify themselves according to their perceptions which are deeply influenced by interlocking and intersecting social structures. They actively perceive, think or weigh the pros and cons. For example, while they are advised, expected, encouraged, discouraged and pressured to beautify themselves, they also seek rewards, advantages and disadvantages in each situation. This phenomenon is described in a diagram. (See Appendix 12) These women know or suspect what kind of advantages they can obtain by beautification. Most of them stated that beautiful women have more employment opportunities and more chances to attract the opposite sex. At the same time, they also have knowledge of disadvantages, such as spending too much energy, time or money. With these accumulations of knowledge, they make decisions how much and how often they beautify themselves. Women experience these ongoing processes in everyday lives, and these activities are organized to a large degree by social structures.

Thus, it is not surprising that there are similarities among my interviewees because these social structures put pressure on each woman. All of my interviewees have not shifted what they perceive beautiful to be since they came to Canada. As I mentioned in Chapter Three, towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Japanese government made decisions to Westernize Japan, including people's appearances. These Westernized appearances were incorporated into the market system which tries to sell mass products using advertising in the mass media. With this system, Westernized standards of beauty have been widespread throughout Japan. Heterosexual dominance and patriarchy have also helped women to beautify themselves because attracting men is seen as advantageous in heterosexually dominant and patriarchal society. Therefore, Westernized perceptions of women's beauty have been socially constructed and maintained in Japan. In result, my interviewees have not shifted their Westernized perceptions of women's beauty since they came to Canada.

Another similarity is that all of them have lessened beautification practices. There are two possible reasons for this shift in self-beautification practices. Some of the social structures are more powerful in Japan than in Canada. Fewer women in Japan obtain influential and higher income jobs. (See Table 3). This indicates that Japanese patriarchy is more powerful than that in Canada. Moreover, as I showed in the section on the market system, Japanese people believe in what the mass media say more than people in North America. This indicates that it is easier for the market system to influence people in Japan than in North America. These structures in Japan are combined with others, such as heterosexual dominance, and consequently Japanese women perceive less pressures, expectations and advantages to beautify themselves in Canada. All of my interviewees

said that they feel less pressured in Canada. For example, some of my interviewees said that when they go out in Japan, they feel pressured because other Japanese people are fashionable. Some of their co-workers or classmates in Japan put pressures on my interviewees but their co-workers or classmates in Canada do not put pressures. One of my interviewees said:

“I am not embarrassed if I wear clothing which was popular 10 years ago here, but I would be embarrassed in Japan....I completely changed (the way I dress). When I was in Japan, I always went out with formal clothing. But now, look at me. Now, I am careful not to be too formal. Because if I wear the suits which I wore in Japan, coworkers ask me ‘are you going to be attending a marriage ceremony?’ really”

These lessened pressures are deeply influenced by schemas of social structures. Thus, the reason of this shift is because Japanese social structures regarding to beauty are more powerful than those in Canada.

The other possible reason that they have lessened the beautification practices in Canada is that even though the mass media in Canada also promote good images of White people, the Canadian market system fails to promote Japanese women’s beautification practices. Propagations of Euro-centric standards of beauty by the mass media have different effects on Japanese women in Japan than they do in Canada. The Japanese market system successfully uses White models in the mass media to promote good images of White people for Japanese people to pursue Westernized standards of beauty by encouraging women to beautify themselves using beauty products. Thus this system symbolizes White models as nice, friendly and beautiful people whose beauty is achievable for Japanese people, as I mentioned in Chapter Three. Since a very small percentage of White people reside in Japan, these positive images and feelings of

achievability are easily maintained. There is little chance to actually compare White women's appearances and their own appearances in reality in Japan. However, Japanese women living in Canada have a lot of chances to compare themselves and White women around them to Euro-centric standards of beauty on a daily basis. These Japanese women may notice that their appearances are farther removed from standards of beauty than White women around them and may lose interest in pursuing Western standards of beauty. Further, Japanese women possibly perceive that without beauty products, White people often already have desirable characteristics which Japanese women have been socialized to desire since they were in Japan. These Japanese women may think that they cannot possibly compete with White women to achieve Western standards of beauty. One of the interviewees actually answered my question why she does not put on cosmetics anymore. She said: "Asians in general do not look better than White people anyway. So, it is no use to make any effort." Consequently, they try to ignore Western standards of beauty in Canada. When I asked one of the interviewees why she evaluates her appearance better in Canada, she answered:

"I do not feel negative reactions from people here. I compared my appearance with main stream people, such as actresses or models (in Japan). But here, I do not compare with those people anymore."

Some of my interviewees actually have discontinued reading fashion magazines in Canada. The side effect of less self-beautification in Canada is possibly to create more time for study and/or more money for investment for their future. In addition, some of them said that they feel comfortable not to feel pressured. But this side effect may lead to disadvantages in Canadian society, such as less employment opportunities and less

chances to attract opposite sex. In addition, the perception that typical European features are more beautiful than their facial features possibly hurt their prides and feelings.

There are differences among my interviewees regarding beauty. These social structures partly shape women's perceptions and activities. However, how much and how often my interviewees beautify themselves varies because they do not simply obey the cultural schemas of these social structures. Women are agents who actively think, intend and feel. Each interviewee is also differently situated. Therefore, they may have encountered each social structure differently. The diversity of these Japanese women's experiences is seen in the way each woman reacted and responded to these interlocking and combined social structures.

A Conclusion within Conclusion

Standards of women's beauty are socially constructed. It is evident that these standards of beauty are organized by cultural schemas and social structures which are reproduced and maintained by organizing pressures, expectations and advantages for women to beautify themselves in their everyday lives. Even though the Japanese women respondents lessened their self-beautification practices, Canadian society has not bettered their situation in Canada because disadvantageous social positions for women who are not close to prevailing standards of beauty exist. Japanese women's everyday lives in Canada are organized initially in Japan and presently in Canada in a manner which leads them to accept the status quo. Since the respondents failed to challenge prevailing standards of beauty in Canada as new residents, problems of gender inequality and White

supremacy regarding beauty which are coordinated by interlocking and intersecting social structures remain and are reproduced.

My interviewees consist of five graduate and two undergraduate students who have already one degree, and a teacher who has finished graduate studies. All of these people major(ed) in social science or humanities. The other two finished undergraduate studies. Because of their high educational level, these women may be exceptional in their awareness of social pressures. Moreover, they are a home maker, teachers and students who are not strongly required to beautify themselves. However, they are strongly influenced by social structures. Even women who do not currently beautify themselves intend to beautify themselves more in the future in order to gain employment and/or attract their husbands. Hence, it may be clear that it is possible to challenge social structures but just being aware is not enough to challenge reproduction of social structures.

Suggestions for the further research

In order to bring about more critical discussion on Japanese women's beautification practices and perceptions of beauty, further research is needed in at least three areas. Firstly, research on Asian women's beautification practices and perceptions of beauty in relation to social movements is needed. While I was seeking the Western history of Japanese women's beautification practices and perceptions of women's beauty, I faced a total lack of published materials on this subject. I had difficulty finding even one article or book focusing on this issue. Knowledge of how social movements, such as feminism and anti-racism, have affected Asian women's and men's beautification

practices and perceptions of beauty is a necessity. In this regard it would be interesting to do a content analysis of North American social movement magazines aimed at Asian people in North America. Advertisements by the beauty industry in these magazines may have contradicted the content of articles. Such contradictions may have promoted Asian women's complex feelings about beauty concepts and practices.

Secondly, research on Japanese women who are employed in North America regarding beautification practices and perceptions of beauty is needed. My respondents are mostly students, and they may have different ideas and experiences from employed Japanese women. Thus, it may be very important to have other studies which mostly include working Japanese women.

Thirdly, longitudinal research focusing on shifts in beautification practices is needed. In my study, I illustrated that Japanese women often shift their self-beautification practices; yet, it is not very clear that how long this shift lasts. These shifts may not occur within a few months after coming to Canada. It may take a few years. It is important to know the reasons why some women quickly shift their practices and other women take time to shift their practices.

¹ According to Human Developing Report 2001, 86 % of working Canadian women has jobs in the service industry compared to 63% of working Canadian men. 69 % of working Japanese women has jobs in the service industry compared to 55 % of working Japanese men. P.222

² The Vancouver Sun Dec. 20, 2000 A1 according to the American Association of Cosmetic Surgery reports, the number of blepharoplasty operations increased from 82,520 in 1990 to 423,719 in 1999

³ *Secai 23 kakoku kachikan data book* (1999) (A Sense of Values comparison of 23 countries)

⁴ *Nihon no Toukei* (1999) (Japan statistics) Tokyo: the Management and Coordination Agency Statistics (Department of Statistics) 83,707 (all Westerners) / 124,299,000 (Japanese citizens) = less than 0.1%

⁵ This percentage is calculated 599 (foreigners) / 4010 (TV advertisement they studied) X 0.78% (White people only). So, this percentage is for using only White people who researchers perceive and exclude white people with other kinds of people.

⁶ Equivalent to C\$3,480 million

⁷ equivalent to C\$240 million

⁸ equivalent to C\$2,400 million

⁹ *Anketo chosa nenkan* (1998) (Questionnaire year book) Tokyo: Namikishobou part 1 .242

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Appendix 1

Peiss (1998) p.205



*The New Negro Woman, in Voice
of the Negro, 1904.*

Appendix 2

Peiss (1998) p.42

BLACK SKIN REMOVER.

BEFORE **AFTER**

A Wonderful Face Bleach.
AND HAIR STRAIGHTENER.

both in a box for \$1. or three boxes for \$3. Guaranteed to do what we say and to be the "best in the world." One box is all that is required if used as directed.

A WONDERFUL FACE BLEACH.

A PEACH-LIKE complexion obtained if used as directed. Will turn the skin of a black or brown person four or five shades lighter, and a mulatto person perfectly white. In forty-eight hours a shade or two will be noticeable. It does not turn the skin in spots but bleaches out white, the skin remaining beautiful without continual use. Will remove wrinkles, freckles, dark spots, pimples or bumps or black heads, making the skin very soft and smooth. Small pox pits, tan, liver spots removed without harm to the skin. When you get the color you wish, stop using the preparation.

THE HAIR STRAIGHTENER.

that goes in every one dollar box is enough to make anyone's hair grow long and straight, and keeps it from falling out. Highly perfumed and makes the hair soft and easy to comb. Many of our customers say one of our dollar boxes is worth ten dollars, yet we sell it for one dollar a box. **THE NO-SWELL**, thrown in free.

Any person sending us one dollar in a letter or Post-Office money order, express money order or registered letter, we will send it through the mail postage prepaid; or if you want it sent C. O. D., it will come by express, inc. extra.

In any case where it fails to do what we claim, we will return the money or send a box free of charge. Packed so that no one will know contents except receiver.

CRANE AND CO.,
122 west Broad Street,
RICHMOND, VA.

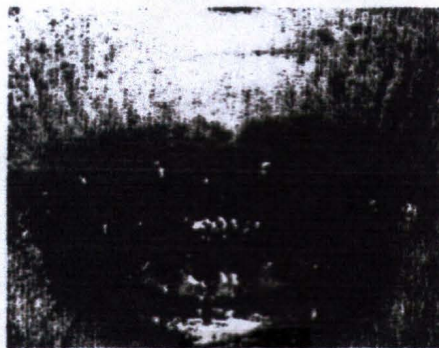
*Crane and Co. advertisement
addressed to African Americans, in
The Colored American Magazine,
1903.*

Appendix 3

Murasawa (1992) p. 62

**Appendix 4**

Murasawa (1992) p.89



Appendix 5

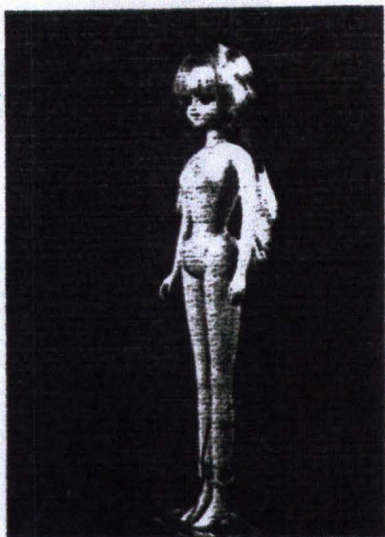
Murasawa (1992) p.80



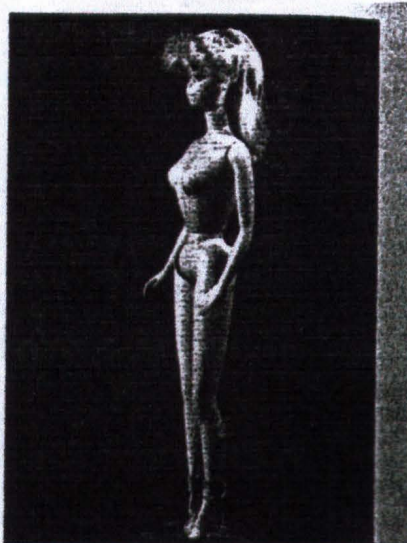
Appendix 6

Murasawa (1992) pp. 204-205

Japanese Barbie



American Barbie



Appendix 7 (con't)

Did you care about your fashion when you were a university student in Japan?	Not much only when shopping in downtown	yes	yes	You but in casual clothing	You but not brand	yes	N/A Did not go	no	yes	yes	
Did you put cosmetics when you worked in Japan?	yes	Yes and became so depends on a job	yes	You and became so and became you depending on a job	Yes Foundation Lipstick Eye-makeup	Lipstick Eye shadow	yes	You it was necessary rule	N/A did not work. But part time job, yes	yes	
Did you care your fashion when you worked in Japan?	yes	Yes and became so depends on a job	yes	You in casual clothing not putting makeup	You but not much. She was also's clothing	yes	You She enjoy thinking about coordination of clothing	no	You and became not so much	You and became not at all and became little bit	
Did you put cosmetics when you were a university student in the West	Lipstick + eye-makeup	No not necessary	Foundation Lipstick	N/A Did not go	You but not much	When she got stimulus.		sometimes	Not much	You but not too much and became so and not too much again	
Did you care your fashion when you were a university student in the West	Simple casual	no	Casual not too much	N/A	You not much Casual but student like	You Try not to be like Canadian.	My/you poor. Husband was also student.	no	Not much	You not too much and became so	
Did you put cosmetics?	N/A Still a student	N/A Still a student	Not much Foundation Lipstick	Only Lipstick for parties or dinner, she put cosmetics. Husband does not like cosmetics	N/A Still student.	N/A Still student	You but not much	N/A	N/A Still student	N/A Still student	
Other points	She knows that students in Canada is different from her. She does not compare herself to white	Aging on average look worse	aging	Aging Less beautiful <i>She had to have skin</i>	Women without cosmetics is average	Canadian do not look like appearance like black.	Aging. She does not want her daughter to be like Barbie		Canadian realize her but she is very careful. She does not want to be a victim.	White people talk only appearance. Beauty expert opinion is to be beautiful	<i>She is a woman - aging - Asian</i>

Appendix 8 Interview questions

I would like to ask you about your experience. When did you leave for Canada?

What was your dream when you were 10 years old or younger?

What kind of toys did you play with when you were a child?

What kind of dolls did you play with when you were a child?

What was your favorite picture book when you were a child?

What kind of TV programs did you watch when you were a child?

What kinds of girls were popular among high school classmates?

What did you wear when you were not wearing high school uniform?

Did you have a dream when you were a high school student?

Did your parents praise your appearance after you became eighteen or older?

What kind of job did you have before you came to Canada?

When you worked in Japan, did you put on cosmetics?

Will you explain in detail how you put cosmetics? Did you put on eye shadow?

Did you read fashion magazines when you were working in Japan?

What kinds of movies did you like when you became eighteen or older?

What kinds of TV programs did you watch when you became eighteen or older?

Did you think that there were many white people on Japanese TV?

In general, what kinds of women were popular among men in Japan?

Did you think that beautiful women had advantages in Japan?

What are the elements of beautiful women in Japan and Canada?

What was your dream before you came to Canada?

What kinds of women are popular among Canadian men?

Have you ever analyzed the difference between Canadian women's beauty and Japanese women's beauty?

Appendix 8 (con't)

Do you think that beautiful women have advantages in Canada?

Which woman or women do you think beautiful? (show the picture)

If I asked you in Japan, do you think that you would have given me the same answer?

Have you perceived that Japanese definition of beauty is different from Canadian definition of beauty?

Have you ever wanted to change your appearance?

Do you put on cosmetics in Canada? How?

What are the points when you chose clothing?

Have you re-evaluated your appearance since you came to Canada?

Have you changed your perceptions of appearances since you came to Canada?

Have you ever felt the differences between Canadian and Japanese women in the way they put on cosmetics?

Do you think that Canadian women use more money for improving their appearances?

Which country Canada or Japan do you think evaluate your appearance better?

Do you think that your self-esteem has increased since you came to Canada?

Did/does your ex-boyfriend/boyfriend/husband/ex-husband praise your appearance?

Did/does your ex-boyfriend/boyfriend/husband/ex-husband tease you about your appearance?

Did/do you see his mother? Did/does she say anything about you/your children's appearance? If so what?

Which one do you think is the most beautiful? Show the pictures!

If I asked you the same question when you were in Japan, would you give me the same answer?

What kind of cosmetics did you put on when you worked in Japan?

What kind of cosmetics did you put on when you were a university student in Japan?

Why?

What did you wear when you were a university student in Japan?

Appendix 9

Vogue (April 1996) p.50



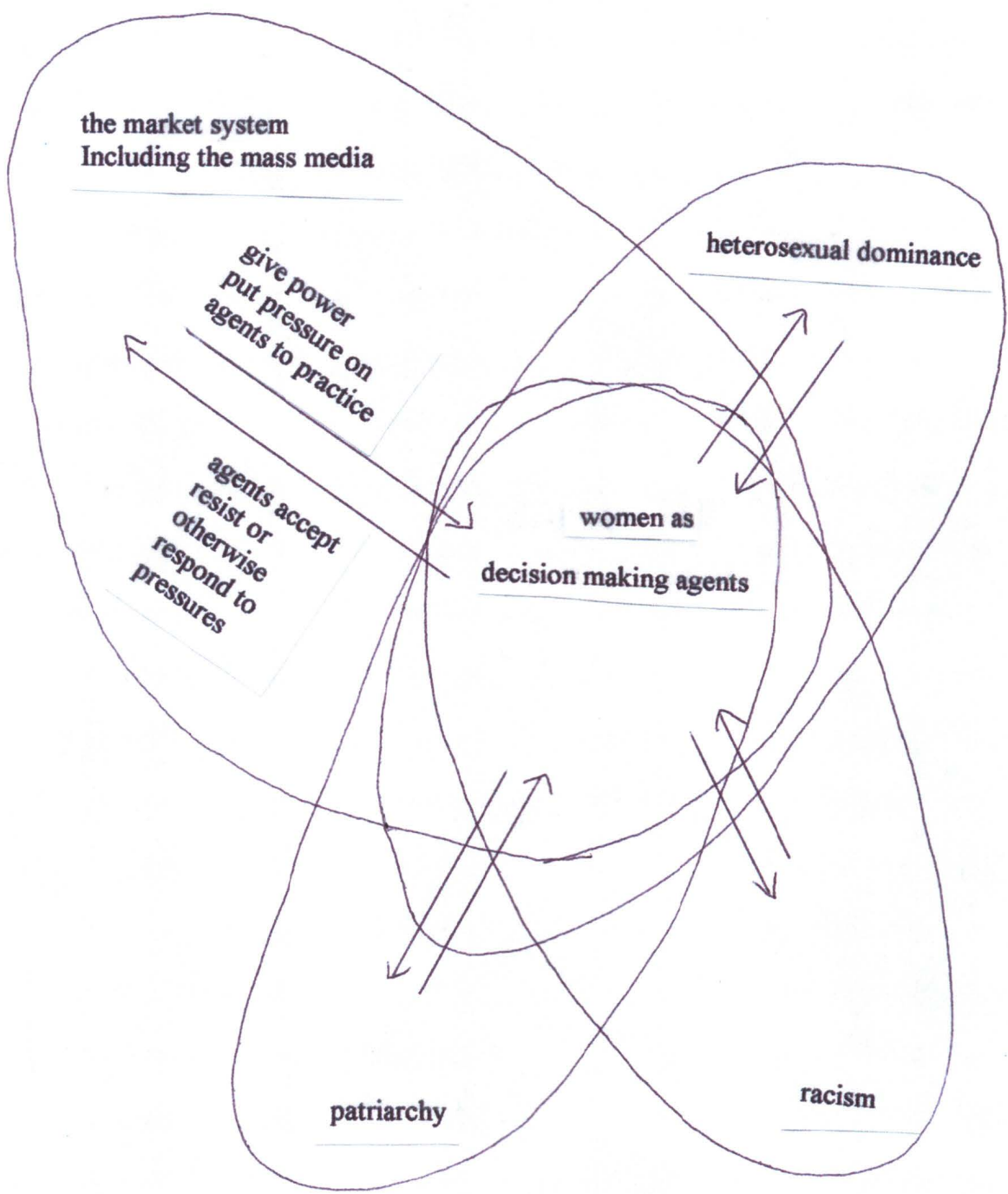
Appendix 10

Whitford, Cecilia (1983) Japanese Prints New York: Gaffery Books



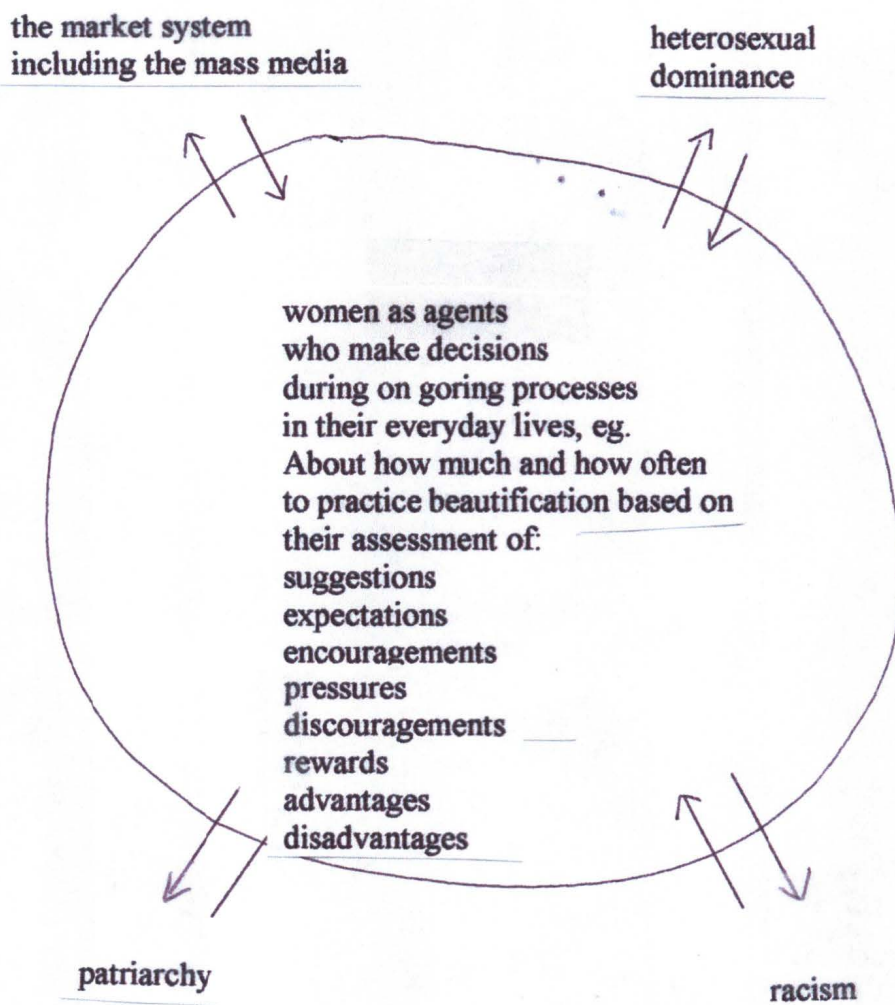
Appendix 11

Intersecting & Interlocking Structures



Appendix 12

Women's Decision Making



VITA

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Place of Birth: Nagoya, Aichi, Japan

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Title of Thesis:

The Shifts in Japanese Women's Perceptions of Beauty and Beautification Practices

Author



Chiaki Iida

Date:

April 25 th , 2003