WOMEN’S MAGAZINES AND THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF PRINT AND READING CULTURE IN INTERWAR JAPAN

by

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Abstract

This dissertation reconsiders the significance of a periodical genre hitherto marginalized in academia, namely, the Japanese mass-market women’s magazine, in the history of print/reading culture in modern Japan. The study also aims to investigate the interrelations among magazine genres, gender categories, and the formation of cultural hierarchy.

Analysis of diverse periodicals from the late 19th century to the 1930s, their contemporary commentaries and various surveys reveals that, around the turn of the 20th century, magazine genres became increasingly gendered in terms of their formats, editing styles, content, and readership: magazines for adults evolved into either “serious” general magazines for men concerning “public” matters or “vulgar” women’s magazines on “light” issues related to the “domestic” sphere.

It was the latter magazine genre that led to the democratization of print/reading culture in interwar Japan. Inclusion of various article genres written in highly colloquial styles, extensive use of visuals, stress on entertainment and people’s private lives, and increasing collaboration with other industries, were to become common practices among Japanese periodicals after WWII. The new editing style also contributed to the spread of a new reading style in Japan.

With its accessible editorial and promotional styles, the interwar mass-market women’s magazine attracted readers from a wide range of ages and social classes, including men, and functioned as the “transfeminized” entertaining home magazine. Moreover, other periodicals, including the more “serious” types, also began adopting some of the strategies developed in the popular women’s magazine, a periodical genre that had formerly been regarded as “deviant.” Arguably, the subversive impact the mass-market women’s magazine had on the publishing world triggered severe criticism.
Thanks to its highly developed readers’ involvement and “transparent” mode of expression, the interwar popular women’s magazine presented a seemingly democratic and egalitarian magazine community. Closer examination of its articles, however, reveals unequal relationships between its readers and editors as well as among the readers, which offers valuable insight regarding its relation with discursive formation of diverse modern discourses and global trends in publishing.
Preface


A part of earlier versions of Chapter Three and Chapter Four has been published as “Rethinking Women’s Magazines: The Impact of Mass-Market Women’s Magazines on Reading Culture in Interwar Japan.” Windows on Comparative Literature. No. 4-5, Tokyo: 2009 (April), 50–65.


A part of an earlier version of Chapter Six (Conclusion) has been published as “Print Culture and Gender: Toward a Comparative Study of Modern Print Media.” In Sung-Won, Cho, ed. Expanding the Frontiers of Comparative Literature Vol. 2: Toward an Age of Tolerance. Seoul: Chung-Ang University Press, 2013, 354–363.

All of the above published studies are original, independent work by the author, Shiho Maeshima.

While earlier versions of several pages included in this dissertation have already been published as stated above, the rest is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Shiho Maeshima.
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Dedication

To my mother, Masako Maeshima (1946–2005)
Chapter 1: Introduction

Her talk of novels seemed to have little to do with “literature” in the everyday sense of the word. The only friendly ties she had with the people of this village had come from exchanging women’s magazines, and afterwards she had gone on with her reading by herself. She was quite indiscriminate and had little understanding of literature, and she borrowed even the novels and magazines she found lying in the guests’ rooms at the inn. Not a few of the new novelists whose names came to her meant nothing to Shimamura. Her manner was as though she were talking of a distant foreign literature. There was something lonely, something sad in it, something that rather suggested a beggar who has lost all desire. It occurred to Shimamura that his own distant fantasy on the occidental ballet, built up from words and photographs in foreign books, was not in its way dissimilar. (Kawabata Yasunari, *Yukiguni*, 42)1

The Interwar Mass-Market Women’s Magazine as Symbol of a New Print/Reading Culture

The above is a scene from *Yukiguni* (*Snow Country*) by Nobel Prize–winning novelist, Kawabata Yasunari (1899–1972), in which the protagonist, Shimamura, a “wealthy sophisticate” from Tokyo, notices for the first time the reading habits of Komako, a newly initiated geisha in a small village in the countryside. The scene is often quoted as a symbolic episode attesting to the vogue of popular novels among female readers; it also tells us more about print/reading culture of the time in general. First, it epitomizes the emergence of an “ordinary reading woman”; reading is

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1 Most sections of this novel were initially published in various magazines from 1935 to 1937. In 1937, Kawabata integrated those sections with an additional chapter and published them in book form. Resuming work on the novel once again in 1940, Kawabata wrote several more new chapters and continuously revised the last several sections until 1947. The final version was finally published as a book in 1948 and its first English translation by Edward G. Seidensticker appeared in 1956, then was later reprinted in 1996. The cited part is taken from the sections initially published in the late 1930s.
no longer a privileged activity limited to a small group of elite women in the city, to the extent that even people in country villages enjoy novels and magazines. The quoted passage also suggests the diversity of reading practices of the time. Shimamura clearly notices differences between Komako’s reading style and his own. His observation that she is indiscriminate in selecting what to read implies that he himself—or at least an ideal reader, according to his standard—is and should be more cautious when it comes to reading materials. He also recognizes that Komako’s reading habits differ from those of the village folk. It seems that people in the village read magazines mainly so that they can talk with others about what they have read. In other words, they use reading as a tool of communication. Magazines were so popular that they even functioned as a communication tool in the village. While she acknowledges such value in reading, Komako also reads for her own pleasure as well. Though it is not clear exactly what motivates her to take notes on characters and narrative lines, at least she understands the pleasure of solitary reading. Moreover, Shimamura’s inner utterance reveals a hint of cynicism toward the popular novels and women’s magazines that Komako reads. Obviously, there seems to him to be a hierarchy among reading materials, even though later he self-mockingly analyzes his own reading habits as well.

As will be shown in the following chapters of this dissertation, the phenomena suggested in this quoted passage were not altogether unrelated to the actual state of print/reading culture in the interwar period\(^2\) in which the novel was set. In fact, something more than what is suggested there was going on behind the scenes at the time. Indeed, the women’s magazine received close attention from contemporary critics and the media in 1920s–30s Japan.\(^3\) Arguably, the number of

\(^2\) While the term “interwar period” usually refers to the period between the end of the First World War (November 1918) and the beginning of the Second World War (September 1939), I will use it here to refer to the period between the First World War (1918) and the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937), for reasons that will be explained at the end of this chapter.

\(^3\) Many contemporary critical articles on the popularity of women’s magazines, including those referred to in a previous paper (Maeshima 2009a), mentioned the vogue of the confessional story.
controversies over women’s magazines even exceeded that of criticisms of the nation’s first million
copy–selling magazine, Kingu (King, founded in 1924⁴), whose importance in modern Japanese
publishing history is pointed out by media history scholar Satō Takumi (2002). Interestingly, these
arguments reveal that the periodicals in dispute were quite different from what one would imagine
as the “Japanese interwar women’s magazine”—a “minor” periodical genre filled with practical
articles concerning cooking, sewing, child-raising, tantalizing advertisements, and moral stories
specifically dedicated to middle-class women.

First, most contemporary commentaries refer to the enormous popularity of this magazine
genre. Compared with major newspapers, the two largest of which attained circulations of more than
one million in 1924, the popularity of women’s magazines in Japan in the 1930s was described by
media critic Nii Itaru (1931) as follows:

Most women’s magazines in today’s Japan . . . enjoy an extraordinary level of
circulation, which is said not only to exceed those of all other kinds of magazines, but
also to surpass those of withering newspapers. (267)

Which is to say that women’s magazines dominated Japanese print media in the interwar period.
Besides Nii, numerous other contemporary critics testified to the tremendous permeation of the
women’s magazine throughout society.⁵

While the actual circulation data of many periodicals cannot be stated with certainty up until
the late 1920s due to lack of accurate data, former magazine editor Hashimoto Motomu (1964)

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⁴ Its first January 1925 issue was published in December 1924.
⁵ In addition to the below-cited texts, there are countless articles on women’s magazines appearing in
moralistic, or social-reformist periodicals, such as Fujin shinpō (Ladies’ Courier), Fujo shinbun
(Newspaper for Ladies and Girls), and Fujin undō (Ladies’ Movement). For more on such articles, see
Takahashi Tomiko (143–152).
writes, in his book on a history of publishing and distribution industries in modern Japan, that the three top-selling magazines at the time were women’s magazines, each with double the circulation of Chūō kōron, a well-regarded intellectual magazine that was launched in 1887. Annual circulation surveys from a major subscription agent, Tōkyōdō, show that women’s magazines were the most popular magazine genre from 1929 to 1934, and even after that they sold as much as other popular magazines. These statistics indicate that the popularity of women’s magazines continued well into the 1930s, even after Kōdansha launched the “national magazine” Kingu (King) in 1924. In the case of the most popular women’s magazine, Shufu no tomo (Housewife’s Friend), every issue since 1934 has sold more than one million copies. It is thus clear that the women’s magazine was one of the most popular periodical genres nation-wide in interwar Japan.

Second, sometimes overtly and other times covertly, the discourses on women’s magazines centered mainly on the issue of the democratic changes in print culture, even when, as was often the case, their original objectives were to criticize the vulgarity and sensationalism of the themes covered by women’s magazines. In his article of June 24, 1933, appearing in the Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun (Tokyo Asahi News), Marxist critic Aono Suekichi pointed out:

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6 Tōkyōdō Tōkeibu (1935): For example, in 1934, the annual circulation of each magazine genre in descending order was as follows: women’s magazines 19,750,000; popular entertainment magazines 18,740,000; boys’/girls’ magazines 9,740,000; children’s magazines 7,480,000; magazines concerning politics, economics, arts, or sciences 4,270,000; youth magazines 2,180,000.
7 More accurately, “Dai Nihon Yūbenkai Kōdansha” at the time.
9 In this study, I use the words “democratic” and “democratization” in a metaphorical sense rather than their political sense, as I will explain more at the end of this chapter.
10 The following present the case of women’s magazines as symbolic of the state of the contemporary publishing world particularly clearly: Takashima 1922, 55; Yamakawa 1922, 158; Akita 1927, 70; Chiba et al. 1928, 104–106; Nii 1930, 105–107; 1931, 272 and 277; Kimura Ki 1933/1930, 175–176 and 193–196; Aono 1933 (a), 9; Ōya 1959/1929, 189–190; 1959/1934, 192–195; 1935/1959, 197 and 203–204; 1935/1959, 197 and 203–204; 1959/1935, 239–252; and Tosaka 1937, 342–349. For details concerning the heated criticism of the mass-market women’s magazines in interwar Japan, see Chapter Four of this dissertation.
Generally speaking, in terms of capitalistic production, no sector made as dramatic progress as the women’s magazine did. One could say that magazine culture was led by this very women’s magazine to an extraordinary stage. … [Recently,] their [=women’s magazines’] thorough commercialism, and its accompanying sensational stimulation, entertaining and ‘practical’ characteristics, have come to have the power to lead magazine culture, in a sense. (Aono 1933a, 9)

Aono’s view of women’s magazines was shared by a leading journalist of the time, Ōya Sōichi. According to Ōya, women’s magazines brought about an “industrial revolution” in Japanese publishing culture. In contrast to the former reading public, which he saw as an “advanced, civilized country” of intelligentsia, he expressed this new phenomenon as “the discovery of a cultural colony” of female readers in the new middle class. This new reading public, he explained, appeared after WWI thanks to the spread of education, growing interest in the cultural matters, an increasing margin for money, and expanded needs for mass-market print media.11 Again, many other contemporaneous critics made similar observations.12 Thus, the increasing number of contemporary comments on interwar women’s magazines suggests that their editorial as well as promotional influence on print and reading culture in general were also notable.

Another observation prevalent among contemporary debates on magazine culture of the time, but striking to today’s readers, is that women’s magazines had male readers, which is entirely

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11 Ōya 1959/1934, 191–194. Likewise, in similarly derogative, yet telling terms, Ōya also referred elsewhere to mass-market women’s magazines and popular magazines as “exportation for the colonies,” and to women’s magazines as the “industrial revolution” in the Japanese literary arena (1935/1959, 247–248, 255).

12 See also Takashima 1922, 55; Yamakawa 1922, 158; Akita 1927, 70; Chiba et al. 1928, 104 and 106; Nii 1930, 105–107; 1931, 272, 277; Kimura Ki 1930/1933, 175–176 and 193–196; Aono 1933, 9; Ōya 1929/1959, 190–197; 1935/1959, 203–204; 1935, 5–22; Tosaka 1937, 342–349.
missed in the passage quoted in the epigraph as well as in most of today’s studies on interwar Japanese print media. While the discussions and commentaries on women’s magazines used the term “fujin-zasshi” (women’s magazines), many of them took it for granted that these so-called “women’s magazines” were read not only by women, but also by men. For instance, an investigation conducted in 1929 by the Bureau of Police and Public Security at the Ministry of Home Affairs reported as follows: “Current women’s magazines are not reading only for women; rather, as mentioned above, they are read by men as well.” As will be detailed in the following chapters, statistical data also underlie the existence of male readers of women’s magazines in the interwar period.

The sheer volume and intensity of criticism against interwar mass-market women’s magazines in Japan invites us to further consider the distinctiveness of the democratization of print culture in Japan in comparison with similar coeval developments in other countries. Astonished by their popularity, some critics even stated that the overwhelming success of women’s magazines was quite rare in the world.

It seems to me that there are few cases in foreign countries in which women’s magazines enjoy such great commercial success as they do in Japan (Hirabayashi 1927, 70).

It is quite rare, even in the West, for there to be as many women’s magazines as in our country.

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14 Naimushō Kkeihokyoku 1929, 10–23.
15 In the cited articles, while Ichikawa clearly compared Japanese cases to “Euro-America/the West” (ōbei), Hirabayashi mentioned only “other countries.” Considering Hirabayashi’s overall argument, however, he also seems to be referring to “the West” with the words “other countries.” Equating “the world” or “other countries” with “the West” or “Euro-America” was a common practice among intellectuals of the day in Japan, and is still so in everyday usage even today.
Many questions arise. Why was this particular magazine genre so popular in interwar Japan? Why did it manage to attract such a wide range of readers, including men? What did its popularity and the heated controversies over it suggest in the context of print and reading culture in and outside of Japan? Clearly, it is necessary to reconsider the “women’s magazine” as a genre in and of itself. What was the “women’s magazine” in interwar Japan in the first place?

**Genealogy of Studies on Interwar Mass-Market Women’s Magazines in Japan**

Interestingly, however, scholars have not paid serious attention to Japanese mass-market women’s magazines of the 1920s and 1930s until recently and comprehensive analysis is still awaited. In the following section of the Introduction, I will present a broad overview and reexamination of earlier discussions and studies on these women’s magazines, both in Japanese- and English-language academia. By reconsidering these earlier studies and referring to recent developments in the fields of mass communication and popular culture, I will clarify the issues to be further addressed in this dissertation. This will be followed by a brief explanation of each chapter.

**Studies in Publishing History: Marginalization of Women’s Magazines**

Mass-market women’s magazines in pre–World War II Japan, most of which were launched in the 1910s and gained wide popularity in the early 1920s, have been studied mainly in two fields in Japanese academia since the end of WWII until around the 1990s: namely, the history of print culture and women’s history. Many studies in the first area have mentioned women’s magazines only in passing, as one example of the popularization of print culture, even though not a few of them have acknowledged the enormous popularity of this particular magazine genre. In
contrast, when these historical studies explain popularization or democratization of periodicals, most of them have devoted many pages—indeed, often a whole chapter—to Kōdansha, a company known for its publication of so-called “goraku zasshi” (entertaining magazines), the genre that always competed in circulation with the women’s magazine in the 1920s and 1930s. Yet, even considering the impressive presence of various Kōdansha magazines, it is puzzling that these studies allot only a few to several pages to the women’s magazine, a genre equally as powerful and popular as Kōdansha’s entertainment magazines were at the time.

One of the factors that must have affected this unbalanced treatment of these two equally popular magazine genres derives from the common practice among historical accounts of Japanese publishing to periodize history according to the one representative company that published the most magazines in the period. Thus, the few decades straddling the end of the nineteenth century were known as the “Hakubunkan Era,” and the next few decades the “Jitsugyō no Nihonsha Era,” followed by the “Kōdansha Era.” In the case of mass-market women’s magazines in the interwar period, however, each publishing company, with the exception of Kōdansha, focused on a single women’s magazine title. This attests to the incredible popularity of this magazine genre, which provided publishers with enough profit from a single title that they did not need to rely on other kinds of publications. Yet, at the same time, it contributed to the marginalization of the women’s magazine in historical studies, which based their research on the “rise and fall” of large publishers known for producing a variety of different kinds of publications.

Biased historical sources would have also contributed to this imbalanced historiography. Many large publishers such as Chūō Kōronsha and Kōdansha issued their own company histories, 16

16 Among such studies, the best known are Okano 1957, Ishikawa S. 1959, Ogawa 1962, Hashimoto 1964, and Shimizu and Kobayashi 1979. Various publishing company histories also fall under this category.
which frequently served as the basis for many publishing histories. On the other hand, almost none of the companies that specialized in mass-market women’s magazines in the interwar period—with the exception of Shufu no Tomosha—survived after WWII, either due to intense competition from rival women’s magazines, or because of their forced consolidation by the authorities during the war. As a result, most historical studies of interwar Japanese popular magazines were based solely on sources that were published and/or written by current or former employees of Kōdansha, the publisher of numerous interwar mass-market magazines including Kingu and a women’s monthly, Fujin kurabu (Women’s Club).\(^\text{17}\) It is no wonder that publication histories of popular magazines during the interwar period were inclined in favor of Kingu and Kōdansha.

Perhaps the most fundamental problem underlying the marginalization of the popular women’s magazine in the historiography of publication derives from its basic tendency to demean or depreciate culture associated with the feminine. It is noteworthy that all of the above-mentioned historical studies offered detailed descriptions and analyses of companies that published “sōgō zasshi” (general magazines)—periodicals that were then highly respected and targeted mainly male intellectuals. Even Kōdansha (then known as Dai Nihon Yūbenkai Kōdansha) published a sōgō zasshi, Gendai (Today, 1920–1946). In contrast, almost no publishers devoted to mass-market women’s magazines in the 1920s and 1930s published general magazines for male intellectuals. Moreover, even when researchers reviewed the democratization of publishing, they focused on Kingu, a “general” entertainment magazine, not on the almost equally popular “women’s magazines,” such as Shufu no tomo or Fujin kurabu (Women’s Club), in spite of the many male readers they had in the 1920s and 1930s and no matter how deeply they impressed various contemporary critics, compelling them to proclaim them a significant social phenomenon of their time. Thus, even in such

a localized case as interwar Japanese mass-market magazines, we can see the central importance of the feminine in the culture of modernity and its concomitant suppression in discourses concerning modernity, an issue that Rita Felski, a scholar in the fields of aesthetics, culture, and literary theory, compellingly problematizes in her analysis of the interconnection of gender and modernity in late nineteenth–century European culture.\(^{18}\)

Other studies in the field of publication history have blamed the mass-market women’s magazine for mobilizing women for the war. Quintessential of this type of historical study were those conducted by writer and independent scholar of war-time journalism and literature Takasaki Ryūji.\(^{19}\) His analyses were hinged on the basic dualistic distinction between the “conscientious/good” magazines or articles and the “unconscientious/bad” ones, as his statements on the purpose of his project suggest: “[the purpose of this study is] to exhaustively muckrake the senders'/writers’ thoughts, credos, intelligence, and emotions as they were, to examine what kind of influences magazine journalism as media was under during wartime, and how they reported, endorsed, promoted, or distrusted the destructive means of modern warfare.”\(^{20}\) Thus, while his attempts were notable in that they treated the popular women’s magazine as worthy of attention, in the end they simply detected the “evil” in them without offering any detailed analysis of the signifying process at work in these magazines and among their readers.

**Studies in Women’s History: Referential Meaning and Repressive Theories of Mass Culture**

In Japanese academia, interwar women’s magazines have also been studied in the field of women’s history in particular. Many of these studies\(^{21}\) focused on women’s subjectivity,

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18 See Felski 1995, especially the introduction (Myths of the Modern) and the first chapter (Modernity and Feminism) for a detailed overview of the interests propelling her project.
19 For example, see Takasaki’s works (1976, 1987, and 1995).
20 Takasaki 1976, 12.
which they claimed was to be seen through the “window of women’s magazines,” a statement clearly suggesting their understanding of women’s subjectivity as a collective one. Indeed, they launched a pioneering attempt to give utterance to women’s voices, which, as Sharalyn Orbaugh (1996) aptly points out, had been silenced in the highly male-centered discourses about the “subject” or “subjectivity” of modern Japan. This “reconstructed” women’s voice, however, was not echoing the voices of all types of women. While they analyzed in detail magazines edited by and for intellectual/elite women of the time, such as Seitō (Bluestocking, launched in 1911) and Fujin kōron (Ladies’ Review, 1916), they blatantly disparaged and underestimated the mass-market magazines, condemning them for their “commercialism” and “shallowness.” The situation of English-language academia up until the late 1990s was similar: the “new woman” or pioneering feminists and the magazines they launched or contributed to attracted many scholars’ attention, which popular women’s magazine in interwar Japan did not.

Research of popular women’s magazines was left to a group of historians and lay citizens who analyzed the “commercialized” magazines of the 1930s instead of their high-brow counterparts. Whereas the members of this study group acknowledged the importance of the mass-market women’s magazines in the 1930s, their principal concerns lay not in the magazines per se, but rather in their role in wartime mobilization. They proclaimed that they would clarify “why women, who were born peace lovers, collaborated in that reckless war.” Thus, by extracting the texts that seemed to have stirred patriotic fervor and invited the readers to support the government in the war against “evil,” their studies showed tendencies and attendant defects similar to those of Takasaki’s work cited above. Another otherwise comprehensive analysis of women’s magazines by

22 Kindai Joseibunkashi Kenkyūkai 1996, the first page of the introduction (unpaged).
26 Watashitachi no Rekishi o Tsuzuru Kai 1987, 282.
journalism scholar Oka Mitsuo (1981) revealed the same inclination toward detecting cultural villains when it came to consideration of popular magazines during wartime. Again, these studies offered no constructive analysis of the interconnected operations of production, representation, distribution, and reading related to the magazines.

These studies of interwar women’s magazines conducted within the field of women’s history shared a reliance upon referential meaning, a tendency toward a view of history as the accumulation of a series of discontinuities, and an understanding of mass culture as a repressive power. First, as shown above, they regarded these magazines as archival records from which one could retrieve “women’s voices” as a discrete entity. The texts of the articles, the style of language in which they were written, photographic images—these were all, according to their presumption, directly re-presenting and corresponding to the referred objects, people and their thoughts, credos, or feelings outside of the representational world. Hence, the primary work of researchers in these studies was to “dig up” such evidence buried in the historical sources as would support their arguments. The textuality, constructedness of texts and images, and formation and dissemination of mediated discourses was passed over in such positivistic analyses.

Secondly, whether implicitly or explicitly, these studies tended to view history as a succession of different phases that were mutually disconnected in principle. Thus, cultural phenomena in the Taishō era (1912–1926) were described as “liberal” and “democratic,” while those in the subsequent first decade of the Shōwa era (roughly 1926–1936) were “erotic, grotesque nonsense,” those in the next decade (1937–1945) “totalitarian,” and those in the occupation decade immediately after WWII labeled as a “retrieval of liberalism and democracy.” As sociologist Yoshimi Shun’ya (2002) pointed out, even quite comprehensive pioneering studies on modern Japanese culture including women’s magazines that were conducted by a group led by social
psychologist Minami Hiroshi revealed the same historical viewpoint based on disconnection. Consequently, problematics of the interconnected overlaps between different historical phases as well as complexities within individual phases were not sufficiently addressed in these studies, if not entirely ignored.

The third problematic tendency implicit in these prior studies is the assumption of overly powerful media messages and a passive audience. According to their underlying theory, as social discourses or ideologies changed, reflecting such social shifts—since representations directly corresponded to their referred objects/people (“reality”)—the contents of various media naturally became affected by new ideologies, and so did the audiences. Therefore, they suggested that their ability to excavate “unknown” or “less known” historical sources of “totalitarian tendencies” or “modern gender roles” inevitably was equivalent to revealing the fact that people living amid the flood of such information also supported, or at least accepted, these totalitarian thoughts or the concept of such gender roles. This understanding of the relationship between mass culture and ideology strongly resembles that of the Frankfurt School. Adorno and Horkheimer observed that mass cultural products are highly standardized and authoritarian, for they are produced for purchase, to provide cultural industries with profit. As a result, they insisted, signifying practices operated by and through these cultural commodities are also so standardized and authoritarian that people do not need to actively participate in meaning-making; they become mere passive consumers. “Culture impresses the same stamp on everything. Films, radio and magazines make up a system which is

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27 Their studies were published as two collections of papers in 1965 (featuring Taisho culture) and 1987 (featuring Showa culture), which include the following studies on publishing of the time: Okada and Sakimura 1965; Barbara Satō 1987b. With all her careful investigations and her pioneering insights into the importance of the women’s magazine including the mass-market, Barbara Sato’s studies of the interwar women’s magazines (1987b, 2003) were based on the above-mentioned presumptions, namely, the viewpoint of history as a series of disconnected phases, and the positivistic treatment of historical sources as a means of retrieving “women’s voices.”
uniform as a whole in every part.”

However, as recent studies have revealed, signifying practices of mass culture are not so overly monolithic as the Frankfurt School analysis insists. First of all, audiences do not wholly and passively accept and internalize the ideologies disseminated through media. Nor do they fully control their own understanding, interpretation, or use of mass culture, either. The options for strategies and deployable sources available to consumers are restricted to some extent, and they are already enmeshed in and have even potentially internalized some of these social discourses, after all. Nevertheless, in many cases, they do not cease to actively manipulate the mass culture available to them: moderating, adding some changes or new elements, eliminating some parts, selecting and arranging certain elements of the commodities, or interpreting them differently from the dominant or assumed reading. People make meaning and value from and through mass cultural products in their own ways, which may be totally different meanings or values from those originally intended by their producers. Thus, meaning and value are not inherent in the commodities or texts themselves, but rather are constructed by consumers, audiences, or users. Even when audiences do not concentrate on the production of meaning, but pay attention rather to the situatedness of an action, their practice could be understood as their own way of subverting or resisting, even if only slightly, the dominant norm or social demands. For example, a woman or man browsing women’s magazines in bed before sleeping is not reading the articles seriously or attentively, hence, is not a “creative” reader. Such an action, however, should not be understood as just “passive,” either. Her/his act of reading itself can be meaningful as an act of relaxing and enjoying one’s own time without being constrained by family or public duties.

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28 Adorno and Horkheimer 1979, 120.
29 For studies emphasizing creative consumption by consumers and audiences, see Radway 1984; Chambers 1987, 1990; Fiske 1989a, 1989b; Hebdige 1988; Willis 1990; and Bird 1992. Many of these studies draw on Michel De Certeau’s consideration of everyday cultural practices (1984).
30 Hermes 1995. For Hermes’ criticism of the “fallacy of meaningfulness,” that is, the false assumption
Thus, it is necessary to pay closer attention to the diverse practices of mass culture in terms of production, circulation, reception, and construction of various social discourses. Meanings of the components of the Japanese interwar mass-market women’s magazines did not exist entirely within the texts or visual images, waiting for readers to decode them just as was originally intended by the producers. Nor were these representations merely reflecting or re-presenting the referred world outside of them. As shown in the following chapters, readers of these magazines were not completely passive nor naïve, even though they were subject to some cultural and social contexts and codes. Various technological, editorial, and promotional changes created diverse opportunities for readers to participate actively in the signifying process, which, in fact, constituted part of the publishers’ strategies for increasing circulation. These changes included advances in photography, printing, and plate-making technologies; developments in systems of marketing, distribution, and promotion; and innovations in editing styles, article formats, and the shape of the magazine as a whole. These shifts also affected the connections between these magazines and other media and transformed the readers’ relationships to the components being represented, to the represented worlds, and to the editors and other readers. Researchers need to take into consideration as many of these interconnected elements as possible when analyzing the complex signifying practices of the magazines in question, while paying special attention to the workings of knowledge and power in the given contexts.

Thus, all of these pioneering studies of interwar popular Japanese women’s magazines until the 1990s took it for granted that readers of these periodicals were lower middle–class women, not highly educated and prone to be influenced by the messages emitted through mass media. These

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that meanings of mass cultural production derive only from consumers’ or audiences’ active interpreting/consuming practices, see the “Introduction” and “Chapter 1: Everyday Media Use,” pp. 1–28. Studies similarly attentive to the use of media in everyday life are Radway 1984 and 1988; Morley 1980 and 1986; and Bird 1992. 

31 As Bird aptly warns, researchers should be cautious when overtly celebrating readers’ creativity in analyzing signifying practices of mass culture (1992, 209).
studies usually neglected the possibility for these readers to subvert, inflect or appropriate the
dominant discourses, representations, or recommended reading styles by and for themselves. They
did not even take into account the existence of male readers of such magazines. Just as popular
women’s magazines in interwar Japan had been marginalized in Japanese academia, English-
language academia did not pay attention to this particular periodical genre from interwar Japan either.

**A Holistic or Multidimensional Approach and Prospects for Further Studies**

In the past few decades, research on mass-market women’s magazines has shown extensive
developments beyond chronological studies and women’s history in both Japanese- and English-
language academia. Recent studies recognize the importance of these periodicals in interwar
Japanese society, and many overcame previous studies’ tendencies to view their readers as a
collective “mass,” vulnerable to the imposed discourses. Instead of the naïve empiricism and rather
simplistic view of history as a series of disconnected periods that was seen in earlier studies, the
latest studies have started to consider these periodicals as apparatuses contributing to the ever-
changing formation of various social discourses. While many such recent studies reveal a deep
interest in the contested construction of gender roles—especially women’s roles—some of them
offer detailed interpretations and analyses of the mostly visual aspects of mass-market women’s
magazines in order to consider the connection between representation and psychological
mobilization of readers. Other recent studies focus on the formation of various modern practices

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Around the World Research Group 2008, and Itō R. et al. 2010. While focusing on the situation in the
previous period, Hirata Yumi’s research on women’s writings in the Meiji Era (1868–1912) is also
related to the problematics raised and addressed by such studies on interwar women’s magazines
(Hirata 1999).

33 For studies focusing on visuals, see Wakakuwa 1995, Migita 2001; Kitahara 2001, 2004. These
studies rely not only on women’s magazines, but also on other mass-marketed print materials. Inoue M.
(2006) is a rare example of an analysis of auditory modernity.
and associated desires, such as reading, advertising, and consumption. They differ from previous similar studies in their attention to the constructedness of such social discourses rather than simply upholding a positivistic view of them as reflecting reality, which leaves room for the audience (or “readers” in this case) to participate in this meaning-formation, at least to some extent. In addition, many of these recent studies on interwar popular women’s magazines are conscious of the complexities of historical transition, with its interconnected continuities and discontinuities.

Although they confront the rather monolithic conceptualization of representation, readers, and history presented by earlier works, these studies are still not without deficiencies; there are issues yet to be addressed. The problem is threefold: first, in the approach to print media, second, in the attitude taken toward analyzing the representations appearing in print media, and third, in the interrelated relationship between magazine genres and gender categories. As for the first, in most cases, if not without several exceptions, recent studies do not aim to consider the implications of the mass-market women’s magazine in interwar Japan as a print medium. Rather, their interests lie in the formation and transformation of various social discourses or modern practices, such as gender roles, nationalism, consumption, and the like. Taking the articles or visuals included in these magazines as “historical materials” to be interpreted, they focus on elucidating the workings of signification in a few components of the magazines, such as the serialized novel, the advertisement, the fashion article, the advisory essay, the cover image, and so on. Thus, they do not address the issue of the position of this hitherto marginalized magazine genre within the larger publishing and reading culture.

See Kitada 1998a; Ishida 1998, 2001, 2003, 2004 and 2015; Frederick 2006; Sezaki 2008. Maeda’s studies on serial novels in popular women’s magazines were the pioneering attempts in this direction (Maeda 2001a/1968). While mostly dealing with literary works appearing in “high-brow” magazines and their readers, Wada (1997, 2002) and Odaira (2008) are also helpful studies falling in this category. Fashion articles in the magazines in question, for instance, clearly show that consumer culture did not simply end as soon as the war started (Ishida 2003).
Another related problem is that their studies prominently rely on the method of textual analysis. With the exception of only a few studies, most recent research has been heavily inclined toward analyses of the text and representations appearing in the magazines in question, which results in a relative neglect of the impact of production, distribution, and reading on the signifying process. Nor do they adequately address the ways in which changes in modes of expression as well as rhetorical and editing styles affect the practices of producing and reading representations, and the relationship of the readers with the texts, those represented in the texts/images, other readers, and their other everyday activities. While the importance of textual analysis is undeniable, the formation and transitions of the idealized image of modern lifestyle and the sense of national connectedness, for instance, could be more thoroughly elucidated by examining shifts in modes of expression and their accompanying influence on representation and reading practices.

Similarly, another urgent issue in this field yet to be reconsidered is the problematization of the gendering nature of the magazine genre itself. As I have already briefly pointed out and will argue in more detail in the following chapters, the “women’s magazine” was not always what we understood it should be; its content, form, style, and significance—that is, its position in the print and reading culture, or in its readers’ everyday lives—were never consistent, nor monolithic. All these aspects of the magazine have changed continuously since its inception at the end of the nineteenth century. This is demonstrated in the above-described shifts in the definition of the interwar popular women’s magazine: while contemporary critics in the interwar period regarded it as the most noteworthy promoter of democratization of publishing, acknowledging the conspicuous number of male readers of the genre, scholars in the subsequent periods treated it as a flashy example of an embryonic mass-magazine, marginalizing it as a medium solely attracting female (namely

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36 For example, Kitada (1998a) and Frederick (2006) are attentive to textuality, mediatedness, technological developments, and differences among the readers.
housewife) readers, presumably reflecting the position of the women’s magazine of their times. Such an understanding of the readership of interwar mass-market women’s magazine still prevails among scholars. While recognizing these magazines as important cultural artifacts, most of the latest studies still view women—particularly housewives—as their readers. Although a few studies pointed out the widespread readership of interwar Japanese popular magazines beyond age, class, and gender restrictions, even they do not venture to fully consider the implications of such a wide range of readers and the significance of the interwar popular women’s magazine in the history of publishing in modern Japan.

In short, the genre of the mass-market women’s magazine in interwar Japan has not been seriously investigated on its own. Yet, before examining articles or visuals appearing in these magazines to consider the formation of various social discourses and practices, or, to put it more accurately, in order to present thorough, in-depth analyses and a more nuanced understanding of them, we need to pay much closer attention to their interrelated associations with textuality and modes of expression. In order to be fully attentive to such issues, in turn, we need to address first and foremost what exactly this specific periodical genre was in interwar Japan. How did the women’s magazine come into being and transform over time in modern Japan? What were the implications of the unprecedented popularity of the mass-market interwar Japanese women’s magazine in the contexts of production, circulation, and reception of print media in the country? How were these issues related to the gendered categorization of print media and readers?

In contrast to the research on early Japanese mass-market women’s magazines, recent studies on women’s magazines in the previous period (i.e., the Meiji era) as well as popular women’s

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37 Even Sarah Frederick’s groundbreaking comprehensive study on interwar women’s magazines was dismissive of their male readers (Frederick 2006).
magazines in Europe and North America increasingly veer toward a holistic approach. Blessed with
the development of studies on contiguous popular cultural practices such as romance novels, soap
opera, film, and the like,39 these new investigations of women’s magazines attempt to combine a
variety of approaches to cultural products and practices, including long-practiced textual analysis,
historical research of production and reading practices, and reception studies.40 In addition, the latest
reception studies not only address the role readers play in actively producing meaning for these texts,
but also examine the significance of the act of magazine reading as implied by its position in their
everyday activities.41 Moreover, unlike most prior studies on the women’s magazine, some of them
also acknowledge the position of male readers of this particular magazine genre, recognizing that
although the genre is conventionally known as “women’s magazines,” the pleasure of reading such
periodicals is not limited exclusively to female readers.42 Drawing on recent developments in studies
on periodicals in and outside Japan, I
would like to address how the so-called women’s magazines
came to be gendered differently in different time periods, when and how they became marginalized
as a “women’s issue” or “women’s culture,” and what these phenomena mean in the history of print
and reading culture in modern Japan.43

42 Hermes 1995. Bird (1992) shares Hermes’ interest in and attentiveness to male readers, although
the target of her study is, strictly speaking, not traditional women’s magazines, but the tabloid, another
magazine genre that has conventionally been considered to be “feminine.” Hermes also included it in
her study under the category of “gossip magazine (tabloid).”
43 While my first dissertation (“The Age of Shufu no tomo”), submitted to and accepted by the
University of Tokyo in 2010, attempted to address these issues to some extent, its emphasis and scope
are different from those of this dissertation, since the former project mainly focused on the role of a
certain publisher, namely, Shufu no Tomosha, in the history of publishing in Japan. In contrast, this
dissertation aims at considering the implications of changes in print/reading culture brought about by
the women’s magazine from broader perspectives, particularly in the contexts of the interrelated
category formation of magazine genres and genders, as well as the emergence of seemingly
“democratic” editorial and promotional strategies in Japan.
A Brief Overview of Each Chapter

In order to address the above issues, this dissertation focuses on interwar Japanese popular women’s magazines as a starting point for exploring the democratization of print/reading culture in Japan, reconsidering the history of print media and reading practices in modern Japan in general. I will reconsider the significance of interwar Japanese women’s magazines such as Shufu no tomo (Housewife’s Friend), Fujin kurabu (Ladies’ Club), Fujokai (World of Ladies and Girls), and the like, through comparisons with other Japanese periodicals of the time, focusing on aspects of readership, structure, editing style, layout, and promotional strategies. I will also examine other historical documents, including contemporary criticism, surveys, company histories, and data concerning price, circulation, content, and readership. In addition, I will analyze readers’ memoirs in order to identify evidence of readers’ reactions beyond their contributions to the magazines in question. Toward the end of the dissertation, I will explore the way in which this “new medium” transformed people’s reading habits into “browsing” magazines for relaxation, which would become the predominant mode of periodical reading in Japan thereafter.

In Chapter Two, I will first outline the overall development of periodicals in modern Japan in general, and situate the interwar women’s magazine within it. The course of this analysis will

44 As the list of periodicals included in the Works Cited shows, I researched a wide range of periodicals, both magazines and newspapers, published between the 1890s and 1937, i.e., the period from the establishment of the industrialization of publishing in Japan to the point when censorship became undeniably tightened by the launch of the National Spiritual Mobilization Movement (Kokumin Seishin Sōdōin Undō) with the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War on July 7, 1937. In particular, I investigated most closely the following women’s magazines (listed in order of launch): Jogaku zasshi (Magazine of Women’s Learning), Jogaku sekai (Girl Student’s World), Fujin sekai (Ladies’ World), Fujin no tomo (Ladies’ Friend), Fujokai (World of Ladies and Girls), Shufu no tomo (Housewife’s Friend), Fujin kōron (Ladies’ Review), and Fujin kurabu (Ladies’ Club). For detailed information about the years of their launch and cessation, see the Works Cited.

45 Admittedly, these memoirs are mostly written by intellectuals, due to the scarcity of such writings by non-intellectual readers of contemporary magazines. Nevertheless, being written from the viewpoint of readers of periodicals, these intellectuals’ texts offer some insights into the history of publishing in modern Japan.
require us to reconsider the very notion of the “women’s magazine,” which has been conventionally regarded as reading material for women. The next chapter (Chapter Three) will present an overview of the characteristics of mass-market interwar Japanese women’s magazines in terms of format, editing style, content, readership, distribution, marketing, and promotion systems, comparing them with other types of periodicals of the time. This comparison will show how refreshingly novel the interwar mass-market women’s magazine was, which in turn will invite us to define this magazine genre as a “new medium.”

Chapter Four will examine the discursive significance of contemporary controversies over the interwar mass-market women’s magazine. Some of the traits exhibited by this magazine genre can be found among other kinds of periodicals of the time in Japan. Yet, it was the interwar popular women’s magazine that received severe criticism in Japan. What does this peculiar phenomenon imply? In considering this question, I will also address issues of categorization and classification, some of the fundamental features of modernity. Specifically, I will problematize the categorical interrelatedness of gender, magazine genre, and formation of hierarchy among everyday cultural products, in this case, periodicals.

The fifth chapter addresses changes in editing style, namely, the extensive involvement of readers in articles and events, and the resulting apparent increased empowerment of readers of the magazine in question. While starting with analysis of examples from different women’s magazines, toward the end of this chapter, I will focus on article genres developed in Shufu no tomo, for it established the new “reader-oriented” editing strategies, which was to be adopted by not only other women’s magazines but also other different types of periodicals, such as general magazines and newspapers, forming, in a sense, the basic format for the modern, still prevent, practices. One of the most conspicuous characteristics of the mass-market women’s magazine of the time was the expansion of reader participation in editing as well as media events. The increasingly accessible style,
greater number of components and events based on readers’ submissions and ideas, less prominent position of the editors, less instructive writing tone, and a more seemingly standardized format of the articles—most of which are techniques still widely practiced in Japanese mass media today—all contributed to promoting the magazine genre’s egalitarian image. While such a reader-oriented editing style appeared to empower readers by including their voices, it also cunningly created a new invisible hierarchy among participants in the magazine community. The complex, simultaneous operation of empowerment and disempowerment, as well as inclusion and exclusion, of readers will also be closely analyzed. Summarizing the analyses and arguments presented in these chapters, and suggesting issues for further study, the Conclusion (Chapter Six) will point out that the shift in Japanese print and reading culture centering around the interwar mass-market women’s magazine is comparable to the phenomenon known as “New Journalism” or “yellow journalism” in English-speaking countries while referring to its connections with other print media from previous periods, including the Meiji era and the Edo period.

The following questions will be addressed in the subsequent chapters: How did the so-called women’s magazine come to be gendered differently in different time periods? (Chapter Two) Exactly what kind of periodical was the mass-market women’s magazine in the context of the print/reading culture of the time? (Chapter Three) Why did the mass-market women’s magazine provoke such public controversies in interwar Japan? (Chapter Four) How did readers of the interwar mass-market women’s magazine involve themselves in the magazine community? (Chapter Five) In sum, this research project addresses the questions of what changes in print/reading culture were brought about by the mass-market women’s magazine in interwar Japan and what their implications were.
Notes on the Terms “Democratic” and “Interwar”

A word of explanation about my use of the terms “democratic,” “democratization,” and “interwar” in this dissertation is in order before I move on to analysis of the periodicals.

In this dissertation, I use words such as “democratic” and “democratization” not in their political sense (i.e., as words describing a certain form of governance), but rather, in a more metaphorical sense, though not entirely without political resonances. In contrast, I use the term “democracy” with its political implications. Tracing the historical transitions and diversification of the meanings of “democracy” and “democratic,” Raymond Williams observes that, while “democracy” is now understood to refer to either “direct democracy” or “representative democracy [indirect democracy],” the word “democratic” is often used in two non-political meanings: the one referring to “freedom of speech,” that is, “the conditions of open argument, without necessary reference to elections or to power”; the other describing “democratic manners or feelings,” or “acting as if all people were equal, and deserved equal respect, whether this is really so or not.”

Drawing on and extending Williams’ explanation of the word “democratic,” I will use the words “democratic” and “democratization” to refer to the perceived or alleged conditions of inclusiveness and egalitarianism in the magazine community and its making: a sort of imagined mediated community in which all the participants, including editors, writers, specialists, celebrities, readers, contest applicants, related-media-event goers, who are featured and presented in stories are seemingly equally and/or represented as having equal rights and accessibility to join, whether directly or indirectly, (at least a part of) the process of making the magazine pages or its media events, regardless of their various attributes or social conditions. It is noteworthy that even in the social sciences, where the term “democracy” and related words are used with predominantly political

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connotations, inclusiveness, participation, and majority—concepts that are related to the seemingly “non-political” usage of the term in this dissertation—are key concerns.48

The “interwar period” refers, at least as an English-language term, to the period between the end of the First World War (November 1918) and the beginning of the Second World War (September 1939). Whereas the concept of the “interwar” is particularly important in European histories, it is usually not considered so in the history of modern Japan, which was, due to its geographical distance from the main battlefields, relatively less affected by the First World War, though the war did impact the country as well its economics, politics (both international and domestic), thought and various discourses, including those at the intellectual level and those related to everyday practices. Instead, references to imperial eras—i.e., the Taisho era and the Showa era—are more common in Japanese modern history. While I do not abandon era-based period demarcations, in this dissertation I still use the term “interwar period,” with slight modifications in the English usage, as will be explained below, mainly for the following three reasons.

First, this is the period in which the main focus of this research project, namely, the major mass-market women’s magazine, developed highly. This period also observed the rise of modern consumer culture and had close relations with the mass-market women’s magazine as well. As the following chapters show, the mass-market women’s magazine became established as a distinct magazine genre after the launch of the magazine Shufu no tomo (Housewife’s Friend) in March 1917. Strictly speaking, its launch was still during wartime, but its popularity and influence in the publishing industry only became firmly settled after the end of the First World War, with the increase in people’s needs for practical information about an “economical” and “rational” modern lifestyle in response to the post–World War I inflationary spiral, which culminated in the eruption of the rice

riots of 1918, a series of popular disturbances across Japan from July to September 1918. The situation was further aggravated by the Siberian Intervention (1918–1920), which brought about the fall of the Terauchi cabinet and was to affect the country’s policy of rice production in its colonies—a symbolic example that Japan’s economic as well as political situation, its people’s lives, and colonial policies were not unaffected by the global socio-political situation.\(^{49}\) Eventually, however, as the nation’s economy recovered and the average income in most social classes (at least in the urban areas) increased,\(^{50}\) the discourses appearing in mass-market women’s magazines of the time, including *Suhfu no tomo, Fujin sekai, Fujokai, Fujin kurabu*, and the like, gradually shifted their emphasis on “frugality” in home economics, through “wise consumption,” to “consumption” itself, partly under the influence of Western consumerist culture and lifestyle.\(^{51}\) In this way, the 1920s and 1930s saw the rise of modern consumer culture, alongside show business, such as films and all-female review companies, which, as I analyzed elsewhere,\(^{52}\) caused controversies over the “modern girl” as the perceived “Americanization” of the society developed, symbolic of which was the reconstruction of Tokyo after the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923. As will be explained in more detail in Chapter Two, the circulation of the women’s magazine continued to increase throughout the interwar period, that is, the period between the two world wars. Thanks to their large circulation, mass-market women’s magazines functioned as one of the main “trendsetters” during the 1920s and the 1930s.

Second, in this dissertation, I would like to trace the changes brought about by the mass-market women’s magazine in Japanese print/reading culture without being too restrained by the conventional era-based chronology, which often associates each era with a specific preconceived

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\(^{49}\) For the rice riots of 1918, see Inoue and Watanabe eds. 1959–1962; Lewis 1990.

\(^{50}\) Nakagawa K. 1985, 382–392.


\(^{52}\) Maeshima 2012, 2014a.
characteristic. Although this chronological method has certain advantages, for instance, in considering the people’s sense of the times or their reactions to the imperial family at certain times, such as during the demise and/or the coronation of an emperor, it has its downsides as well, one of which, particularly relevant to this dissertation, is its tendency to mark each era with a set of specific characteristics, usually summarized by a catchphrase, such as “Taisho democracy (Taishō demokurasī)” or early Showa “erotic, grotesque, nonsense (ero-guro-nansensu),” followed by “totalitarianism (zentai shugi).” However, changes in society developed gradually across eras and seemingly contradictory phenomena—such as democracy and totalitarianism, for example—theoretically could and in reality did co-exist in Japan, epitomized by the establishment of two laws in the same year of 1925, namely, the General Election Law (Futsū Senkyo Hō), which realized universal male suffrage, and the Public Security Preservation Law (Chian Iji Hō), which meant, from the viewpoint of the publishing industry, tightening of the already fairly strict censorship.53 Similarly, as I will discuss in the following chapters, while seemingly democratic editorial and promotional strategies developed in interwar Japanese periodicals, particularly among mass-market women’s magazines, they also cunningly served to conceal the mediated nature of published stories and how they controlled the audiences’ or readers’ participation in magazine making.

Third, by using the term “interwar period” instead of chronological demarcations by Japanese imperial era, I would like to emphasize the contemporaneity of developments during this time with similar developments in the other areas of the world. In English-speaking regions, democratic changes in editorial and promotional strategies, whose early forms had appeared in the late 19th century with the emergence of “new journalism” or “yellow journalism,” developed significantly during the interwar period with the vogue of tabloids during this time, a trend that is

sometimes called “jazz journalism.”

Although this dissertation is mainly concerned with transitions in print/reading culture in early 20th-century Japan, I was considering this research project in the context of similar global shifts in publishing.

Lastly, I must introduce some modifications to the definition of the word “interwar period” as it is used in this study. When the term “interwar” is used in historical studies concerning the Japanese context, it usually refers to the period between the two world wars (1918–1939), just like in European or North American histories. In some cases, the end of the period could be either pushed a little later, since Japan joined the Second World War at the end of 1941 with the attack on Pearl Harbor (also known as the beginning of the Asia-Pacific War), or moved forward to 1937, the year of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident (also Rokōkyō Jiken or Lugouqiao Shibian), known as the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War, or further moved forward to 1931 if the Japanese invasion of Manchuria is taken as the de facto start of the Second Sino-Japanese War. While I do agree with the view that the so-called “Manchurian Incident” and subsequent various “incidents” definitely had an impact on Japanese society and the subsequent years observed a growth of militarism and patriotism, from the viewpoint of censorship and control of thought, I would like to see 1937 as a watershed. For, as media historian Park Soon Ae argues, although it had not been entirely ignored in the previous decade, it was only starting with the Marco Polo Bridge Incident that the Ministry of Home Affairs (naimu shō) started the serious, systemic use of media to mobilize its citizens and for foreign propaganda. Moreover, whereas, until then, Japan had observed the intermittent rise of populist militaristic and patriotic fever at the “eruption of an incident,” with the implementation of the National Spiritual Mobilization Movement (Kokumin Seishin Sōdōin Undō)

55 For such studies, see titles included in Kuroda et al., 2003.
56 Louise Young vividly illustrated and closely examined such militaristic mood in the society with various examples of contemporary mediated discourses (1998, 55–114).
two months after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, this fever was made “official” and became ongoing.\textsuperscript{58} Thus, in terms of media conditions, one can see an obvious, continual shift in 1937.

This is not to say, however, that the above-defined “interwar period” had nothing to do with any kind of war or wartime national policy. On the contrary, various modern institutions, discourses, and practices that developed during this so-called “interwar period” offered the basis for “wartime” socio-cultural conditions. The “democratized” and highly “commercialized” publishing industry, the developments and characteristics of which will be examined in the following chapters, was one such institution. And, arguably, the totalitarian wartime social conditions were related to or made possible by the “democratic” tendencies and everyday modern consumerist practices developed during the interwar period. In a sense, then, the “interwar period” was, though it may sound like an oxymoron, a part of the “wartime.” As space is limited, this dissertation does not fully address the issue of the relationship between the media, everyday life practices, and the totalitarian wartime mobilization effort. However, I believe that a deeper understanding of the contemporary media will provide us with clearer and more nuanced insights into the interrelated developments of the media, modern everyday practices, and the wartime mobilization. I hope that this study will contribute to such an understanding.

\textsuperscript{58} For censorship in modern Japan up until 1945, see Mitchell 1984; Rubin 1984 and Kasza 1998.
Chapter 2: Beyond “Magazines for Women”: The Emergence of Mass-Market Women’s Magazines as Popular Magazines for Both Sexes and their Historical Contexts

As noted in the introduction, while their approaches vary, previous studies on the interwar mass-market women’s magazine share the assumption that these magazines attracted female readers exclusively. Based on such an assumption, pioneering chronological studies of publishing in modern Japan tended to conclude that the interwar popular women’s magazine constituted a relatively “minor,” if distinct, genre in the history of modern Japanese print culture. In contrast, recent studies recognize the importance of this particular magazine genre as an historical source, yet most still adhere to the view that popular women’s magazines published in interwar Japan were edited for and read by women, and thus do not question what kind of periodicals they actually were, or who really read them for what purposes. The numerous comments on and controversies over the magazine genre of the time, however, compel us to rethink its position and significance in the publication history of Japan. Why did this particular magazine genre, which was, as the name suggests, originally created for female readers, attract so many people—including men—in Japan, unlike in most other societies? Why did it provoke this much public controversy? Did it have more to do with the democratization of Japanese print/reading culture than we usually assume? If so, how did this magazine genre democratize or transform print media and the concomitant reading practice in Japanese society? In order to elucidate these questions, we have first to understand exactly what kind of periodical the

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1 It should be noted that there are some exceptional scholars who insisted that researchers should pay more attention to the crucial role that women’s magazines played in the modern Japanese publishing world. Such scholars, however, either just argued generally for the necessity of further research on this magazine genre (Nagamine 1997 and Satō 2002) or focused on only one aspect of this kind of periodical in their analyses (Maeda 2001/1973, focusing on serialized novels, and Kitada 1998, focusing on advertising styles).
mass-market women’s magazine was in Japan in the context of the print/reading culture of the time.

But before that, we need to grasp the big picture of magazine culture and its socio-cultural conditions in modern Japan in the time leading up to the interwar period. This chapter will explore the increasing popularity of women’s magazines and the expansion of their readership, as well as the socio-cultural backgrounds that enabled this particular magazine genre to obtain widespread readership. One caveat is in order. Since the first section is largely based on existing chronological studies of print culture in modern Japan, it shares some of their shortcomings that I explained in the Introduction, especially that of periodization according to the large “representative” publishers. This limitation, however, will be addressed in the following sections and chapters, with analyses of contemporary data, commentaries, and actual magazine articles that were not well incorporated in the pioneering historical studies in this field.

Development of the Magazine in Modern Japan

Industrialization of Magazine Publishing

The first magazine-style publication in modern Japan is said to be Seiyō zasshi (Western Magazine) edited by Yanagawa Shunzō, then a professor at the Western Studies Institute (Bakufu Kaiseijo: lit., Shogunal Institution of Development) in 1867. It was a small booklet consisting of translated articles explaining various aspects of European culture ranging from natural sciences to history. Strictly speaking, however, it was not until the 1870s that the magazine as regular periodical became well established in Japan, with the publication of Meiroku zasshi (Meiroku Magazine) in 1873. This general interest magazine was edited by an elite intellectual group called Meirokusha. In

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the subsequent decade, various magazines followed, including *Eisai shinshi* (New Magazine for Geniuses, a writing competition magazine founded in 1877), *Tōkyō keizai zasshi* (Tokyo Economics Magazine, 1879), *Seirisōdan* (Magazine of Political Theories, 1882), *Jogaku zasshi* (Magazine of Women’s Learning, originally founded as *Jogaku shinshi* or New Magazine of Women’s Learning in 1883, and relaunched as *Jogaku zasshi* in 1884), *Chūō kōron* (Central Review, originally launched as *Hanseikai zasshi* in 1887, but renamed as *Hansei zasshi* in 1892 and *Chūō kōron* in 1899), *Kokumin no tomo* (The Nation’s Friend, 1887), *Katei zasshi* (Home Magazine,³ founded by journalist, critic, and historian Tokutomi Sohō in 1892), and others. These early magazines targeted mainly intellectuals and contributed greatly to the introduction of various Western modern ideas and trends, both social and cultural, into Japan.

The following decades were the age of the industrialization of magazine publication. With the profits from the collection of essays *Nihon taika ronshū* (Collection of Japanese Authorities) in 1887, Ōhashi Sahei, the founder of the publishing company Hakubunkan, launched as many as thirteen magazine titles within the following two years. In 1895, these magazines were further integrated into a single monthly entitled *Taiyō* (The Sun), the first nationally recognized “general magazine (*sōgō zasshi*),” which soon became popular among intellectuals and enjoyed a circulation of one hundred thousand copies a month for its first decade.⁴ While publishing other well-circulated magazines such as *Bungei kurabu* (Literature Club) and *Shōnen sekai* (Boy’s World), Hakubunkan had, by the twentieth century, formed its own “publishing kingdom” with the establishment of various related organizations, such as the distribution agency Tōkyōdō (in 1889), news agency Naigai Tsūshinsha (1893), printing house Hakubunkan Insatsujo (1896, today’s Kyōdō Insatsu/Kyōdō Printing), library Ōhashi Toshokan (1902, today’s Sankō Toshokan/Sankō Library),

³ There is another magazine with exactly the same title launched by Sakai Toshihiko in 1903.
⁴ This data is based on statistics compiled by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department, appearing in Suzuki ed. 2001 (9).
and the like. Though the popularity of its magazines lasted for a while, battered by the intense competition and its out-of-date buy-out distribution policy, the company suffered from deficits by the 1920s and in 1928 had to cease the publication of its once national magazine Taiyō.

The next formidable publisher was Jitsugyō no Nihonsha. It published numerous magazines such as Jitsugyō no Nihon (Japan Business, founded in 1896), Fujin sekai (Woman’s World, 1906), Nihon shōnen (Japan Boy, 1906), and so on, many of which competed intensively with the Hakubunkan publications. The company’s success is well epitomized by the case of its women’s magazines; with the introduction of a refreshing, more accessible editing style and a new consignment-based distribution system, Jitsugyō no Nihonsha’s Fujin sekai increased its circulation to three hundred thousand, far exceeding the circulation of Jogaku sekai (Girl Student’s World, founded in 1901), which stood at seventy to eighty thousand.

Following the example of Hakubunkan and Jitsugyō no Nihonsha, many other publishers also launched a variety of monthlies targeting different readerships. Kinkōdō, for example, founded as many as seven different magazines at once in 1902, touting them as “Kinkōdō’s Seven Great Magazines (Kinkōdō nanadai zasshi).” In this way, the magazine industry became fairly firmly established by the interwar period, when most of the mass-market women’s magazines were launched.

**Nation-Wide Systematization of Distribution and Advertising**

Such publishing conglomerates were made possible by developments in printing technologies and systematization of publishing-related industries. While the technology of halftone printing had already been put into practical use by the end of nineteenth century, it was around the

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5 In the case of “general magazines,” for instance, Chūō kōron (Central Review) was launched in 1886 and Kaizō (Reformation) in 1919. Both surpassed Taiyō in circulation by the 1920s.
time of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) when inclusion of photo images in periodicals became commonplace in Japan out of a need for more immediate, accurate visual information on the war. In 1904, Hōchi shinbun (Hōchi Newspaper or Reporting Newspaper) successfully achieved halftone on the web press, and thereafter this printing technology came to be commonly practiced among publishers throughout the country.\(^6\) In addition, other printing technologies, such as collotype and photolithography, were also utilized when clear images were needed.\(^7\)

Inclusion of visuals in periodicals became ever more popular during the 1920s. Starting with WWI, when the demand for immediate, detailed reports of wars and international affairs increased, numerous printing technologies developed to feed the vogue of photo magazines and photo newspapers or tabloids in Europe as well as in North America.\(^8\) These technologies, namely, gravure printing, offset printing, H. B. process (polychrome offset printing), and the like, were soon introduced into Japan.\(^9\) The development of vest-pocket cameras like Leica also supported the trend toward visualization of news reports by allowing photographers to snap pictures of moving objects or people, sometimes without even being noticed by others, including those who were being photographed.\(^10\)

Moreover, by 1920, individual wholesale booksellers and associations of booksellers had

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\(^6\) The introduction of photographed images into the periodical itself had already been practiced with Shashin shinbun published in 1879. This magazine, however, did not enjoy a large ongoing circulation and was soon discontinued after the publication of its tenth issue. The photo images were not printed directly onto the pages of the magazine: rather, developed photographs were pasted onto them (Taniguchi 1931, 217–218). My explanation of photo-printing techniques is based on the following studies: Shuppan Jiten Henshū Iinkai 1971; Nihon Insatsu Gakkai 2002; Rosenblum 1997; Murase 1931, 218–219; Hasegawa 1987, 134; Carpenter 1990; Galerneau 2008; Dansereau 2008.

\(^7\) Shuppan Jiten Henshū Iinkai 1971, 49–50, 150, 370, 461; Murase 1931, 285–293. See also the explanations of related terms in the glossary of Rosenblum.

\(^8\) Pictorial magazines featuring images in photogravure, such as Midweek Pictorial as well as a sort of photo newspaper known as the tabloid became prevalent in Euroamerica (Hasegawa 1987, 140–141; Kimura Ki 1933/1932, 39–42; Carlebach 1997, 143–192).

\(^9\) On printing technologies such as gravure printing, offset printing, and H.B. process, see the explanations in Nihon Insatsu Gakkai and Shuppanjiten Henshū Iinkai as well as the following: Sonobe 1987 (183–206); Hasegawa 1987 (136–137).

\(^10\) On the development and growth of Leica, see Furointo (Freund) 1986/1974 (155–159).
merged into several major partnerships. For instance, in 1924, after continuous merging, all magazine-selling associations merged into a single national organization called Nihon Zasshi Kyōkai (Japan Magazine Association).\textsuperscript{11} Likewise, in 1925, the former wholesale booksellers integrated themselves into four major ones, namely, Tōkyōdō, Tōkaidō, Hokurikukan, and Daitōkan.\textsuperscript{12} Such major associations established a nationwide distribution network across the country, which greatly facilitated the bookselling business. Now, whatever problems might occur in terms of distribution, book agents all over the country no longer needed to negotiate with each publisher individually. Developments and maturity of the paper industry also contributed to the growth of mass print culture.\textsuperscript{13}

Expansion of the advertising industry resulting from the development of industries such as medicine and cosmetics also promoted major publication through commercialization. One statistical analysis tells us that in 1913, income through advertising at newspaper publishers reached 50 percent of business earnings in Tokyo and 55 percent in Osaka.\textsuperscript{14} It was during the 1910s that management of major advertisement agencies such as Mannendō (founded in 1890), Hakuhōdō (1895), and Nihon

\textsuperscript{11} The period from the end of Meiji era to the following Taishō era saw the foundation of major wholesale booksellers and nation-wide sales networks, with the steady establishment of the following associations: Tōkyō Shoseki Shuppan Eigyōsha Kumiai (Tokyo Book Publishers Association, founded in Nov. 1907 and reorganized as Tōkyō Shosekishō Kumiai/Tokyo Bookstores Association in 1902), Tōkyō Zasshi Urisabaki Eigyōsha Kumiai (Tokyo Magazine Sellers Association, founded in 1892), Ōsaka Shosekishō Kumiai (Osaka Booksellers Association, founded in Aug. 1897), Tōkyō Zasshi Kumiai (Tokyo Magazine Association, founded in March 1914 and reorganized as Nihon Zasshi Kyōkai/Japan Magazine Association in May 1924), Tōkyō Zasshi Hanbaigyō Kumiai (Tokyo Magazine Sellers Association, founded in April 1914), Ōsaka Zasshi Hanbaigyō Kumiai (Osaka Magazine Sellers Association, founded in May 1914), Tōkyō Tosho Shuppan Kyōkai (Tokyo Book Publishers Association, founded in Oct. 1914 and reorganized as Tōkyō Shuppan Kyōkai/Tokyo Publishers Association in 1918), Tōkyō Tosho Zasshi Junkourigyō Kumiai (Tokyo Books Magazines Retailers Association, founded in 1919), Zenkoku Shosekishō Kumiai Rengōkai (National Federation of Bookstores Associations, founded in 1920). On the establishment of publishing-related associations up to the prolongation of the war between China and Japan, see Hashimoto 1964 (45–540) and Shimizu and Kobayashi 1979 (35–36).

\textsuperscript{12} Hashimoto 1964, 346–347.

\textsuperscript{13} On the publishing world of the time in general, see the above studies by Hashimoto, Shimizu and Kobayashi, as well as Satō Takumi 2002.

\textsuperscript{14} Sakamoto 1951; Minami et al. 1965, 130.
Kōkoku Dairiten (1900; today’s Dentsū), many of which still operate today, became stable.\textsuperscript{15}

Until then, advertising tended to be despised as a low-prestige job in Japan. The chief editor and president of Fujokai (founded in 1910 and relaunched in 1913), Tsugawa Tatsumi, recalled how shameful and embarrassed he felt when he first solicited ads as an employee for Fujin no tomo (Ladies’ Friend; originally launched as Katei no tomo or “Home’s Friend” in 1903 and renamed in 1908) (201–202). With the development of the advertising industry, however, the importance of advertisement became widely acknowledged in various industries, and advertising techniques such as design and ad copy came to be actively studied. The 1910s observed the emergence of numerous academic groups and journals specializing in advertising design or copy.\textsuperscript{16} Alongside these activities, various ad design contests and exhibitions were held and special book series on advertisement were published.\textsuperscript{17} Thus, Ishikawa Takeyoshi (a.k.a. Takemi), the founder of Shufu no tomo (Housewife’s Friend, launched in 1917), no longer felt any shame in soliciting and including gaudy advertisements in his magazine; rather, he even enjoyed it.\textsuperscript{18} And it was mass-market women’s magazines edited by Tsugawa or Ishikawa that extensively deployed new advertising techniques, as will be examined in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{15} Minami et al. 1965, 130.
\textsuperscript{16} Examples of journals on advertising studies of the time include Dentsū’s Shinbun sōran (launched in 1900), Kōkoku sekai (1916), and Kōkoku kenkyū zasshi (1917) and those of advertising-related study groups, Ōsaka Kōkoku Kenkyūkai (1911) and Waseda Daigaku Kōkoku Kenkyūkai (1914). Increased interest in advertising can be found in the following as well: Ōsaka asahi shinbun’s use of design-oriented advertisements (started in 1904), a special section featuring photo advertisements (started in 1905), and a special section featuring design-oriented advertisement (1911).
\textsuperscript{18} Ishii 1940, 92, 98; Shufu no Tomosha 1967, 51–52.
Gender- and Age-Based Differentiation of Magazine Genres

As the magazine publishing industry matured, magazines came to be differentiated according to the gender and age group of their targeted readers. Thus, Jitsugyō no Nihon Sha, for instance, published *Jitsugyō no Nihon* for adult men (mainly male intellectuals and businessmen), *Fujin sekai* for adult (mainly well-educated) women, *Shōjo no tomo* (Girl’s Friend, founded in 1908) for schoolgirls, and *Nihon shōnen* for schoolboys. As will be explained in detail later, these magazine genres all differed from each other in terms of format, writing and visual style, and themes covered.

Interestingly, however, before that, gender had not been the main factor in magazine categorization. While some titles included words such as “*jogaku* (women’s learning)” (e.g., *Jogaku zasshi*) and “*katei* (home)” (e.g., *Katei sōdan*), appearing to indicate that they were published especially for women and edited differently from magazines for men. Until the end of the nineteenth century, Japanese magazines had been, both thematically and formally, undifferentiated (or, more precisely, not so clearly differentiated) in terms of gender. As for the forms, most articles in these nineteenth-century periodicals, except for the creative essays, that offered a venue for experimentation in various colloquial writing styles (*genbun itchi tai*), were rendered in a classical writing style called “Meiji common writing (Meiji futsū bun).”¹⁹ Similar to “general magazines (sōgō zasshi),” which were to become increasingly associated with male readers, “women’s magazines (fujin zasshi)” contained almost no visuals.

¹⁹ Yamamoto M. 1981, 69–74, 89–170. “Meiji common writing” (Meiji futsū bun) is one of the classical writing styles (bungotai) widely used in Meiji Japan until the so-called “colloquial writing styles” (genbun itchi tai) became dominant in the early 20th century. It goes without saying that such seemingly “transparent” writing styles, which appear to transcribe what one utters, are “writing styles” as much as “classical styles.” The implications of *genbun itch* (lit. “reconciliation of speech and writing”) have been studied in the fields of literary studies and linguistics anthropology. For *genbun itch* and the formations or discoveries of modern institutions such as landscape and interiority, see Karatani 1993/1983. For the significant linkage between Japan’s national as well as capitalist modernity and linguistic modernity, including the formations and transformations of *genbun itch* and “women’s language,” see Inoue 2006. For the interrelation between the development of *genbun itch*, translation, gender and nationalism in the formation of literary styles and cultural hierarchy, see Levy 2010.
These pioneering magazines, both “general magazines (sōgō zasshi)” and “women’s magazines (fujin zasshi),” dealt with almost identical themes as well. Analyzing various magazines in the 1880s and 1890s, historical sociologist and scholar of gender studies Muta Kazue concludes that, up until around 1890, magazine content was not clearly divided by gender.\(^20\) According to her observation, articles included in early so-called “general magazines,” which later were considered to cater to male intellectuals, were not limited to topics related to the “public sphere,” such as philosophy, politics, economics, arts, and natural sciences; they covered issues concerning family, love-based marriage, domestic chores and the like—themes that later came to be known as “women’s matters.”\(^21\) Likewise, magazines that were to be categorized as “women’s magazines” carried articles on both the “public” and “private” spheres and functioned as general intellectual magazines for both sexes. Analyzing the pioneering women’s magazine *Jogaku zasshi* (Magazine of Women’s Learning), historian Inoue Teruko points out that, on par with the then popular general magazine *Kokumin no tomo* (Nation’s Friend) edited by famous journalist Tokutomi Sohō, *Jogaku zasshi* played an important part in “opinion journalism (opinion jānarizumu)” in the 1880s and 1890s. While the magazine was originally edited with the objective of “enlightening” Japanese women, in effect, *Jogaku zasshi* attracted intellectuals of both sexes and led various social as well as philosophical discussions.\(^22\) These early magazines for intellectuals rendered stories on the “public” and “private” issues as “serious” editorials. As we will see later, many critics in the interwar period

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\(^{20}\) Arguably, one can further say that magazines were not differentiated by age, either. Contributors to one pioneering weekly writing competition for youth, *Eisai shinshi* (New Magazine for Geniuses, launched in 1877), for example, initially included students, both male and female, from elementary, secondary, and tertiary educational institutions. On the gender-mixed contributors/readers of this magazine, see Imada 2007, 31–36.


\(^{22}\) Inoue T. 1971, 96–137 (especially, 110–112). The magazine was edited by individuals, such as Iwamoto Yoshiharu, who were closely related to one particular Christian girls’ high school, Meiji Jogakkō (Meiji Girls’ High School). Some contributors were also students or alumni of the school. For *Jogaku zasshi* and Meiji Jogakkō, see Inoue T. 1971 (96–137) and Fujita 1984.
favorably recalled the existence of male readers of women’s magazines in the late Meiji Era.

From around the end of the century, however, such gender-neutral magazines for intellectuals became increasingly divided in terms of gender, style, and readership. First, thematic distinctions began to appear between magazines for men and those for women. Muta considers the gravity of the shift among magazines emerging around 1890: “general magazines” ceased to run articles on matters regarding the domestic/private sphere; these instead were taken up by the newly established women’s magazines such as Katei (Home, launched by socialist and writer Sakai Toshihiko) and Fujin no tomo (Ladies’ Friend). In this sense, the contemporaneous split of Jogaku zasshi into the “red-cover” (aka byōshi, later renamed Bungakukai/Literature World in 1893) and the “white-cover” (shiro byōshî) version was particularly symbolic. While the former was dedicated to creative writings mostly by and for young male intellectuals and became known as a leading literary journal of the day, the latter targeted housewives and their children, mainly dealing with home-related matters.

Thus, anything related to “family” or “everyday life,” namely, things belonging to “the domestic sphere,” came to appear only in women’s magazines, which, in turn, gradually became regarded as “women’s issues” or “women’s matters.” Muta calls this thematic division among magazines emerging around 1890 the “feminization/privatization of home/domesticity (katei no shika/joseika).” Moreover, “women’s matters” gradually came to be discussed with derogative

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24 Until then, the magazine was an arena for progressive writers to attempt various new writing systems before colloquial writing styles became officially established (Yamamoto M. 1981, 89–199).
25 Muta 1996, 54. A similar observation concerning periodicals published for children and youth in the Meiji era is presented by social- and media-historian Imada Erika. Examining pioneering magazines for children and youth in the Meiji era, Imada shows that the word “shōnen (lit., minor or juvenile)” had been used to refer to “minors,” regardless gender. Gradually, however, as single-sex education at the secondary and tertiary levels (i.e., after elementary education) was made official by the implementation of the Education Ordinance (kyōiku rei) in 1879, the word “shōjo (girl)” appeared and “shōnen” increasingly came to exclusively refer to “boys.” As a result, while women initially comprised 37% of all contributors to the youth writing competition Eisai shinshi (New Magazine for Geniuses), the rate...
nuance in public discussions, at least among intellectuals, however serious or useful the overall content and/or intention might have been. As the interwar critical commentaries on the women’s magazine to be examined in Chapter Four show, by the 1920s, it had become considered to be embarrassing for male intellectuals to read (or, more accurately, to openly admit to reading) women’s magazines.

Yet, until the beginning of the twentieth century, the “feminization” of the women’s magazine was not firmly established. The articles in women’s magazines were still written mostly in Meiji common writing and usually not accompanied by illustrations, just like those in magazines for men. Besides articles related to domestic chores, women’s magazines also included editorials on “serious” public issues again in a similar manner to the “general” magazines intended for male intellectuals.

“Feminization” of the Women’s Magazine

Gendered differentiation among magazines intensified in the twentieth century, especially with the foundation of Fujin sekai in 1906. In the interwar period, media critic Kimura Ki reminisced that this shift in women’s magazines put off male readers as they started seeing women’s magazines as “too feminine,” “too vulgar,” “too pragmatic,” and offering nothing for educated men to read, well demonstrating their gendered thematic distinction appearing in the early twentieth century. According to Kimura, Jogaku sekai included “many articles that did not appeal exclusively to particular female interests” and was said to be “readable even by male readers” and “could pass as Chūgaku sekai [a boys’ magazine] if one replaced its cover and illustrations.”

Gender-based differentiation among magazines can also be observed in the format of the

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26 Kimura 1933/1930, 194. Ogawa 1962 (69–70) also made the same observation.
magazines and the style of their articles. The feminine/masculine dichotomy of print culture was also clearly manifest in the adoption of different writing systems. A heavy emphasis on orality was first pioneered by women’s magazines. After decades of struggling to create a new writing style based on everyday utterance to replace the old-fashioned literary style, a new colloquial style finally officially got settled with the first government-designated textbooks compiled in 1903–1904. Soon after that, in 1906, Fujin sekai was launched as one of the first periodicals in Japan that was completely based on a colloquial writing style (genbun itchi tai), preceding in these terms the first “national” magazine, Taiyō, by a few years, and the major newspapers by a decade.

Even after almost all magazines adopted the colloquial style, the differentiation between periodicals for male intellectuals and those for “women and children” in their writing styles remained, the implications of which will be analyzed in detail in Chapter Five. The colloquial style practiced in women’s and children’s magazines (desu/masu style) is much closer to the actual spoken language than the style most often deployed in general magazines and newspapers (da/de aru style). On the one hand, the former (desu/masu style) has been used to write texts as if they were being spoken. Heavily relying on deixis—the use of indexical expressions, such as honorifics, ending particles, vocative expressions, interjections, or “here,” or “today,” all denoting meaning dependent on the specific context in which it is used—texts written in desu/masu style establish an intimate, “I–you” relationship between the narrator and the reader, promoting submissions from readers, as I will further explain in detail in Chapter Five. The latter writing style (da/de aru style), on the other

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28 Even in the 1910s, around 10% of bylined articles in Taiyō continuously used the literal/formal “nari/tari” language (or Meiji futsūbun) (Suzuki 1996:86–91).
29 It was only in the 1920s that major newspapers shifted their writing style from literal/formal language to the “da/de aru” colloquial style. (Shashi Hensan Iinkai 1952, 209–212).
hand, has less to do with the actual spoken language. Omitting deictic markers almost entirely, it has been conventionally considered to be abstract, objective or detached in tone; thus, it often has been used in “serious” writings such as theses or official documents. Hence, the style of articles in magazines for women or children has been called “subjective” or “vulgar,” as opposed to that of general magazines or newspapers, which was “objective,” “neutral,” or “scientific.”

The difference between women’s magazines and “general” magazines was visually marked as well. While the front covers of women’s magazines after the turn of the century were often colorfully illustrated with pictures of flowers (later, beautiful women were added), those of general magazines for male intellectuals had only the titles on a plain background. Thus, even at first glance on the bookstore shelves, their appearance was clearly gendered. At the same time, the women’s magazines included increasingly more illustrations and photos accompanying ordinary articles than men’s magazines did, while general magazines maintained their text-oriented style.

The implication of gendered demarcation among periodicals is also blatantly stated in the names of the magazine genres. Designation of magazines for male intellectuals as “general-interest magazines (sōgō zasshi)” positioned them as “norm” or “standard” periodicals, while implicitly marking and marginalizing magazines for women as “deviant” from such a norm. In other words, as their designations suggest, so-called “general magazines” presented themselves as “neutral” and “general” periodicals, theoretically open to both sexes regardless of education level or age. In practice, however, they were de facto male elite magazines, attracting mainly highly educated male intellectuals and intellectual wannabes. Women’s magazines were, on the other hand, marginalized as magazines for women, as their genre denomination, “women’s magazines” (fujin zasshi) implied. That is, women’s magazines were not simply understood as a periodical genre of equal standing; rather, they were marked as “deviant” from the standard, “general” magazines. Furthermore,

31 For the development of two colloquial styles, see Yamamoto 1971 & 1981.
women’s magazines were not only distinguished as separate from magazines for men; they became regarded as less important than men’s magazines, an issue that will be further discussed in Chapter Four. Thus, in terms of theme, format, style, appellation and evaluation, women’s magazines were differentiated from and devalued in relation to “general magazines.” I would like to call this phenomenon occurring in the beginning of twentieth century before the interwar period “magazine gendering.”

Thus, by the late Meiji Era or around 1910, while reading culture had been split into two spheres, namely, the masculine and the feminine, magazine genres became divided by target gender in terms of content, format, and editing style, and the women’s magazine as we understand it today came into being. I call this shift in periodicals the “feminization of women’s magazines.”

Emergence of the Mass-Market Women’s Magazine and its Increasing Popularity

As briefly described in the Introduction, the women’s magazine maintained its popularity for several decades during the interwar period. This section will trace the development of this particular periodical genre in terms of its circulation, while briefly surveying the shifts in its editorial style, which will be examined in more detail in the following chapters.

Increasing Circulation before *Kingu*

Already since around the turn of the century, the women’s magazine as a category was the most popular magazine genre. For example, *Jogaku sekai* (founded in 1877 by Hakubunkan) had a circulation of 70,000 to 80,000 when the average circulation of a magazine was 2,000 to 3,000.³² The more daily life–oriented *Fujin sekai* (launched in 1906 by Jitsugyō no Nihon Sha) had a

³² Suzuki 2001, 7. Suzuki’s data itself is based on statistics compiled by the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department.
circulation of about 300,000 to 400,000 at its peak. Considering that Taiyō, the most popular “general magazine” of the time, had a circulation of approximately 100,000, the enormous popularity of women’s magazines is undeniable.

In the next decade, the trio of Fujokai, Shufu no tomo, and Fujin kurabu emerged as the most popular women’s magazines. The first among them to delve into drastic democratization of content was Fujokai. When he acquired the editorship as well as ownership of Fujokai from his former employer, Dōbunkan, in 1913, Tsugawa Tatsumi undertook the transformation of this once distinctly didactic women’s magazine into a more entertaining one. Thanks to its more mass-oriented feature components, such as popular serial novels and fashion articles, the magazine increased its subscribership; the number reached 210,000 to 220,000 in 1924. Shufu no tomo, launched by Tsugawa’s former colleague, Ishikawa Takeyoshi (a.k.a. Takemi), further accelerated the trend toward democratization. The magazine intensively deployed advertisements, a reader-participatory editing style, and heavy visualization with photographs, included more entertainment materials and supplements, and promoted related media events as well as a mixing of media. All of these strategies were typical to mass-market women’s magazines and were followed by Kōdansha’s Fujin kurabu.

Other kinds of popular magazines paled before the vogue of mass-market women’s magazines. Hashimoto Motomu, who worked as an editor at Kōdansha, recalled that Shufu no tomo had a monthly circulation of 230 to 240,000 around 1924, with Fujokai at 210 to 220,000 and Fujin sekai at 170 to 180,000. Only after these top three “best-selling magazines” came Kōdan kurabu

34 The target audience of Fujokai was “too educated for Fujin sekai, but not sophisticated enough for Fujin no tomo (the magazine edited by Christian intellectual, Hani Motoko)” (Tsugawa 1931, 215). On the main readers of Fujokai, see also the explanation of Fujokai by Yuchi Junko included in Nakajima 1994 (156).
35 Shashi Hensan Iinkai 1959, 609.
36 For more information about the democratization of the Japanese magazine format by interwar women’s magazines, see Maeshima 2009a.
(Storytelling Club) with a circulation of 150 to 160,000.\textsuperscript{37} It should be noted that the top three best-selling magazines were all women’s magazines. Thus, even this popular storytelling magazine, which “sold enormously” at the time, could not reach the popularity of the mass-market women’s magazines.\textsuperscript{38}

By this time, women’s magazines had far surpassed “general magazines” in circulation. For example, the monthly circulation of \textit{Chūō kōron} was 120,000 in 1919\textsuperscript{39} and dropped drastically in subsequent years; the magazine had a circulation of as few as 20,000 a month in 1927.\textsuperscript{40} Likewise, another general magazine, \textit{Kaizō}, which was then known as politically and culturally more progressive, had a circulation of circa 50,000 issues a month before 1927, when it reduced its price to 50 sen, the same price as most mass-market magazines.\textsuperscript{41} Critic Murofuse Kōshin also stated that the circulation of women’s magazines was several dozen times that of “magazines for men.”\textsuperscript{42} This commercial success of mass-market women’s magazines was well reflected in the fee paid for manuscripts. According to Kisaki Masaru, an editor of \textit{Chūō kōron}, the pay for a manuscript from that magazine was six to eight yen, while “women’s magazines paid an extraordinary amount, that is, three to four times as much as general magazines”.\textsuperscript{43}

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\textsuperscript{37} The circulation figures of each magazine are based on Hashimoto Motomu’s statements in a round table talk on publishing history. Hashimoto was working for Kōdansha (Shashi Hensan linkai 1959a, 609.)

\textsuperscript{38} Shashi Hensan linkai 1959a, 486.

\textsuperscript{39} Kisaki 1965, 16.

\textsuperscript{40} Naimushō Keihokyoku 1979/1927.

\textsuperscript{41} Makino 1956, 22.

\textsuperscript{42} Murofuse 1922, 163. Here, from the context of his writing, it can be said that Murofuse’s use of the phrase “magazines for men,” referred to “general magazines” and “specialized [academic] magazines.” For contemporary testimonies to the enormous popularity of the women’s magazine in the 1920s and 1930s, see also Takashima 1922, 59; Kimura Ki 1930/1933, 176, 194–195; Aono 1933, 9; Ōya 1929/1959, 192; Ōya 1935/1959, 247, 254–255.

\textsuperscript{43} Kisaki 1965, 28. Such highly commercialized publishing circles undermined the idea of “the autonomy of literary practice,” while some writers benefited from this new mass culture, which in turn affected various aspects of contemporary literature (Lippit 2003, 18–19).
Increasing Circulation after Kingu

The popularity of women’s magazines did not decrease even after the publication of the famous first million copy–selling Japanese magazine, Kingu, in 1925.\textsuperscript{44} Statistics compiled by the Bureau of Police and Public Security at the Ministry of Home Affairs report that this “national magazine” sold 300,000 issues in 1927, while \textit{Shufu no tomo} sold 200,000, \textit{Fujokai} 155,000, and \textit{Fujin kurabu} 120,000 in the same year.\textsuperscript{45} To put it another way, three out of the top four best-selling magazines were women’s magazines. Even though all of the women’s magazines may have lost to \textit{Kingu} in terms of monthly circulation, statistics showed that the women’s magazine as a genre had a much larger circulation than \textit{Kingu} and other popular magazines in total. A comparison of the mass-market women’s magazines and other kinds of popular magazines would more clearly demonstrate the enormous continuing popularity of these women’s magazines. According to the annual genre-by-genre circulation survey from the major subscription agent, Tōkyōdō, the women’s magazine was the most popular magazine genre from 1929 to 1934, and even after that they sold as much as the “popular magazine” (\textit{taishū goraku zasshi}), the category including \textit{Kingu}.\textsuperscript{46}

As the competition among women’s magazines intensified, two emerged as the largest in the genre: namely, \textit{Shufu no tomo} and \textit{Fujin kurabu} (Ladies’ Club, launched in 1920 by Kōdansha). Both drew subscribers by putting an emphasis on supplements, special presents, and media events. A survey conducted by a major newspaper, \textit{Asahi shinbun}, in 1931, indicates that \textit{Shufu no tomo} had a monthly circulation of 600,000, \textit{Fujin kurabu} had 550,000, and \textit{Fujokai} had 350,000.\textsuperscript{47} Of the

\textsuperscript{44} With the New Year issue in 1927, \textit{Kingu} became the first magazine in Japan to gain a circulation of over one million (Satō Takumi 2002, 10–11; Nakamura Takanari 1944, 609; Shashi Hensan linkai 1959b, 53).

\textsuperscript{45} Naimushō keihokyoku 1927/1979.

\textsuperscript{46} Tōkyōdō Tōkeibu 1935: frontispiece. For example, the annual circulation in 1934 of each magazine genre is as follows in descending order: the women’s magazine 19,750,000; the popular entertainment magazine 18,740,000; the boys'/girls’ magazine 9,740,000; the children’s magazine 7,480,000; the magazine concerning politics, economics, arts, or sciences 4,270,000; the youth magazine 2,180,000.

\textsuperscript{47} According to the same statistics, circulations of other women’s magazines were as follows: \textit{Fujin
three, the most popular was *Shufu no tomo*; each issue of the magazine sold more than one million copies since 1934, and during WWII, circulation reached 1.8 million.48

Comparing the circulation of these women’s magazines with that of contemporaneous major newspapers, one can gain a better picture of the popularity of the former. In 1924, the two largest national newspapers, namely, *Ôsaka mainichi shinbun* and *Ôsaka asahi shinbun*, both recorded a circulation of one million for the first time in Japan.49 Estimates suggest that “nearly half of the country’s eleven million households subscribed to a daily paper” around this time.50 Again, numerous contemporary critics noted the wide circulation numbers of the women’s magazines as being comparable with nation-wide newspapers. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the women’s magazine was one of the most popular periodical genres nation-wide in interwar Japan.

**Expansion of Readership of Women’s Magazines among Women**

As the circulation of mass-market women’s magazines rose, divisions among readers

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*sekai*, 120,000; *Fujin gahō* (Ladies’ Pictorial, founded in 1905), 70 to 80,000; *Nyonin geijutsu* (*Women’s Arts*, launched in 1928), 30,000 (Nagashima 1951, 33).


49 In 1904, the daily gross circulation of the 63 major newspapers in the country was 1,630,000. In 1924, it was estimated at 6,250,000, which indicates that one in 9.28 Japanese people bought a newspaper (Asahi Shinbun Hyakunenshi Henshū linkai 1995b, 320; Shashi Hensan linkai 1952, 233; Mainichi Shinbun Hyakunenshi Kankō linkai 1972, 370–371; Kawakami 1979. For the development of newspapers in Japan, see Yamamoto Taketoshi 1978, 1979, 1981.

50 Duus 1998, 185.

51 See the following comments by critics: “Most current Japanese women’s magazines are published in Tokyo. Some of them have enormous circulations: they are said not only to eclipse all the other kinds of magazines, but also to surpass newspapers in circulation.” (Nii 1931, 267); “The magazine genre in Japan today with the greatest circulation is said to be the women’s magazine.” (Sugiyama 1934/1935, 456) (Sugiyama 1934/1935 [f], 456); “Although related to culture, having the greatest readership, and hence, possessing the greatest influence on the masses, newspapers and women’s magazines seem to have been excluded from critical analysis.” (Nakamura July 1928, 9); “Recently, circulation of magazines has been increasing astounding. The popular magazine and the women’s magazine will be their best examples.” (Hayasaka 1930, 119); “The magazines holding the greatest circulation in today’s Japan are the women’s magazine, or the family magazine.” (Sugiyama 1935 [e], 369). More similar comments can be found in the following: Hirabayashi 1927, 71; Chiba et al. 1928, 98; Nakamura Aug. 1928, 6; Naimushō Keihokyoku 1929, X-23 [10 / 23]; Sugiyama 1934/1935 [b], 118; Sugiyama 1934/1935 [c], 135.
according to education level, class, and gender, became increasingly blurred. Partly due to their self-definition as “magazines for housewives,” one would assume that the interwar mass-market women’s magazines had readerships comprised mostly of women, especially middle-aged “housewives” of the middle and lower-middle classes. Statistics of the time, however, present a much wider range of readership than would be expected.

Indeed, as is often mentioned in publication history, women’s magazines first boosted their sales among middle-class housewives of city-dwelling white-collar families, rich farmers and merchants from all over the country. However, thanks to their new accessible editing style, modern layout, various practical how-to articles, increasing entertainment components, and reader-oriented policies, they spread further among lower-middle-class women and unmarried young women, both in the cities and the countryside. For example, based on his detailed empirical studies on readership in the interwar period, Nagamine Shigetoshi concludes that from around 1921 Shufu no tomo rapidly gained popularity among female factory workers (1997, 185). According to an area-by-area survey, the most popular magazine among female members of youth organizations in the country was Shufu no tomo in all the investigated areas (urban, farming, industrial, and fishing).

This phenomenon is well evidenced by a 1930 article by socialist and feminist activist/writer Yamakawa Kikue. Regarding mass-market women’s magazines as “vulgar,” she

54 The survey was held by Dainihon Rengō Joshi Seinendan in 1934 (Nagamine 1997, 200. Figure 5-11). The top two to three periodicals in each region were as follows: in urban areas (493 people were surveyed in total): Shufu no tomo (with 110 subscribers), Fujin kurabu (55), Fujin kōron (30); in farming areas (out of 1365 surveyed): Shufu no tomo (186), Shojo no tomo (108), (Ie no hikari, a popular family magazine for farmers/rural residents, ranked number 4 with 78 subscribers); in industrial areas (out of 344 surveyed), Shufu no tomo (206), Fujin kurabu (57), Shojo no tomo (20); in fishing areas, Shufu no tomo (129), Fujin kurabu (90), Shojo no tomo (48).
lamented that most female workers at factories were avid readers of women’s magazines such as *Shufu no tomo* and *Fujokai*; at one printing house even, all thirteen female workers subscribed to the same “*X no tomo*” (*X’s Friend*) [presumably *Shufu no tomo*]. In addition, Yamakawa urged readers to note that mass-market women’s magazines enjoyed great popularity among women in the occupations of maids, retailers, and small farmers (1930, 110). Participants in the round-table discussion entitled “Criticism of Women’s Magazines (*Fujin zasshi no hihankai*)” in the June 1928 issue of *Shinchō* stated that the range of readership of current women’s magazines was quite wide and that readers could be found all over the country. Numerous similar observations were made by contemporary commentators. If we were to include the less well-to-do readers who rented or circulated magazines in groups, purchased discounted second-hand issues at street stalls, or habitually browsed periodicals at libraries, the readership of mass-market women’s magazines must have amounted to even more than what surveys suggested and been spread across much wider social strata.

It should be noted that ardent readers of mass-market women’s magazines were not limited to the less-educated or financially underprivileged women. Various statistics concerning the reading habits of office workers and high school girls in the interwar period always listed mass-market

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56 The participants are the following contemporary commentators: Chiba Kameo (critic and journalist), Miwada Motomichi (educator), Miyake Yasuko (writer and critic), Nakamura Murao (editor, writer, and critic), Nii Itaru (writer and critic), Satō Haruo (poet, novelist, dramatist and writer), Tokuda Shūsei (novelist), and Yamakawa Kikue (socialist, feminist, and acrivist). It should be noted that, of the eight participants, only two (Miyake and Yamakawa) were women.

57 See, for example, the following comments by critics in Chiba et al. 1928: “In my opinion, the range of readership of present women’s magazines is quite wide.” (Nii 102); “The readers [of the women’s magazine] all over the country are graduates from elementary schools (Miwada 105); “Members in country maiden groups seem to be enlightened by magazines in terms of both culture, taste, and knowledge” (Chiba 105); “Women in the countryside cannot read newspapers every day, having no time to read such a thing in the first place, let alone a book. Therefore, naturally, they read and substitute magazines for both newspapers and books.” (Miyake 105).

58 For the custom of reading circulated or second-hand magazines from the late Taishō era to the early Shōwa era, see Nagamine 2001, 51–93. On the spread of bookshops, libraries, street magazine stalls, rental book shops, newspaper/magazine/novel browsing rooms, see pp. 19–50 of the same book.
women’s magazines among their favorite magazines, a statistic that was again supported by many contemporary critics. Thus, unlike in previous decades, the readership of magazines was no longer neatly divided according to educational level or social class. As Nagamine Shigetoshi aptly states, mass-market women’s magazines enjoyed a large readership among women in the interwar period, regardless of class, education, age, and marriage status, while elite women educated in secondary schools and colleges also read other magazines intended for intellectual women, such as *Fujin kōron* (Ladies’ Review, founded in 1916), in addition to magazines such as *Shufu no tomo* or *Fujin kurabu*.

**Expansion of Readership of Women’s Magazines among Men**

Likewise, it is also noteworthy that mass-market women’s magazines had a considerable number and variety of male readers as well. Critics and researchers of the time furrowed their brows at male readers attracted by the sensational articles in popular women’s magazines—on love affairs,

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59 According to Nagamine’s research on readership surveys conducted between 1922 and 1934, the most popular magazines among working women in major metropolitan cities including Tokyo, Nagoya, Hiroshima, Kyoto, and Osaka were, *Shufu no tomo* and *Fujokai*, up to the end of Taishō era (from 1922 to 1926), and *Shufu no tomo, Fujin kurabu, Fujin kōron, Kingu, Shōjo kurabu,* and *Fujokai* after 1931 (Nagamine 1997, 177–178). Similar surveys held in Tokyo and Akita between 1914 and 1933 reveal that female students of the time favored womens’ magazines such as *Shufu no tomo* and *Fujin kurabu* (from the late 1920s, *Kingu* as well) in addition to various girls’ magazines (Nagamine 1997, 178–179).

60 For example: “Certainly, those in the middle class read them [women’s magazines], but some proletariat may also read and enjoy them” (Satō Haruo’s statement in Chiba et al. 1928, 100). One can find more similar comments in the following: Chiba et al. 1928, 99, 100, 102; Hayasaka 1930, 119; Satō Sumiko 1931, 310; Nii 1931, 273.

61 Similarly, the readership of *Kingu* spread to a wide range of people. A contemporary critic and educator, Kawai Eijirō lamented that the most favored magazine among both younger students under 18 and senior students under 25 was “the vulgar entertainment magazine” *Kingu* (Kawai 1937, 441. His comments are on the statistical survey by six major libraries in Tokyo in 1934). Journalist Ōya Sōichi also pointed out this phenomenon (Ōya 1936, 207). Observing this, philosopher Miki Kiyoshi criticized high-school students reading “only as low as *Kingu* outside of their school assignments” by calling them “Kingu students (*Kingu gakusei*).” Miki stated that such students increased after the Manchurian Incident in 1931 (Miki K. 1937, 158).

romances, celebrity scandals and the like.\textsuperscript{63} There even appeared a special feature of essays from various intellectuals on women’s magazines entitled “Women’s Magazines and Sexual Articles (Fujin zasshi to seiyoku mondaï)” in the June 1928 issue of \textit{Chūō kōron}, a prestigious “general magazine” of the time that remains so today. The following is an excerpt from a round-table discussion on the “problems” concerning women’s magazines, appearing in the June 1928 issue of another magazine for intellectuals, \textit{Shinchō}.

Miwada: I have no idea about their percentage, but there are men among the readers of women’s magazines. And these male readers are fond of sexual issues, so the magazines puts such articles in them. It would be a shame for only the women to take the blame for this. […]

Nakamura: Are there women who showed interest in them [=the magazines including sex-related articles]?  
Tokuda: Rather men, I think.  
Chiba: Some of them should be men. […]  
Miyake: More male readers than female ones would read such articles.  
Chiba: I think so. (Chiba et al. 1928, 100, 109, 120)

However, male readers were not enticed solely by the sexually sensational stories of women’s magazines. As detailed at the end of this chapter, some contemporary male critics confessed that, although most male readers “borrowed” the magazines and did not dare to buy them themselves, they enjoyed reading such components of mass-market women’s magazines as serialized novels, practical how-to articles, advice columns, informative articles on illness, child-raising, cooking,  

\textsuperscript{63} For example, Chiba et al. 1928, 99, 100, 109; Nii 1931, 273.
fashion, human relations, socialization and etiquette, human-interest stories, and various features on
entertainment. Male readers were not restricted to young (school) students, either. According to a
survey in 1930, male students at a secondary school in Tokyo (Honjo Kōtō Shōgakkō/ Honjo Higher
Elementary School) listed mass-market women’s magazines such as Fujin kurabu, Shufu no tomo, Fujokai, and Fujin sekai as periodicals that they had read since their enrollment at the school. Likewise, data concerning readers at Asakusa Library in Tokyo ranked Shufu no tomo and Fujin kurabu the top tenth and eleventh most-browsed magazines respectively in 1924, and not a few of the browsers were male. With a note of surprise, the surveyor pointed out that male readers of such mass-market women’s magazines were not limited to young men, but, rather, they also included a considerable number of white-collar workers such as office clerks or bankers.

In this respect, media scholar Sakata Kenji’s speculation is worth noting. Considering the highly technical and scientific articles on radio appearing in popular women’s magazines in the 1920s, he deduces the possible existence of male readers of these periodicals. Moreover, numerous letters and reader contributions from men appearing in these magazines supported the theory that this magazine genre attracted male readers (see Chapter Five). Of course, being edited and possibly sometimes even written by professional writers, all the texts in these magazines were mediated and should not be taken at face value; readers’ contributions and letters are no exception. Still, their repeated appearance implies that male readers did exist, or more accurately, at least the possibility

65 According to a 1930 survey taken at Tokyo Municipal Honjo Higher Elementary School (Tōkyō-shi Honjo Kōtōshōgakkō), (male) students had read the following magazines since entering the school, 251 students listed Fujin kurabu, 154, Shufu no tomo, 153, Fujokai, 90, Fujin sekai, and 12, Fujin gahō (Nagamine 1997, 187–188. Statistics originally appeared in Toshokan zasshi No. 122 Jan. 1930, 10–11.
66 Nagamine 1997, 193–194 (the statistics are based on the survey appearing in Shiritsu toshokan to sono jigyō No. 28, March 1925).
67 Sakata 2002, 162–175.
The Socio-Cultural Contexts

Spread of Literacy

In considering the factors behind the enormous popularity of mass-market women’s magazines in the given period, one has to turn one’s eyes to the socio-historical contexts that made large-scale publication, especially that of these popular women’s magazines, possible. In addition to the nation-wide systematization of publication, distribution, and advertising as we have already reviewed, another factor that could have led to the expansion of readership of mass-market women’s magazines was surely the increase in literacy brought about by compulsory education. The Fundamental Code of Education of 1872 required all children, both boys and girls, to attend school for four years. In 1907, the period of compulsory attendance was raised to six years and by 1910 almost all children were completing the state-mandated education.68 According to governmental statistics, the elementary school enrolment ratio of both sexes already topped 95 percent.69

Female school attendance rates also improved around the turn of the century. In 1873, 15.14% of girls were enrolled in elementary school, a statistic that jumped to 59.04% in 1899, and 91.46 % in 1904. This shows a rapid increase in literacy among women. Similarly, the number of women receiving secondary education after elementary school also grew; there were 2,363 students at girls’ high schools in 1887, 8,857 in 1899, and 40,273 in 1907.70 Due to the increasing number of readers, newspapers and the popular press flourished from the 1920s. With 1,100 newspapers in

68 Hunter 1985, 29.
69 Monbushō Chōsakyoku 1962.
circulation in 1920, estimates suggest that “nearly half of the country’s eleven million households subscribed to a daily paper.”

**Limited Budget for Entertainment**

Arguably, the limited entertainment budget of the average household also contributed to the great popularity of mass-market women’s magazines. From readers’ contributions to articles on family finance appearing in *Shufu no tomo* between 1917 and 1929, one researcher calculated that the average middle-class household during the given period, with its average monthly income circa 67.5 yen (in the Taishō era) and 98.9 yen (in the Shōwa era), could subscribe to one to two magazines in addition to a newspaper. Since upper- and middle-class families were presumably only a portion of the population, it is likely that the average household in Japan then barely bought one magazine per month.

On such meager budgets, it was natural for most ordinary people to choose as their monthly entertainment a popular women’s magazine with various interesting articles and numerous photos. Mass-market women’s magazines were the most voluminous, covering the widest variety of topics, and the most affordable mass-market periodicals in Japan at that time. So-called “general magazines” for intellectuals were too serious in content to read for relaxation. Nor did other kinds of popular magazines provide the ordinary household with suitable enjoyment. Certainly, they did include entertaining elements, as will be shown in the next chapter. Yet, most of them specialized in only a few kinds of writing or specific topics. Large-format pictorial magazines might have become the most popular periodicals in other countries at the time. In Japan, however, they were too thin and too expensive for an average household to subscribe to regularly in addition to a newspaper.

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71 Duus 1998, 185.
73 For more on the characteristics of each magazine genre, see Chapter Three.
Comparing their format to the structure of the then novel department store type, some contemporaneous critics pinpointed the diversity of components in women’s magazines as one of the factors that attracted their readers.\(^{74}\)

**Changing Lifestyle and the Craze for “Culture”**

Still, increasing literacy and a limited entertainment budget alone could not account for the extraordinary popularity of mass-market women’s magazines among various strata of people. Particularly when it comes to highly educated readers, most of whom were from fairly wealthy families, these two factors do not provide sufficient explanation for why they were attracted to interwar mass-market women’s magazines. To elucidate this, one needs to pay attention to the transformation of people’s lifestyles as well as the craze for a “home” or “modern family.”

After the Meiji Restoration\(^{75}\) in 1868, modernization in Japan intensified to catch up with the other powerful Anglo-European nation-states. This Japanese modernization project was first started by the government under the slogan “Rich Country, Strong Army” (\(fukoku kyōhei\)). “Between 1912 and 1932, real national income per capita more than doubled, and living standards rose as well.”\(^{76}\) During this period, the urban population grew and urban culture developed. Advancements in industry, transportation systems, education, and capitalism gradually shifted the focus of modernization from a state-led “Westernization” project through bourgeois “cosmopolitanism” to consumerist “mass culture.” The transition from the Meiji era (1868–1912) to the Taishō era (1912–1926) is considered the point when society’s primary concern shifted from “civilization/public” to

\(^{74}\) Miyake’s statement in Chiba et al. 1928, 103; Sugiyama 1934/1935b, 120; Ōya 1935, 17.

\(^{75}\) Several elements of modernization, such as reliable channels of communication and commerce, urban culture, print culture, and high literacy, had already been in place in Japan before its full opening to the world in the mid-nineteenth century. However, after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, spurred a more intense period of modernization.

\(^{76}\) Duus 1998, 185.
Increasingly more often urban upper- and middle-class people wore Western clothes, ate Western food, such as bread and coffee, lived in rooms with carpets, curtains, easy chairs, coffee tables, and floor lamps, and enjoyed movies, musicals, radio programs (started in 1925), visits to beer halls or Western cafes, and shopping in department stores. More adventurous young people enjoyed Japan’s version of the Jazz Age; they were fond of listening to jazz and dancing at dance halls. Now it became quite common for Tokyoites with some income to go out to Ueno to visit museums or amusement parks, or to Ginza to shop at the Mitsukoshi department store, watch movies, enjoy performances at the Imperial Theatre, and have fruit parfaits at confectionery cafés like Senbikiya or Shiseidō Parlor. Various new leisure activity services and mass media entertained people and offered new job opportunities. “White-collar workers” (sararī man) appeared and young middle-class women went out to work as teachers, telephone operators, shop clerks, secretaries, bus conductors, bus guides, or cafe waitresses.

Urbanization of the areas within and around Tokyo accelerated and the urban lifestyle increasingly diverged from that of the past. It was especially so in the period after the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923. The devastated Tokyo was drastically reconstructed into a modern capital city. Various movements and trends to “improve” or “refine” home life and home culture appeared during the Taishō and early Shōwa eras. Together with this, the government started establishing public services and support for survivors to promote a rational, efficient, modern family lifestyle by operating supermarkets where consumers did not need to bargain, and by holding numerous

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77 Minami 1965, 35–59. Minami’s view of the change from Meiji to Taishō has been widely shared by scholars, including Harootunian (1974) and Lippit (2002), although the latter two focused mainly on the shift among intellectuals.

78 Unless particularly specified, historical accounts in this section mainly derive from Minami and Shakai Shinri Kenkyūjo 1965 and 1987. See also Silverberg 2006.

exhibitions featuring “the modern family,” “modern child-raising,” “modern housekeeping,” and so on. Such attempts to advocate a modern lifestyle and massive urbanization of Tokyo also had a symbolic impact on people in other areas of the country.\(^8^0\)

Originally, such public services and events were launched as an attempt to educate ordinary people about the modern lifestyle with an emphasis on frugality in regard to entertainment and convenience services. However, as the terrible aftermath of the earthquake abated, the emphasis shifted to the promotion of a consumer lifestyle. In order to stimulate economic activity, the government was first compelled to familiarize people with purchasing not only quality goods at fashionable department stores, but also everyday commodities at stores or supermarkets based on their own “rational” judgments and decisions, rather than “passively” buying from delivery men. With the emerging commercialization and developments in advertising, this new practice of consumption gradually took root in the society. Thus, the consumer as we understand it today emerged.\(^8^1\)

Whereas most men of the new middle class were graduates of high schools or colleges and obtained jobs in the cities as bureaucrats, office workers, or clerks, women of this class who were also well educated at girls’ high schools or, less commonly, at women’s colleges, were supposed to get married to become full-time housewives after completing their education, or obtaining a few years’ experience in jobs outside of the home. These members of the emerging white-collar class led their private lives in “culture houses (bunka jūtaku),” a mixture of Western and Japanese homes, in the suburbs. The urban entertainments and facilities enticing consumers, such as department stores and theme parks, catered to and fostered the modern family’s needs.\(^8^2\)

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Craving Information Concerning the “Modern Family” and the “Home”

Growing interest in “home life (katei seikatsu)” and “home culture (katei bunka)” would be another factor that gave vogue to these women’s magazines. The Taishō era was also a time when the concept of a Western-style “home (katei),” as differentiated from the perceived pre-existing Japanese “family system (ie or ie seido),” first materialized in Japan, if partially, with the new middle class, which emerged due to the expansion of industry. While the ideal of the modern family/home was still a rather novel concept even in Europe and North America, its image spread in quite a limited time period in Japan, which had to experience rapid modernization.

Indeed, modern life as a concept had already appeared earlier in the late nineteenth century (Meiji era). Intellectuals conceptualized a Japanese version of modern family life by blending and modifying the Western—mostly, but not limited to, British and North American—ideal modern family with some conventional Japanese family life, especially that of the upper-middle samurai class (bushi; strictly speaking, “shizoku” or “former samurai class” since the Meiji era). Already in the 1880s and early 1890s, the idea of a modern family and “home,” based mostly on the British model, was discussed and often applauded by intellectuals in various “general magazines.” The ideal image of such a family consisted of a heterosexual couple and their children, who were intimately bound by affection rather than by familial roles. This idea was symbolized in family activities such as savoring meals together at a table over cheerful conversation, happily celebrating each others’ birthdays and family or seasonal events, and occasionally enjoying respectable leisure activities.


85 The above-mentioned “home exhibitions” and “children’s exhibition” invited visitors to be informed as well as to experience such modern leisure suitable for an ideal modern family (Koyama 1999, 49–57).
Husbands were now known as breadwinners and wives, “housewives,” that is, specialists in the domestic sphere.\(^{86}\)

It was not until the mid-1910s, however, when such a modern lifestyle in Japan was first realized thanks to the emerging new middle class as I briefly mentioned above. Due to high living costs, a reduced infant mortality rate, and the newly developed ideal of the modern family, urbanites and suburbanites in all social strata, whether native-born or immigrants from the countryside, gradually shifted toward the lifestyle of the nuclear family. The standard of this new form of family consisted of a heterosexual couple and an increasingly smaller number of children as its constituent members, which differs greatly from the lifestyle based on the extended family that had hitherto been the norm.\(^{87}\)

With the number of children per household decreasing, people started paying more attention to their children. As historian Koyama Shizuko observes, such heightened attention to children also included a growing interest in the culture of the “modern nuclear home” with children as its center. In this connection, one can observe numerous publications of so-called “children-oriented magazines” during the interwar period. Unsatisfied with the existing overtly didactic, moralistic, and “vulgar” children’s magazines such as *Shōnen sekai* (1895–1933) and the stories compiled as a series in *Tachikawa bunko* (1914–1924), novelist Suzuki Miekichi founded *Akai tori* (Red Bird; 1918–1928, 1932–1936) in 1918. Including “plain, yet refined writings” by professional novelists, poets, and writers, as well as submissions from children themselves, this magazine attempted to nurture

\(^{86}\) Creation of new entertainment appropriate for such modern families was also attempted. For instance, Tsubouchi Shōyō exerted himself to establish “family dramas” to be played at home and founded the Kōtō engeijō (Higher Theater) to “refine” an existing vaudeville theater into a family leisure facility at the end of the Meiji era, that is, around the turn of the century (Minami Hiroshi and Shakai Shinri Kenkyūjo 1965, 51–54).

\(^{87}\) On the gradual formation of the ideal “modern family” in Japan and the social conditions that allowed for the idea to spread and be embodied in society, see Šenda (2002) and Ochiai (2002).
children’s artistic sensitivity and creativity, opening up a new age of children’s periodicals.88

Behind this was a current of thought that aimed to overcome the cult of success ("risshin shusse" or “success in life”) in the previous period. Instead, intellectuals, especially educators in Japan during the interwar period, tried to shift their focus concerning children from promoting social success to respecting children’s own thoughts, feelings, and creativity. One can say that such a trend emerged with the influence of pacifism and liberalism in interwar Europe as well as from philosophers such as Ellen Key (1849–1926) or John Dewey (1859–1952).89 From the mid-1920s, magazines appeared that promoted children’s writings based more on their own everyday life experiences (seikatsu tsuzurikata) than such refined submissions as were found in Akai tori. The promotion of children’s own writings became intensified and the early Shōwa era saw the launch of magazines such as Tsuzurikata seikatsu (1929) and Hoppō kyōiku (1930), which encouraged children to write less academic or art-oriented and more down-to-earth, everyday-life-oriented writings than those recommended in Akai tori.90

Besides the world of literature, diverse events featuring modern family life, often focusing on children, were held by private enterprises during the interwar period, all of which, again, allowed ideal images of modern life and the modern family to penetrate society. Several researchers point out that, with its various displays of nicely decorated and furnished spaces, a department store such as Mitsukoshi functioned as a kind of model room that provided visitors with a concrete example of “good taste” as defined by the middle-class modern family life in the West, while it also offered an opportunity for them to experience a voyeuristic pleasure of peeping into this kind of life and to

88 Nihon Jidō Bungaku Gakkai 1976, 56.
89 As a result, not intimidating, “children-centered” education was insisted by the participants in Eight Major Educational Thesis Lectures (Hachidai kyōiku shuchō) in 1921 and the foundation of private schools based on such theories including Seijō Shōgakkō (1917), Jiyū Gakuen (1921), Bunka and Gakuin (1921) (Yamazumi 1987, 91 – 117).
90 On various movements to promote children’s writings, see Takamori 1979, 149; Satō Manabu (1996, 36); Kawaji (2007, 1 – 14).
satisfy their desire for visual appropriation of diverse modern lifestyles as well as intriguing objects.\footnote{Jinno 1994, Hatsuda 1999. Department stores also established various study groups, which came to generate new fashion and leisure based on such “good taste.”}

Thus, a department store was, in a sense, a pleasure land for the modern family, where all family members could spend the whole day.\footnote{Jinno 1994, 55.}

In addition, a variety of family- or children-related events was also organized by major department stores and newspapers. Typical examples of such activities were the children’s and family exhibitions. To give several examples, there was the annual spring Children’s Exhibition held at Mitsukoshi department store (from 1909 to 1915);\footnote{For children’s exhibitions mentioned here, see Jinno (1994, 164 – 172); Nakamura (1997, 215-225); Ōshima (2002, 43 – 66). Koresawa (2008, 39 – 46). Before Mitsukoshi’s attempt, the first Japanese children’s exhibition had already been held in Tokyo and Kyoto in 1906, influenced by Paris’ example in 1901 (Koresawa 1995, 159-165; Nakamura 1998, 223-235). See also Koresawa (1997, 2008) for children’s exhibitions in general.} the Family Exhibition held in Tokyo in 1915 by Kokumin shinbun newspaper; the Women and Children’s Exhibition in Osaka in 1919 presented by Osaka Asahi shinbun newspaper; the Children’s Exhibition, in Tokyo and Kyoto in 1926, by Tokyo Nichi nichi shinbun/ Osaka Mainichi shinbun; and the International Women and Children’s Exhibition in Tokyo in 1933 by Tokyo Nichi nichi shinbun.

These events, even those named “Children’s Exhibitions,” in fact presented various kinds of exhibitions and activities for both children and their parents.\footnote{An article on Children’s Exhibition in 1926 reads “This ‘Children’s Exhibition’ is an exhibition for children as well as for parents.” (“Kodomo hakurankai an’nai.” Sandē Mainichi Jan. 17th, 1926: 6) (Ōshima 2007, 184 – 185).} For example, at the Children’s Exhibitions organized in Tokyo and Kyoto by a major national newspaper in 1926, there were facilities for adults, such as an Education Hall, Mothers’ Hall, and Health Advisory Office, as well as spaces for children, such as a Toy Hall, Clothes Hall, Children’s Room, and Play Room. Special events held during the exhibition, including Calpis (a popular beverage) Day, Sweets Day, Toy Day, Milk Day, and Shōchiku Cinema Day, were apparently intended to promote specific commodities.
Researchers Yoshimi and Ōshima pointed out the deep relationship between such family/children-oriented events and consumer culture. Thus, an increasing focus on children meant an increasing focus on everyday culture of the children-oriented nuclear family. Other leisure activities, such as listening to radio programs and watching shows of the Takarazuka Revue Company, then originated in part to promote the ideal modern family life, while many of them are not associated specifically with children or family leisure activities now. Though some of these “family” leisure activities such as Takarazuka gradually became less “family” traits and instead grew into leisure activities in general, it was this craving for a new family lifestyle with some cultural activities that first attracted a wide

95 Yoshimi 1992, 162; Ōshima 2007, 185.
96 Koyama 2002. See also Koyama (1999, Chapter 4).
97 Though it is almost forgotten today, radio programs were originally expected to provide families with leisure at home. People were expected to listen together to programs after dinner and talk about them with each other, which was supposed to promote mutual bonding (Sakata 2002, 162–175). Even the all-female Takarazuka Revue Company, whose shows are now known to attract mainly avid female fans, was originally founded in 1913 as a “national opera” to offer a modern, fashionable, yet refined leisure activity for families. (For more on the Takarazuka Revue Company, see Robertson 1998; Watanabe 1999; Kawasaki 1999; 2005). This original intended function is clearly indicated in the location and surroundings of the theater. It was constructed by industrialist Kobayashi Ichizō as part of a modern residential suburb along the railway he ran (Minoo Arima Denkidō or Minoo Arima Electric Tramway, present Hankyū Railway). Located near a spa in Takarazuka, the theater provided people with holiday leisure living in suburban homes bought through installment sales along the railway to enjoy theatrical plays or revues, in the same way as they might go shopping at a huge department store at the terminal station in Umeda, Osaka (Tsuganezawa 1991).

In fact, a survey shows that those who visited the theater in 1930 included quite a few men, both young and old. A survey entitled “Takarazuka moderunorojio (modernologio)” appearing in the September 1930 issue of Kageki reported that there were eight shows at Takarazuka Theater between August 4th and 10th in 1930 with 194 audience members, 72 of whom were young men, constituting the majority, followed by 52 young women, 27 middle-aged women, 16 middle-aged men, 5 girls younger than 15, 13 much younger girls, 7 boys, and 2 old ladies (Watanabe 1999, 50–51). “Moderunorojio (modernologio)” is referring to the method of field survey of people’s actual conditions started by Kon Wajirō and Yoshida Kenkichi in the 1920s, which was also called “Kōgengaku.” For Moderunorojio or Kōgengaku, see Satō Kenji (1986) and Kawazoe (2004).

Such modern suburban life seems to have been modeled on the contemporary British idea of the “garden city.” A book, Den’en toshi (Garden city), compiled by the government official (Naimushō Chihōkyoku Yūshi ed. 1907) soon introduced Ebenezer Howard’s To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform, a book published in 1898 (rev. ed., Garden Cities of To-Morrow. 1902). The deterioration of environmental conditions in London due to industrialization compelled intellectuals to develop the ideal of the “garden city,” which was also influenced deeply by the utopian philosophies of John Ruskin and William Morris. On the similarities between the Japanese suburban city planning and the British city garden, see Takemura (2004, 232).
variety of people to the women’s magazines, which were filled with related information and continuously offered readers a formidable image of modern family and home.

**The Media and the Spread of the Idea of the “Modern Home Life”**

While such modern lifestyle and leisure were first realized among the upper- and upper-middle classes in the cities, they were not strictly limited to such a narrow stratum of people. First of all, the tendency toward modernization in lifestyle was not limited to people living in big cities such as Tokyo and Osaka. One document describes that there was a trend among young people in small villages in 1930s Yamanashi to go to Kōfu city (the capital of Yamanashi prefecture) for movies or to visit the cafés. The establishment of a public transportation system, including national railways, and of various means of communication such as newspapers, magazines, mail, telephone, telegram, and, later, radio, as well as the intensification of diverse advertising methods promoted the mobility of people, goods, and information. As Vera Mackie concludes in her survey of Japanese modernity of the 1920s, “[b]eing modern in 1920s Japan involved the embodied practices of everyday life.”

Lifestyles among the underprivileged also changed under the influence of modernization. Presumably, mass media contributed to the spread of information about “model” lifestyles and ideal life philosophies among their participants, readers, or listeners. Needless to say, indeed, the number of people who were actually able to realize such a modern life was still limited. The interwar period was also a time when the disparity among social strata as well as in the various regions intensified. The miserable conditions of the slums and poverty in the countryside motivated intellectuals such as Kon Wajirō and Kagawa Toyohiko to discuss and research their own lives (kōgengaku/modernologio,

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98 Tazaki 1985, 182.
100 Mackie 2000, 196.
nōson mondai (rural problems) and sometimes even to provide various services to those in need in the form of “settlement houses.” Nevertheless, the idea of “modern family life,” if not its realization in actual everyday life, arguably spread in society to a considerable extent. It was especially so in the urban areas. A comprehensive, detailed, empirical study by Nakagawa Kiyoshi on the lives of people on the wrong side of the tracks in the cities suggests that even the lives of the poorest urbanites clearly showed inclinations toward a modern nuclear family lifestyle with occasional urban leisure. Analyzing contemporary statistical data, which shows a steady increase of miscellaneous expenditure and a decreased percentage in food spending (Engel’s coefficient), Nakagawa argued that the poor, most of whom were immigrants from other regions, did enjoy movies or theater-going, just as the “respectable” upper- and lower-middle classes did in the same period, although to a different degree and with different content.

As people’s lifestyles changed in the urban areas, and their desire and aspiration for information about modern home life grew, if differently, in both cities and the countryside across social classes, local and conventional practices of housekeeping and child care came to be regarded as less appropriate for the modern family lifestyle, which is epitomized in the increasing publication of how-to manuals and advisory books. Increasingly detached from traditional lifestyles, some

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101 A reformist socialist movement known as “setsurumento undō (settlement movement).” For Kon, see Sukenari 2003; Kawazoe 2004. For Kagawa, see Bikle 1976.
102 Nakagawa K. 1985, 382–392. See also Chimoto 1990, 187–228. Some further deprived people, whether living in the urban areas or the countryside, may have attempted to “realize” such a lifestyle at least in their imaginations. Analyzing contemporary reader surveys, Nagamine pointed out that mass-market women’s magazines, full of consumerist articles, had factory female workers and women in the countryside among their readers, thanks to the group purchase or retailers of second-hand or old magazine issues (1997, 172–202). Arguably, their severe conditions of life compelled them to read women’s magazines: here, reading functioned as a way to escape from reality. Yet, as contemporary commentator and editor Satō Sumiko speculated (1930, 309), such a craving for a modern, utopian lifestyle may have further depressed their readers, making them face anew the difference between such an ideal lifestyle and their own, which may well have increased their discontent. For discrepancies between the countryside and the urban areas, see Havens (1974) and Tamanoi (1998).
103 In a sense, people’s craving for practical information about the modern lifestyle enabled the young entrepreneur Ishikawa Takeyoshi to launch his publishing business. Thanks to the huge success of a series of practical books, one on “savings (chokin)” (1916) and the others on “easy, delicious,
even literally physically so, people relied on the “scientific” and “rational” instructions of specialists in order to survive in the ever-changing, individualized, and competitive modern society. Despite the intermittent economic turmoil after the First World War in 1918 and the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923, or rather, perhaps, because of that, people’s demand for information as to how to realize, even only partially, a modern way of living within a limited budget grew. Thus, living in cities or even in towns increasingly required up-to-date information about new life strategies in order to survive in the modernized society. The growth in publication of city guides, job ads, manner books, child-raising guides, and the like attests to such demand. Women’s magazines were the periodicals that included the most such practical information about modern daily life.

**Beyond the “Women’s Magazine”: Transfeminization of the Women’s Magazine**

Articles in women’s magazines concerning home life directly accommodated such trends of the times. For those who could not realize the complete set of activities described as typical of the ideal “modern life” or “modern family,” articles in women’s magazines taught their readers how to practice certain parts of such activities. Even if they could not adopt these partial practices into their real lives, they could still enjoy women’s magazines as entertainment, which offered them the opportunity to realize such activities in their imaginary worlds, and which arguably further nurtured economical food (**tegaru de umai keizai ryōri**) (1918), he gained 500 yen, enough capital to launch and continue a new business publishing a monthly, *Shufu no tomo* (Tsugawa 1930, 397; Shufu no tomosha 1967, 32–34).

104 When the economic situation in the society was not healthy, practical articles appearing in women’s magazines emphasized “frugality (**ken’yaku**),” or an “economical (**keizai-teki**)” manner of consumption. On the other hand, when the situation became better, they stressed a wise and up-to-date way of consumption. In either case, pursuit of a better, modern life through consumption itself was not discouraged, but, rather, recommended as desirable, although, in the latter case, the emphasis tended to focus on the consumption itself (Koyama 1999, Chapter 3; Maeshima 2012).

their craving for such ideals. Letters from readers, both men and women, posted in women’s magazines, testify to the prevalence of this inclination toward home life/culture; they often mention how the writer enjoyed everyday home activities such as cooking, cleaning, knitting, child-raising, and chatting in the living room (see Chapter Five).

In fact, there are many “practical articles” both overtly and covertly targeting male readers (or married couples) in interwar mass-market women’s magazine. To take some examples from Shufu no tomo, for the former cases, one can see articles entitled “Tsuma kara otto he no chūmon 20 ka jō (Twenty demands from wives to husbands)” (April 1917, 82–85) or “Danshi no yōfuku to fuzokuhin no ryūkō (Trendy male clothes and accessories)” (May 1923, 232–235). Advice columns also received inquiries from male readers. For instance, in one letter, a male (“Mr. M”) inquired about the legalities of compelling his wife, who insisted on living separately from him, to return to his/their house (January 1923, 260), while Mr. F asked a medical doctor about the safety of a certain sleeping drug (February 1923, 213). Even advice sections on cosmetics or fashion seemed to attract male readers. A certain “young man” asked the professional columnist for information about medicine to soften his beard or a recommendation for a chemical depilatory, because his beard was so tough that his skin always bled when he shaved (March 1924, 293). A seemingly fashion-conscious man “Jun’ichi” made an inquiry as follows: “What kind of belt do I need for a black rubashka shirt [a kind of Russian-style shirt]? Could you tell me where I can buy one?” (May 1924, 306). Articles on social manners and human relationships were especially popular components among male readers: there are many letters from them thanking the editors for those articles and telling them that they enjoyed the women’s magazines together with their female family members (wives, sisters and so on), as well as with other men or women in the neighborhood.106

106 For example from early issues of Shufu no tomo, see July 1919, 158; September 1919; Nov. 1920, 158–159. As some letters from men reveal (Nov. 1920, 158–159), the contemporary custom practiced in some families of men selecting readings for their female family members also indirectly helped turn
Male intellectuals were no exception. As we will see more in Chapter Four, some intellectuals and writers confessed that they were fond of women’s magazines. Some enjoyed the novels that were published in these magazines. Sugiyama Heisuke complained that current serialized novels appearing in women’s magazines were not as enjoyable as they used to be.\textsuperscript{107} This implies that he read women’s magazines frequently enough to make such a judgment. Others found practical articles in the magazines entertaining. Komaki Ōmi and Nakamura Murao wrote that they enjoyed reading practical articles in women’s magazines on fashion, food, child raising, washing, seasonal diseases, and that they learned from them as well as being amused by them.\textsuperscript{108} The social ardor for modern home life, therefore, even drew back the male readers who had once stepped away from these magazines when they became “feminized” in terms of style and content. The editors of the interwar popular women’s magazines were well aware of this social trend and took advantage of it in order to widen their readership. While usually using the ordinary term “women’s magazines (fujin zasshi)” to refer to their magazines and never abandoning that self-designation, quite often they also called them “home magazines (katei zasshi)” to be read by both men and women, a practice observed among contemporary commentators.\textsuperscript{109} In the words of contemporary philosopher Tosaka Jun, interwar mass-market women’s magazines were “general [entertainment] magazines called ‘women’s magazines’” (1937, 345).

Thus, developments in printing technology, the systematization of publishing related industries, increasing literacy and limited entertainment budgets, together with the craze for a “home” with a cultural life, contributed to the enormous popularity of mass-market women’s magazines involving avid male and female readers. Yet, one cannot say that these magazines became

\textsuperscript{107} Sugiyama 1934/1935, 119 – 120.  
\textsuperscript{108} Komaki 1927, 68; Nakamura Aug. 1928, 8.  
\textsuperscript{109} Chiba et.al 1928, 112; Sugiyama 1935, 369; Ishikawa 1940, 109, 121, 309 – 311; Ishikawa 1944, 5, 68, 105, 182, 197.
“defeminized,” or freed of gendered hierarchical markers. As will be discussed in the next two chapters, their content, format, and styles of editing and promotion were still considered to be “feminine,” hence socially “deviant.” The very term “women’s magazine” eloquently describes the lingering discursively gendered, hierarchical division among periodicals. The femininity implied in the magazine categories was not simply a gendered differentiation from masculine categories. Since around the turn of the century, when the women’s magazine became “feminized,” it was also strongly tied with a diminished evaluation, with respect to the masculine, as a magazine genre within the publishing hierarchy. Still, this “feminine” periodical genre attracted a variety of readers, including men. It would be more appropriate to say, then, that the above-mentioned socio-cultural contexts “transfeminized” women’s magazines. Retaining their “feminine” traits, their purportedly subordinate status, and their self-designation as periodicals for women, interwar mass-market women’s magazines now functioned as general home entertainment magazines, reaching a wide range of readers across gender, age, marital status, and social class—arguably, a much wider range of readers than any other periodical genres, including magazines considered to be for men.
Chapter 3: Revolution in Publication: Changes Introduced by Interwar Mass-Market Women’s Magazines to Japanese Print / Reading Culture

As explained in Chapter Two, the mass-market women’s magazine had become “transfeminized” by the 1920s, attracting a wide range of readers, regardless of gender, age, education, address, social status, and marital status. This was made possible thanks to rapid developments in printing technology, nation-wide systematization of related industries, increased literacy among ordinary people, as well as the relatively reasonable pricing of this kind of magazine. An idealized image of the modern family with a “cultural life” would also help the women’s magazine transform into a general popular entertainment periodical. Nevertheless, such socio-cultural contexts themselves cannot fully explain the reasons for the popularity of this magazine genre.

From the perspective of publishing history, besides the above-mentioned socio-cultural contexts, there is another important factor that supported, enhanced, and maintained the popularity of mass-market women’s magazines: namely, the very novelty of this type of magazine as a periodical itself. The women’s magazine was, so to speak, a new medium of the time. Consequently, this new medium affected the way people read. This chapter will analyze the distinctiveness of the Japanese interwar mass-market women’s magazine, in comparison with other magazine genres of the time, and the changes in reading habits brought about by this magazine genre.

Developments in Formats and Modes of Expression of Mass-Market Women’s Magazines

High Receptivity to New Systems and Technologies

It should be noted that before 1945, of the various magazine genres, it was almost always women’s magazines that ventured to introduce new styles, techniques or systems for editing, printing,
bookbinding, distribution, and marketing in modern Japanese publishing history. To take a few examples: in 1909, Jitsugyō no Nihonsha started selling magazines on a commission basis for the first time in Japan with *Fujin sekai* (Women’s World), which rose to become one of the best-selling magazines of that time.\(^1\) Until then, it had been common for retailers to buy periodicals, a rather risky practice for them in the case when items were left unsold. The new commission-based selling system enabled retail dealers to return unsold items freely to publishers. It was a natural consequence that bookstores all over the nation preferred publishers that adopted this new policy; other publishers soon followed Jitsugyō no Nihonsha.\(^2\)

Women’s magazines opened the way for a “one-coin” sales policy in Japanese publication culture. Before such a policy was settled upon, at the beginning of the 1920s, the price of magazines was not stable. In the case of *Shufu no tomo*, for instance, the price of any particular issue ranged from 40 *sen* to 90 *sen*, depending on the size of the issue or the particular economic conditions of publication-related industries at the moment. In 1922, inspired by a vision of convenience that both subscribers and sellers would welcome, Ishikawa Takeyoshi, the founder of *Shufu no tomo*, fixed the price of each issue at the price of 50 *sen*, payable with one coin. His hunch turned out to be right; before long, most popular magazines, including *Kingu*, adopted the same one-coin policy,\(^3\) even if in some cases this meant a reduction in price.\(^4\) This change in price policy affected even “general

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\(^1\) The exact circulation numbers for each women’s magazine of the time are obscure and the case of *Fujin sekai* is not immune to this tendency. While Shimizu and Kobayashi (1979, 53) and Kōdansha Shashi Henshū Inkanai (2001, 75) reported the monthly circulation of the magazine was 300,000, Ogawa (1962, 70–71) stated that it was 400,000. In any case, clearly, as Kimura Ki (1933/1930, 194) and Ogawa (1962, 69–70) pointed out, it was *Fujin sekai* that carved out a readership of several hundred thousand among women and opened up a new reading environment for subsequent women's magazines.


\(^3\) Shashi Hensan Inkanai, ed. 1959a, 674; Kōdansha Shashi Henshū Inkanai, ed. 2001, 112.

\(^4\) For example, *Fujin kurabu* (from 1929), *Yūben* and *Gendai* (both from 1928) dropped their prices from 80 *sen* to 50 *sen*, *Fujin kōron* (from 1930), from 70 *sen* to 50 *sen*, and *Kōdan kurabu* (from 1929), from one yen (that is, 100 *sen*) to 50 *sen* (Ishii 1940, 124–125; Kōdansha Shashi Henshū Inkanai, ed. 2001, 128, 134; Shashi Henshū Inkanai, ed. 1959a, 466–470, 1959b, 81–85; Matsuda 1965, 125).
magazines” for intellectuals. From the February 1927 issue onward, Kaizō “dared to reduce its price” from 80 sen to 50 sen, which opened up the magazine to a wider range of readership.\(^5\) *Shufu no tomo* introduced another practice for its readers’ convenience: In 1929, it began including a listing of the tables of contents of all its issues for the year in every December issue. With this list, readers could use the magazines as a kind of “home encyclopedia.”\(^6\) Many other magazines adopted this new service as well.

It was also mass-market women’s magazines that first achieved more flexible and informative layouts than ever by introducing new printing technologies. Ever since the leading women’s magazine, *Shufu no tomo*, started adopting the technique of printing text in an American point system in 1921, this became the most popular type among Japanese magazines.\(^7\) Until then, only major newspapers had used this new, globally standardized printing type. Magazines had relied on a Japanese type called *gōsū katsuji*, whose bigger letters than those in American point system had restricted layout patterns and limited the amount of information appearing on each page.\(^8\) To avoid being noticed by other magazine publishers, Ishikawa arranged with the magazine’s main printing house that this new point system be adopted gradually in stages starting with the March 1918 issue, but the strategy was nevertheless leaked to other publishers two years later.\(^9\) This smaller system of

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5 Kaizō pressed ahead with a “drastic price cut” from 80 sen to 50 sen from the February 1927 issue (Yokoyama 1966, 16).
6 Shufu no Tomosha, ed. 1967, 169; Shufu no Tomosha, ed. 1996, 35. The founder, Ishikawa Takemi, himself had an ideal to publish a magazine as a kind of “home encyclopedia” for every Japanese household (Ishii 1940, 168–169).
7 Shufu no Tomosha 1967, 130–131, 231.
8 Mainichi Shinbunsha Shashi Hensan Iinkai 122–123. The American point system was first introduced to Japan at the 5th Naikoku Kangyō Hakurankai (National Industrial Exhibition) in 1903. The first newspaper to use it was *Chūō shinbun*, though it employed such tiny 6 to 7 point letters that the system did not spread among newspapers until the 1908 September 3rd issue of *Osaka mainichi shinbun* first adopted 10-point letters (Dainihon Insatsu Kabushiki Gaisha 1952, 96–97; Shashi Hensan Iinkai 1952, 122–123). For a while, however, the system was restricted to newspapers and pamphlets such as train schedule. It was after the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923 that the American point system became prevalent in the publishing world, including magazines (Shuppan Jiten Henshū Iinkai, ed. 1971, 422).
type along with newly employed printing technologies allowed magazines to print both Japanese and alphanumeric letters together on the same page, giving the pages a more flexible, dynamic, and modern appearance.\(^{10}\)

**Orality, New Article Genres, and an Emphasis on Everyday Life**

The heavy emphasis on orality, which is quite a common practice among popular magazines today, was also first popularized by women’s magazines. Following the official introduction of colloquial writing styles (*genbun itchi tai*) into compulsory education by the first government-designated Japanese textbook compiled between 1903 and 1904, periodicals gradually started using these new writing systems in their articles. Yet, there were “time lags” among them. While magazines for women, youth (boys and girls), and children overall had adopted colloquial styles by 1910,\(^ {11}\) magazines for male intellectuals and major newspapers maintained a formal, literary writing style called “Meiji common writing” (*Meiji futsū bun*).\(^ {12}\) Introduction of colloquial styles was delayed even further in the case of newspaper columns and official documents. It was not until the post-WWII period that an imperial rescript was first written in colloquial style. The formal literary style lingered in these periodicals until 1920, and, in the case of major newspapers, quite a few articles continued to be written in this archaic style even during the 1920s.\(^ {13}\) On the other hand, articles in women’s magazines from the 1910s onward were written in *desu/masu* style, which was considered to be more “colloquial” than the *da/de aru* form that was used mainly in editorial articles in “serious” magazines. Therefore, women’s magazines were said to be filled with “published

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\(^{10}\) Shashi Hensan linkai 1952, 122–123. Kitada pointed out their quick introduction of new technologies enabled popular women’s magazines to realize a flexible layout (Kitada 1998, 155–179).

\(^ {11}\) Iwata 1997, 417–426.


conversation” (*danwa*). In fact, quite a few how-to articles in women’s magazines were verbal reports dictated by magazine writers.

Various other kinds of articles were also written in the above style. The most typical examples are round-table talks (*zadankai*). Round-table articles presented as “recording” actual discussions emerged in women’s magazines in the early 1920s even before round-table radio shows achieved great popularity in the late 1920s. The articles became so popular that in the 1930s each issue of a women’s magazine regularly contained three to four round-table talks. In contrast, other kinds of magazines included only one or two, which testifies to women’s magazines’ strong inclination toward orality. The realistic colloquial style of popular women’s magazines and inclusion of fewer editorial columns, together with the practice of adding phonetic reading guides (*furigana* or *rubi*) to the printed texts, especially those in complicated Chinese characters, made the magazines more accessible to readers.

Mass-market women’s magazines also expanded their range of contents. Until it became mass marketed, the typical women’s magazine (such as *Katei zasshi* and *Jogaku zasshi*), consisted of editorial articles on philosophy, aesthetics, natural sciences, politics and economics, alongside literary works; the same format as their contemporary magazines for male intellectuals. Most of these articles were written in the above-mentioned formal, classical style, and they were also read by male readers. After being mass-market, however, women’s magazines such as *Fujin sekai*

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16 “Fujokai Discussion (*fujokai hihankai*)” (6–31) appearing in May 1923 issue of *Fujokai* is one of the earliest examples.
17 Satō Haruo’s comments on *Katei zasshi* in Chiba et al. 1928, 104; Teruko Inoue 1971, 96–137. It is well-known that *Jogaku zasshi* contributed to the creation of the modern colloquial writing system, a clear indication that women’s magazines of the time were read by both sexes (Yamamoto Masahide 1971, 89–119). See Chapter Two and Chapter Five of this dissertation.
dramatically reduced the number of such “serious” editorial articles and started including more practical articles, namely, articles on cooking, fashion, and other everyday private activities. Critic Kimura Ki reminisces that this content shift among women’s magazines pulled male readers away from them.¹⁸

In the mid-1910s, this inclination toward content from everyday life intensified in popular women’s magazines. While it had long been a custom among women’s magazines since *Jogaku sekai* to carry readers’ letters, *Fujokai* initiated inclusion of reader-contributed full article submissions. Almost all of these contributions were written in the newly established colloquial writing style and were about the readers’ life experiences or their feelings in everyday life. In addition to practical articles, serialized novels, and confessional writings, popular women’s magazines introduced other new contents: reportage by correspondent writers (*tokuha kiji* or *tanbōki*), interviews (*taidan* or *hōmonki*), and round-table discussions (*zadankai*).¹⁹ These articles not only deployed the colloquial style; they also relied heavily on direct quotation, which gave a more phonetically pseudo-mimetic or realistic, and thus vivid, tone to the magazines.²⁰ *Shufu no tomo* accelerated this trend to the extent that it discarded editorial articles almost entirely in order to reach not only the existing readers of magazines, most of whom were highly educated, but also elementary-school graduates. While the interviews mainly featured well-known celebrities in show business or from good families, the other articles often reported on the life experiences of ordinary people, ranging from minor bureaucrats to factory workers and fishers (see Chapter Five for examples).

To achieve more subscribers, other popular women’s magazines soon adopted this same editing approach. As such egalitarian coverage did not yet exist in any other magazine genre, *Shufu*

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¹⁸ Kimura Ki 1930/1933, 194.
²⁰ Strictly speaking, no written texts, including those in this colloquial style, can manage to re-present spoken lines. Even the “*desu/masu*” style is a grammatology, after all. See Miyako Inoue 2006.
no tomo and other women’s magazines employing this editing style soon began to attract male readers as well. Thus, by 1920, these so-called “women’s magazines” had come to reflect—or, more precisely, had come to present themselves as reflecting—the “voices” of people of various backgrounds, telling their experiences, feelings, and thoughts in this two-dimensional public sphere.

Intense Visualization

Women’s magazines were also quick to employ the latest printing techniques. Halftone was first introduced into Japan in 1889 and it came to be commonly applied in periodicals since around 1904, at the time of the Russo-Japanese War. It is notable that as early as 1890 a women’s magazine, Jogaku zasshi, included a few photographic images. This deep interest in new printing technologies was passed down to later generations of women’s magazines. For example, soon after the Ichida Offset Company in Osaka began working in the H. B. process (polychrome offset printing) in 1920, Shufu no tomo introduced this technology for its covers in 1922, which was two years before the Ichida Offset Company established its office and factory in Tokyo.

Shufu no tomo was also one of the first magazine publishers to adopt photogravure. Popularized in Europe and North America during WWI, this printing technology was first realized in Japan by Tsujimoto Shūgorō, sponsored by Ōsaka Asahi Shinbunsha in 1920. Still, for a while, the technology was limited to large newspaper publishers such as the Osaka and Tōkyō asahi shinbun or the Osaka mainichi and Tōkyō nichinichi shinbun. Shufu no tomo started deploying this technology with its August 1926 issue. One year later, in August 1927, the magazine had a ten-

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22 Kitada 1998.
23 The company signed a contract concerning its patent in the US in 1919 (See the explanation of “Ichihashi Kōshirō” in Shuppan Jiten Henshū linkai, ed. 1971; Shufu no Tomosha, ed. 1967, 228.
24 Hasegawa 1987b, 136.
page photo section printed in photogravure, a considerable volume when compared with the graphic weekly magazine Sandē mainichi (Sunday Mainichi), which had four pages of photogravure in every issue. In 1928, Shūeisha, one of the main printing houses for Shufu no tomo, began using the latest Swiss chromatic gravure process, called Sadag Gravure; this was a full three years in advance of its application in Fortune magazine by Time Publications in 1930.26 It is noteworthy that it was mass-market women’s magazines that first introduced such a novel printing technology as Sadag Gravure to the Japanese magazine publishing with an immediacy that was on a par with Euro-American publishers, another episode attesting to the receptivity of women’s magazines to new technologies. Soon, other women’s magazines adopted the traits of Shufu no tomo in order to increase their circulation following the example of their best-selling competitor.

Thanks to advanced printing and photographic techniques, women’s magazines preceded other periodicals in the use of visual images. Even today, it is still well known that serialized novels in these magazines were brilliantly illustrated by popular artists such as Takahata Kashō, Iwamoto Sentarō, and so on. But illustrations in these magazines were not limited to the full-length novels. Almost all the articles in women’s magazines were accompanied by some kind of visual imagery. The front and back covers beguiled many people as well. When displayed among magazines with subdued covers consisting of only letters or paintings of flowers and birds at most, women’s magazine covers portraying beautiful young women were extremely eye-catching (Figure 1).

Matsuda Tomitaka reminisces about hearing that so many young male students had been attracted by his painting of a wide-mouthed modern beauty on the front cover of a particular issue that they rushed to buy the magazine and the issue was soon sold out.\(^{27}\)

The most obvious change that mass-market women’s magazines brought about in Japanese magazine culture was the transformation of the photographic section into a feature of the magazine. Modern Japanese magazines had contained pictorial sections since the late 19th century, when the invention of halftone enabled the press to insert photos.\(^ {28}\) Since then, Japanese magazines consisted of two parts: pictorial sections on the opening pages called *kuchi-e* (frontispieces), and the following text section, or *honbun* (main text). In the 1910s–1920s, most magazines carried only several photographs in this frontispiece section. Even in the case of the so-called “pictorial magazine” (*gahō*), which included more photographs than any other kind of magazine, just half of the whole issue was allotted to the pictorial section, roughly half of which consisted of illustrations, not photos. That is,

\(^{27}\) Shufu no Tomosha, ed. 1967, 225.
\(^{28}\) Hasegawa 1987, 135–136; Kaneko 1999b, 92.
only about one fourth of the whole issue was occupied by photographs. For example, Volume 15 of *Nichiro sensō shashin gahō* (Russo-Japanese War Pictorial), published in 1904, devoted the first 40 pages to the *kuchi-e* (15 of which were not photographs but illustrations), and the following 64 pages to the *honbun*. This magazine format continued to be utilized by magazines for intellectuals, as is often the case even now.

It was the most popular women’s magazine of the time, *Shufu no tomo*, that gradually shifted the function of the pictorial section in the 1920s so much that it almost deconstructed this dual-section magazine format. First, the magazine drastically expanded its pictorial section. From its start in 1917 until the early 1920s, the magazine had allotted only several pages to the pictorial section, while the textual section contained 160 pages or so, just like other popular magazines of the day. Ever since the foundation of its own photo department in 1921, however, the magazine consistently increased the size of the photo section. Having its own photo department enabled *Shufu no tomo* to insert original photos without borrowing from press agencies, differentiating it from other magazines without many original photos. By the late 1920s, the visual section of the magazine ran about 50 pages and in the 1930s, it occupied 80–90 pages of every issue, which corresponded to roughly 20% of the whole magazine.

It should also be noted that at this point the photo-based articles became completely independent from the text articles. Until the mid-1920s, most photos in the frontispiece were not independent from the articles in the text section. A short one- to two-line caption accompanying each photo referred the reader’s attention to a related article in the text section. Words guiding the audience

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29 Only major, nation-wide newspaper companies had their own photo and publishing departments enabling them to insert their own pictures in their newspapers. By 1922, for instance, Asahi shinbun had established its photo division under the department of city news (Asahi Shinbun Hyakunenshi Henshū Linkai, ed. 1995d, 22). Ordinary publishers and newspaper companies had to borrow photographs for their publications from press agencies such as Nihon Denpō Tsūshinsha, Teikoku Tsūshinsha and Naigai Tsūshinsha. For more on photo use, photo departments, and press agencies of the time, see Taniguchi 1931, 226.
to a textual article indicated that the photo was a mere appendix or illustration to the verbal article in
the body section, located some dozens of pages later. In other words, the photo page itself did not
constitute a self-contained item. From the mid 1920s onward, Shufu no tomo increasingly introduced
photo articles that were completely independent from the articles in the text section. At the beginning,
the magazine simply adopted already existing photo-article styles from pictorial magazines and film-
fan magazines, which typically consisted of a photo accompanied by an immediately adjacent
paragraph. Gradually, however, Shufu no tomo developed its own styles of photo articles, such as a
series of sequential photographs with a corresponding narrative (Figure 2).30

Figure 2 Example of a Pictorial Page

From a star-featuring article, “A Day in the Life of Miss Sayo Fukuko: From Morning ’til Night (Sayo
Fukuko san no asa kara ban made).” (Shufu no tomo, Feb. 1936, p. 14.)

Ishikawa Takeyoshi Memorial Library, Tokyo, Japan

In this way, Shufu no tomo transformed the pictorial section from a mere appendix to the
most popular featured component of the magazine. Its renaming of kuchi-e (frontispiece) to gahō

30 Maeshima 2009b.
(pictorial) symbolizes this change. Illustrations accompanying various kinds of articles and stories gradually became replaced by photographs. As usual, other popular women’s magazines soon followed *Shufu no tomo* in heavy visualization. In 1931, magazine editor Satō Sumiko reported that the pictorial section of each mass-market women’s magazine constituted 48–50 pages out of a total of 480–490 pages, which, an investigation conducted by the Ministry of Home Affairs (Naimushō) argued, undermined the uniqueness of existing pictorial magazines such as *Fujin gahō*.

As a point of comparison, in the early 1930s, old monthly pictorial magazines carried 40–50 pictorial pages, and new weekly magazines and photo journals, 8–24 pages. Other popular magazines contained 15- to 20-page picture sections, while magazines for intellectuals ("general magazines") included almost no pictorial sections except in special issues. Moreover, as already mentioned, not only the introductory sections, but most of the other articles in women’s magazines included pictures. In a sense, therefore, mass-market women’s magazines were the de facto popular pictorial magazines in the late 1920s and 1930s, contributing to disciplining the way in which readers “read” such photo articles.

Emphasis on Entertainment and the Relative Retreat of the Moralistic Tone

The diversity in the content of interwar mass-market women’s magazines belies a common misconception of Japanese women’s magazines of the time—one presented by early studies and one that is still held at least outside academia—as periodicals consisting of moralistic and practical articles. Indeed, they did contain how-to articles and advice columns on everyday domestic chores. The interwar editors’ own claims that they aimed to provide readers with practical information and

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33 On the details of the development of pictorial sections in women’s magazines, see Maeshima 2007 and 2009b.
moral lessons seemed to confirm such a focus,\textsuperscript{34} which was often cited in previous studies on publishing history. Upon browsing these women’s magazines, however, one notices that their overall impression is not as exclusively didactic or pragmatic as their editors claimed. Rather, one finds it to be more entertaining. In fact, despite the editors’ emphasis on moral teachings and practical information, which were often highlighted in the readers’ letters to the magazines as well, entertainment-oriented components such as photo reportages of the everyday lives of movie stars or “transcribed” interviews with popular singers increased every year. Frequent reference by the editors and readers to the moral, educational, and practical aspects of the women’s magazine can quite likely be an excuse for their indulgence in such entertaining “light” periodicals.\textsuperscript{35}

One can find only a few moralistic components in any single issue of a women’s magazine. For example, in the case of Shufu no tomo, the regular components that would appear to be distinctly morals-oriented are a one-page prefatory note, sometimes followed by an opening article by a well-known intellectual and some passages in Ishikawa Takeyoshi’s 2–4 page “Editor’s Diary” (henshū nisshi). Thus, clearly morally charged pages amounted to a mere dozen pages or so out of a total of several hundred pages (300 pages in the mid-1920s, and 600 pages in the mid-1930s). Moreover, the prefatory note and “Editor’s Diary” were printed in smaller type and not highlighted in format, while their regular appearance and fixed position may have suggested their role as the last bastion of morality in the magazine. In actuality, besides the above-mentioned items, other stories, especially “real stories,” that is, narratives based on “facts” about sensational issues or touching stories, habitually ended on an additional moral note. However, these endings were so short that the readers’ attention must have focused rather on the main body of the narratives themselves, which described

\textsuperscript{34} Shufu no Tomosha 1967, 40; Ishikawa 1940, 170. There are numerous similar self-referential comments in each issue of Shufu no tomo in those days.

\textsuperscript{35} Similar phenomena have been observed among both male and female readers of women’s magazines in the Netherlands today (Hermes 1995).
things like love affairs between stars, or the sad lives of women in the red-light districts. From this, one could infer that the exaggerated emphasis on morality and practicality might have been an alibi or an excuse used to avoid additional criticism of mass-market women’s magazines, which was already quite extensive.

Opening these mass-market women’s magazines, one can find among their pages considerable content that was intended solely to amuse their readers: illustrated serialized novels, humorous stories, short quizzes, comic strips, movie digests in reconstructed photo stories, interviews featuring movie stars or singers, and so on. While such entertaining components undoubtedly contributed to “disciplining” their readers in the Foucauldian sense, they were not overtly intended to teach moral lessons or offer practical advice in a direct way. In this sense, media scholar Ariyoshi Teruo’s theory concerning the function of women’s magazines of the time is highly suggestive. Observing a very limited number of female moviegoers in the interwar period, Ariyoshi speculates that reading women’s magazines might have been an alternative leisure activity to watching moving pictures.36

It was serialized novels that first steered women’s magazines in the direction of entertainment (Figure 3). The trend initiated by Fujokai, was, as usual, furthered by Shufu no tomo and adopted by other women’s magazines.37 Trained as an editor and manager at Fujin no tomo and Fujokai, Ishikawa Takeyoshi more radically transformed women’s magazines, with his foundation of Shufu no tomo. One of his innovative editing strategies was extending the range of serialized novels. Probably in order to solicit more subscribers from both sexes, the magazine offered not only those typical “fictions for women” such as romances and family novels, but also other genres of narrative, including detective stories, humor, comic strips, historical stories, and translations of

36 Ariyoshi 1984, 41–42.
37 On serial novels in women’s magazines, see Maeda 1973.
European or American contemporary novels.

Figure 3 Example of a Serialized Novel Page: from “New Woman in Makeup (Shin nyonin shō)” by Kikuchi Kan, illustrated by Teramoto Tadao (Fujokai, May 1932, pp. 88–89)

Ishikawa Takeyoshi Memorial Library, Tokyo, Japan

The variety of fictional content appearing in women’s magazines was enormously popular among both men and women, and many novelists as well as poets contributed to these magazines. While most of these fictions were categorized as “popular literature” (taishū bungaku/tsūzoku shōsetsu), customarily labeled as “vulgar” or “light,” works of “serious” or “aesthetic” “pure literature” (jun bungaku) gradually came to be included in the popular women’s magazine as well.39

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38 These fictions named “popular literature” (taishū bungaku/tsūzoku shōsetsu) were, and still to some extent are, labeled as “vulgar” or “light” as opposed to the “serious” or “aesthetic” “pure literature” (junbungaku) appearing in “general” magazines or literary journals. The formation of such a hierarchy in the literary world needs separate, further study. For the division between “pure” literature and “vulgar/popular/mass” literature and the formation of hierarchy in the literary genres in the interwar period, see Suzuki Sadami 1994 and Strecher 1996.

39 The following are examples of writers/novelists who contributed frequently to Shufu no tomo in the interwar period.: Okamoto Kidō, Sasaki Kuni, Watanabe Katei, Mikami Otokichi, Kume Masao, Yamanaka Minetarō, Kikuchi Kan, Satomi Ton, Shirai Kyōji, Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, Ōkura Tōrō, Asou Yutaka, Kagawa Toyohiko, Mushanokōji Saneatsu, Osaragi Jirō, Yokomitsu Riichi, Yoshikawa Eiji, Yoshiya Nobuko, Kōzu Kazuo, Nagayo Yoshirō, Maki Itsuma, Naoki Sanjūgo, Yamamoto Yūzō, Kojima Seijirō, Shihī Bunroku, Ishizaka Yōjirō, Kawaguchi Matsutarō, Saijō Yaso. In addition, after WWII, the following writers also contributed their works to the magazine: Hirabayashi Taiko, Hayashi...
The diverse supplements to women’s magazines also attracted many people, including men and children. Once *Shufu no tomo* started appending a separate-volume supplement in 1918, all mass-market magazines followed suit in order to compete with their rivals. The competition was so intense that the January 1934 issue of *Shufu no tomo* presented its readers with fifteen kinds of supplements, which only *Fujin kurabu* came close to rivaling in number. Now, when one thinks of supplements to women’s magazines, one would imagine these might consist of things like recipe cards, sewing patterns, manner books, or fashion catalogues. The variety of actual supplements confounds such preconceived ideas. They ranged from items for all family members, such as calendars, game books, travel guides, and reproductions of famous paintings to illustrated storybooks for children. Heavy, gorgeous supplements in popular women’s magazines often caused problems with distribution companies and resulted in various restrictions, although each time the publishers managed to evade them.

**Practical Articles and Human Interest Stories as Entertainment**

Moreover, the components that were seemingly didactic or full of practical information could also be enjoyed as entertainment. Many colorful illustrations or photographs added visual pleasure to the so-called “practical articles,” even though they were primarily intended to show their readers how to cook, sew, raise children, entertain guests, or prepare for marriage, the New Year, and

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Fumiko, Hino Ashihei, Mishima Yukio, Koyama Itoko, Inoue Hisashi, Niwa Fumio, Hayashi Fusao, Tsuboi Sakae, Ozaki Shirō, Matsumoto Seichō, Sata Ineko, Shibas Rōtarō, Endō Shūsaku, Miura Ayako, Setouchi Harumi (later “Jakuchō”). Recently scholar has started paying academic attention to works included in interwar women’s magazines, particularly those have been categorized as “popular literature.” For studies on works by Yoshiya Nobuko, for example, see Frederick 2002 & 2005 and Michiko Suzuki 2006 & 2010 (especially Chapter 3).

40 As much as 150 tons of cardboard and 450,000 meters of silk string were used to bind the issues and supplements together, which amounted to 1800 tons in total, for transportation. This New Year issue was so well sold that it was reprinted twice (Shufu no Tomosha 1967, 205–206).

41 For details, see Hashimoto 1964, 251, 442–449.
so on. In the case of photo articles, this entertainment aspect becomes even more foregrounded; by casting popular movie stars, accompanied by their lines, and presenting the information in a narrative form, these articles could be read as enjoyable photo stories.

Furthermore, quite a few articles in popular women’s magazines of the time focused on Western-style cooking, interior decoration, and fashion. For the average person in Japan, to whom a modern Western lifestyle was still far from the reality unless they were upper- or middle-class city-dwellers, even ordinary, practical articles could function as sources of entertainment. Even those who were able to realize such practices in their lives could enjoy these practical articles with their colorful, glossy pictures and detailed descriptions as informative, eye-nurturing, and inspiring entertainment, a practice that still prevails among today’s readers of fashion magazines, or audiences of TV shows on home-making. Writer Kirishima Yōko recalls from her youth that while she sometimes tried cooking the recipes that her mother clipped from and gathered into recipe books from women’s magazines, she also enjoyed browsing them everyday.42 Thus, a practice that appears at first glance to be simply collecting practical information through reading how-to articles can sometimes have additional significance, such as providing relaxing entertainment or a distraction.43

Similarly, human interest stories based on “facts” could also function as entertainment. “Real stories”—such as confessional life stories submitted from readers, fiction based on “facts,” reportages, interviews, and photo reportages of a variety of people—satisfied readers’ curiosity as well as offering them the intriguing experience of peeping into the private lives of others.44 Those who were featured in such stories ranged from unnamed ordinary people, both in the countryside and in the cities, to movie stars and aristocratic families. Reportages and photo reportages did not

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43 See Hermes’ arguments on symbolic significance of activities to scrap how-to articles beyond mere practical information collection (Hermes 1995).
44 Barbara Sato argues that such accounts of various people functioned as an “alternative informant” (2000, 137–153).
only feature individuals; they often focused on groups, events, or places, such as city life, public facilities, factories, or small local communities. In a sense, such components provided readers with virtual field trips offering a glimpse at the lives of various kinds of people as well as diverse aspects of the society. These could be regarded as an enjoyable distraction, while at the same time giving the readers opportunities to reflexively reconsider their lives in comparison with those of others featured in these magazines. In this way, readers contributed to the construction of a modern reflexive subjectivity, “continually integrat[ing] events which occur in the external world, and sort[ing] them into the ongoing ‘story’ about the self”.

Commentators taking part in a round-table talk on women’s magazines in the June 1928 issue of Shinchō showed their insights into this sort of pleasure that women’s magazines offered to their readers:

Miyake: [The mass-market women’s magazines are very popular] because even those who will never see Tokyo in their lives can expose themselves to the social climate of the time through women’s magazines.

[…] Chiba: Since these magazines were all edited in Tokyo, it is only the lifestyles of the wealthy consumer class in the cities that is reflected in these magazines. […] This sometimes even inculcates useless desires into women in the countryside.

Satō: In a sense, that could work as leisure, after all, couldn’t it?

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45 Examples include department stores, theaters, movie houses, modern restaurants, radio stations, zoos, theme parks, big stations, the Diet Building, exhibitions, the renewed city of Tokyo, and coronation ceremonies; unique schools, hospitals, military installations, Buddhist temples, and Christian monasteries; cotton spinning mills, canneries, and food-processing factories; rural villages, fishing villages, and villages near the national borders.

Nakamura: Women in the countryside entertain themselves by browsing the magazines.

Satō: Human beings have a tendency to enjoy what is far away from their own standards.

[…] (Chiba et al. 1928, 122–123)

In a sense, the readers of interwar popular women’s magazines found themselves to be flâneurs/flâneuses in their imaginary worlds while browsing their entertaining components. When a popular movie or revue star acts as a guide in an article to show readers around places beyond their own daily living areas, the entertainment aspect of the article becomes highlighted even more. As contemporary critic Tosaka Jun points out, almost all the articles popular magazines in the 1930s, especially mass-market women’s magazines like Shufu no tomo, were pleasing their readers with this kind of new voyeuristic entertainment (1937, 342–349). This is the pleasure of the gaze, which has been associated with modernity since Charles Baudelaire’s mention of it in the 1850s.47

Developments in Promotion

Promoting Reader Participation: Features of Reader Submissions and Media Events

Inviting the reader to participate in magazine-making and various events held by the magazines was also part of a “new editorial style” in interwar Japan (see Chapter Five). Women’s magazines were one of the first periodicals to include reader submissions as independent articles. First, Fujokai started including writing samples from their readership, not as letters in a “readers’ column,” as had been common hitherto in women’s magazines, but as full-fledged articles on a par with those by specialists.48 Shufu no tomo then further pursued this trend; it left more pages for

47 See Friedberg 1993.
48 One could also say such a custom originated from Fujin sekai, which showed readers’ tips concerning domestic chores such as cooking, sewing, cleaning, washing, and the like. Yet, each submission included in this section was only a few sentences in length, much shorter than regular articles and even than readers’ letters. For details about the development of readers’ contributions, see
reader submissions and started including contributions by men in addition to women while reducing the number of editorials, a trend that was soon imitated by other women’s magazines.49 In interwar Japan, readers could even affect the editing of popular women’s magazines. For example, having received many letters from readers pleading for illustrated serialized novels, the editor of Shufu no tomo (probably Ishikawa Takeyoshi) decided to include such components in the magazine. Of course, it is difficult to tell to what extent we can trust such accounts at face value. Yet, we can at least say that editors of interwar popular women’s magazines were eager to stage readers’ participation in magazine-making (see Chapter Five).

A variety of events organized by and through women’s magazines also enhanced readers’ feeling of involvement in the magazine public sphere. Mass-market women’s magazines such as Shufu no tomo enlarged the community of readers beyond the upper-middle class subscribers of prior women’s magazines by promoting activities or “campaigns” ranging from mediated correspondence, personal ads, and exchanging information about folk remedies, to soliciting donations or volunteer activity on behalf of unfortunate people such as lepers, orphans, bereaved parents, disaster victims, and soldiers on the front, or fundraising for a monument to infants who met untimely death. The magazine also offered media events to invite reader participation, such as contests in novel-writing, photography, knitting, kimono pattern–design, and so on. Major events were held by the publishers’ Bunka jigyōbu (Department of Cultural Programs), some of which continued even during WWII.50 Among these, one of the first contests that were held annually as a sort of “seasonal event” was the knitting contest. Every year, Shufu no tomo solicited contributions of hand-made knitted goods, some

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49 This was a huge step in the history of magazines in Japan, for men’s submissions had been prohibited in many women’s magazines since their “feminization” at the beginning of the century. See Chapter Four.

50 On the establishment of the Department of Cultural Programs, see Shufu no Tomosha 1967, 94–95. The analysis of Department of Cultural Programs by Okada and Sakimura is probably the first study to point out the pioneering attempts by Shufu no Tomosha in this time (1965, 334–338).
of which were selected for awards, presented in the magazine with the names of the makers and photos of the works, and exhibited around the country. Some participants, such as Shibata Takeko and Saeki Shūko, later became well-known pioneering specialists in the knitting world. Similarly, some participants in other contests held by Shufu no tomo also became professional artists, with such opportunities serving as turning points in their careers. They include painter Yamagishi (later Morita) Motoko and photographer Okada Kōyō. As Okada’s case testifies, there were considerable male participants in the events presented by Shufu no tomo.51

Some events, such as the annual Shufu no tomo Yukata (summer kimono) Pattern Design Contest, were even intertwined with commodity culture. The whole process, from the call for participants to the nation-wide exhibitions of works for sale, was reported in the magazine over several months. First, the call for a kimono fabric pattern design contest was posted almost half a year before the final exhibition. A few months later, an “impartial panel of judges,” including specialists in the fashion and art worlds, selected a few dozen patterns from among the submissions, and the selections were announced in the magazine along with the names of the individuals who designed them. Meanwhile, through collaboration with a major cloth dyer, each pattern was made into real fabric. Then, just before the start of the summer season, the fabrics were presented in a photo article in the style of a fashion show, in which well-known actresses served as models and specialists commented on each design.52

At the same time, major department stores and drapers in and outside of the country—including the colonies of Korea and Taiwan and the de facto colony of Manchuria—held exhibitions and spot sales of these fabrics almost simultaneously, which was reported in detail in the magazine.

with photographs. In 1929, as many as 263 cities, including some in Taiwan, Korea, and China, hosted events at local department stores or major drapers.\textsuperscript{53} The articles also functioned as a mail-order catalogue, from which readers could purchase fabrics without visiting shops themselves. Browsing advertisements and reports every month, readers could feel as if they gained intimate views into the backstage activities of this “grand event.” In this way, whether participating in this commodified contest passively or actively, readers must have felt themselves to be contributing to, at the most, or being involved, at the least, in the nation-wide media event together with other readers whom they had never seen and would never meet. Similarly, other contests were also commercialized and staged in the magazine.\textsuperscript{54} This collaboration with various other industries turned out to be an enormous commercial success. Other women’s magazines, as usual, followed this trend; even \textit{Bungei shunjū}, a general magazine initially launched as a literary magazine, started selling its own summer kimono.\textsuperscript{55}

Media events held by women’s magazines had already existed before the launch of \textit{Shufu no tomo}.\textsuperscript{56} Magazines such as \textit{Fujin sekai} or \textit{Fujokai} occasionally organized “avid readers’ gatherings” (\textit{aidokusha taikai}), inviting selected readers to enjoy theatrical plays or watching movies. However, they were held only in very limited metropolitan areas such as Tokyo and Osaka. Moreover, they had not been commercialized projects organized through collaboration with other companies in different industries. In addition, previously, events of women’s magazines were held for the existing “avid” readers; there was no room for those who had never read the magazines in question to participate in such events. In contrast, commercialized media events by interwar women’s magazines

\textsuperscript{53} Shufu no Tomosha 1996, 26–34.
\textsuperscript{54} On the knitting contest, exhibition, and lecture, see Shufu no Tomosha, ed. 1967, 191–192.
\textsuperscript{55} Shufu no Tomosha, ed. 1967, 114–115; Matsuda 1965, 118; Shashi Hensan Inkai 1959b, 149–150. See also Maeshima 2012 and 2014.
\textsuperscript{56} On the history of media events in Japan, including those organized by general magazines and newspapers, see Chapter Three of this dissertation.
since the success of *Shufu no tomo* were almost simultaneously held in multiple cities across the country, through collaboration with various industries beyond publishing. Those who were not regular readers of such magazines could also “participate” in the events as visitors to or shoppers at the exhibitions and sales. Even mere passers-by can be said, in a sense, to have been indirect “participants” in such events.

**Commercialization: Advertisements, Special Gifts, and Mail Ordering**

As seen in the media events they organized, commercialism was one of the conspicuous traits of mass-market women’s magazines of the time. In 1929, the Bureau of Police and Public Security at the Ministry of Home Affairs reported on women’s magazines as follows:

> Publication of women’s magazines became a very profitable enterprise. Hence, they have come to be edited primarily for sale, in addition to their original mission as a magazine to disseminate culture in general. (Naimushō Keihokyoku 1929, x–27)

In order to promote sales, each popular women’s magazine extensively deployed advertisements.\(^{57}\) Tsugawa Tatsumi and Ishikawa Takeyoshi, who once worked together for *Fujokai* and *Fujin no tomo* (Ladies’ Friend) before they founded their own women’s magazines,\(^ {58}\) are particularly well known for their intensive use of various kinds of advertisements. In the interwar period, one could find their advertisements almost everywhere in towns and at home. Advertising techniques such as direct mail, flyers, inserts in newspapers and magazines, not to mention

\(^{57}\) The foundation of “design-oriented ads sections (*ishō kōkoku-ran*)” in major newspapers, such as *Osaka Asahi shinbun* (1904), promoted visualization of newspaper advertisements (Minami et al., ed. 1965, 133). Until the emergence of the mass-market women’s magazine, newspapers were the media that offered the flashiest, most eye-catching advertisements in Japan (Kitada 1998, 155–179).

\(^{58}\) (The new) *Fujokai* and *Shufu no tomo*, respectively.
newspaper ads, had become common in the women’s magazine industry.\textsuperscript{59} In the towns, especially near girls’ high schools, one could see power poles plastered with colorful posters advertising women’s magazines.\textsuperscript{60}

Above all, \textit{Shufu no tomo}’s insatiable deployment of advertisements was remarkable. Already at the time of its founding, \textit{Shufu no tomo} put a full quarter-sheet ad in each major newspaper.\textsuperscript{61} This particular magazine was the only one that could compete with the newly-launched mass-market general entertainment magazine, \textit{Kingu}, in the number and space of newspaper ads it placed.\textsuperscript{62} The size allotted for magazine advertisements in newspapers grew rapidly and it soon became a common strategy among all women’s magazines to have full-sheet newspaper ads. The advertising competition among women’s magazines was so intense that numerous contemporary commentators criticized it.\textsuperscript{63}

Another signature promotion strategy among mass-market women’s magazines was the distribution of free gifts. The leader among them was said to be \textit{Shufu no tomo}, again, with its first attempt in 1921. To commemorate its accomplishment of becoming “No. 1 in circulation in the East” with its June 1921 issue,\textsuperscript{64} the magazine decided to present anyone who signed up for a two-year subscription with a removable summer kimono collar (\textit{han’eri}) “made of refined silk with hand-stitched embroidery that would cost 2.5 or 3 yen at market.”\textsuperscript{65} While this first attempt was severely

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\textsuperscript{59} Tsugawa 1930, 185, 194. Although Tsugawa, the chief editor of \textit{Fujokai} of the time, had first considered his job as both editor and advertising canvasser to be “indecent,” he later changed his opinion on advertising and started regarding it as part of magazine articles (Tsugawa 1930, 201–202, 214, 446–447).

\textsuperscript{60} Tsugawa 1930, 314–316.

\textsuperscript{61} Shufu no Tomosha 1967, 52. \textit{Nihon shōnen} and \textit{Shōjo no tomo} posted the second biggest advertisements in the same newspaper, though they were only one fourth the size of the ad by \textit{Shufu no tomo}.

\textsuperscript{62} Satō Takumi 2002, 7.

\textsuperscript{63} Takashima 1922, 59–60; Chiba et al. 1928, 106 (statement by Nii), 110 (statements by Nakamura and Miyake); Hiratsuka 1928, 84; Yamakawa 1928, 85; Komaki 1927, 68; Noguchi 1927, 65–66.

\textsuperscript{64} The magazine had a monthly circulation of more than 220,000 (Shufu no Tomosha ed. 1996, 19).

\textsuperscript{65} They managed to offer such gifts by means of using embroidery made by students at an embroidery
criticized by its rivals and intellectuals for its commercialism, before long free gifts became common among popular women’s magazines. By 1930, a monthly giveaway quiz (kenshō mondai), another version of the free gift, had become one of the main features of this kind of magazine. Every month, winners were solemnly selected in the presence of the police, whose picture on the page attested to the unbiased nature of the magazine, at the same time seducing readers to participate in this ostentatious event.

Another example illustrating the commercial innovativeness of mass-market women’s magazines is the case of the mail-order system. While it has often been said that, unlike in the US, mail-order sale was never common in pre-WWII Japan, the sale system became quite popular after Fujin no tomo introduced it in 1905, and it was soon followed by other popular magazines such as Shufu no tomo, Fujokai, and Fujin kurabu. Each women’s magazine included a catalogue and advertisements for its own “sales agent” (dairibu). In addition to the regular sales catalogue, the regular articles also functioned as an additional kind of mail-order catalogue, as I have already described in explaining commercialized media events. Thus, in contrast to the case in the US, which utilized dedicated sales catalogues, it was mainly through women’s magazines that purchasing by mail-order became common practice in Japan.

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school in Meguro as their practice (Shufu no Tomosha ed. 1967, 90). The price of Shufu no tomo was 30 sen at that time.

66 For instance, see Takashima 1922, 60.

67 It was long believed that, though some department stores, mail-order sellers, and newspapers started using mail-order sale, it was not commonly practiced in Japan before WWII (see, for instance, Terade 1994, 508). While Kurozumi (1993) referred to mail-order sale by the women’s magazine in the 1920s as an exception, he does not elaborate it. He also shares with Terade the conclusion that, before its prevalence, the mail-order sale had declined by the end of Taishō era and the beginning of Shōwa era (roughly from the mid- to the late 1920s) due to depression and diversification of people’s fashion “tastes” (Kurozumi 1993, 224–225).

68 Fujin no Tomosha 2003, 110.

69 Sales agents were established in Shufu no tomo in 1917 (Shufu no Tomosha 1967, 63–65), in Fujin kurabu in 1929 (Shashi Hensan Iinkai, ed. 1959b, 149–150), in Fujin kōron in 1931 (the sale itself had already started in 1927) (Matsuda 1965, 118). Other magazines, including Fujokai, Bungei shunjū, and Kingu, also had their own sales agents.
Popular women’s magazines not only sold commodities in collaboration with trading partners; they also developed and marketed their own original products in collaboration with other manufactures. There were health-building tablets (“Katsuryoku-so” and “Ōtsuzura Fuji”), various kinds of original kimonos, cosmetics (“Megumi-eki” lotion) and original hair care products (“Hatomugi Araiko” and so on) of *Shufu no tomo*; the summer kimono and cosmetics (“Petē Keshōhin”) of *Fujin kōron*; the summer kimono and healthy soft drink (“Dorikono”) of Kōdansha magazines, to name a few. With articles on fashion, cooking, medicine, cosmetics, and seasonal or life events, the mail-order selling system connected readers’ everyday lives with various traders and department stores, inviting them to indulge in a materially affluent lifestyle.

### Media Mixing

Building on the overwhelming popularity of these magazines, publishers developed a media-mixing strategy, whereby plays, movies, and records were produced based on the contents of popular women’s magazines. Popular serialized novels, such as Yanagawa Shun’yō’s *Ukimi* (Drifting Body/Unfortunate Life) and Oguri Fūyō’s *Omoi-zuma* (My Beloved Wife) appearing in *Fujokai*, were made into theatrical plays and later some of them were made into films (Tsugawa 1930, 436-440). Among the movies based on fiction from women’s magazines of the 1930s that are still remembered are “*Hito-zuma tsubaki*” (Camellia and Someone Else’s Wife) from *Shufu no tomo* (novelized in 1935–1938; cinematized in 1936) and “*Aizen katsura*” (Love Laurel) in *Fujin kurabu* (novelized in 1937; cinematized in 1938), both of which cast top stars, such as Kawasaki Hiroko, Tanaka Kinuyo, Saburi Shin, and Uehara Ken, and recorded tremendous commercial success together with their original theme songs, which were also sold as records. The media mixing

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70 For the products of *Shufu no tomo*, see Shufu no Tomosha, ed. 1967, 155, 293–296, 114–116
71 On the case of *Shufu no tomo*, see Shufu no Tomosha, ed. 1967, 63–65, 209
strategy continued to be practiced even during war time. Cheerful and humorous despite its militant title, the narrative comic “Jūgo no Hanako-san” (Hanako on the Home Front) appeared in *Shufu no tomo*, then was made into a happy musical movie starring Todoroki Yukiko as Hanako in 1943. The movie and its theme song became a major hit. This and other theatrical dramas, movies, and songs based on magazine fictions were promoted by the various above-mentioned advertising strategies as well as through regular magazine articles.

Even if a fiction was not dramatized or cinematized, it could still be connected with commercialism; novels themselves would include references—sometimes overt, other times covert—to various goods and services in their descriptions of the environments or circumstances of the story. Some such commodities were further advertised in accompanying advertisements. One contemporary critic, Ōya Sōichi, cynically criticized women’s magazine strategies of media mixing and their tie-ups with diverse industries as follows:

“[A novel appearing in women’s magazines] is not simply literature; in a sense, it is a department store.

In it, the latest trendy goods are all displayed. New fashion just imported from Paris, new accessories, new cosmetics, first-class motorcars, and besides these, concerts, movies, theatrical plays—everything and anything that millions of women would like—are displayed in that “novel.” It covers everything ranging from new taste, new games, new leisure activities, new love strategies, and new words to slang expressions. This kind of literature gets dramatized and merchandised through tie-ups with publishers, promoters, entrepreneurs, record companies, and the like, and absorbs the masses. Considering this situation, it is no wonder that wan artistic literature has no chance against it.”

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Not only is the entire women’s magazine itself a department store, but every single novel appearing within it constitutes a department store in the same way (Ōya 1959/1934, 193–194).

“Like department stores”: this common metaphor for interwar mass-market women’s magazines referred not only to their multifarious contents, but also to their commercialism.74

The Mass-Market Women’s Magazine as New Media

The Typical Format of the Interwar Mass-Market Women’s Magazine

As shown above, in the 1920s mass-market women’s magazines experienced a great transformation in terms of style, expression, and promotional strategies. However, compared with other kinds of magazines (apart from pictorials, movie-fan periodicals, and cartoon magazines), women’s magazines did not have as clear a distinction in form during the early 1910s as they were to have later. Although the articles of 1910s women’s magazines were written in a more colloquial style than general magazines or newspapers, they still relied on a double-section format, that is, a few pages of frontispiece (kuchie) with photographs and illustrations, followed by an 80-page text section (honbun). While periodicals for women included some entertaining components, such as quizzes and comics, and some articles were illustrated, the main items were more oriented toward practical information rather than being sources of amusement. Media mixing and tie-ups were also rather limited. Thus, up until the mid 1910s, the distinction between women’s magazines and “serious” periodicals rested mainly in the difference in their writing styles, what kinds of themes were dealt with in them, and some of the illustrations that accompanied them.

With inclusion of illustrated serialized novels and readers’ submissions as full articles around

74 Akita 1927, 70; Chiba et al. 1928, 101; Satō Sumiko 1931, 309–311.
the mid-1910s, popular women’s magazines gradually distanced themselves from other magazines in their editing and promotional styles. Toward the end of the 1920s, popular women’s magazines clearly demarcated themselves from their rivals in the format. Each one included an 80-page photo section called a “pictorial” (gahō) and 500+ pages of text content, although now this too was accompanied by numerous photos and illustrations. In a sense, the double-section magazine format typical of magazines in Japan so far, with a frontispiece and text section, was more or less deconstructed among popular women’s magazines. Their cover illustrations, both on the front and the back, were increasingly flashier than before as well.

The range of articles appearing in popular women’s magazines had expanded by the 1930s. A typical mass-market women’s magazine included: photo reportages, interviews, and round-table talks of a variety of people; pinups of top movie stars and beautiful young women from “respectable families”; useful and enjoyable practical articles with (sometimes colored) pictures; entertaining illustrated serialized novels, comic strips, and photo stories; informative articles in entertaining forms on entertainment, celebrities, art, and politics; dramatic “confessional stories” submitted by diverse readers; helpful advice columns with suggestion from specialists; fashion articles with famous actresses acting as models; a mail order catalogue with various advertisements; a readers’ letters section rendered in a friendly, intimate tone; and a variety of supplements ranging from monthly recipe calendars and table game boards to colorfully illustrated travel guidebooks. The reader could enjoy such a voluminous magazine carrying a wide range of article genres for only one 50-sen coin or even less (in the case of buying an old issue or through joint-purchase) for a full month’s worth of entertainment.

By 1930, moreover, mass-market women’s magazines had become fully commercialized and entertainment-oriented. Articles focused ever more on humor, visual pleasure, human interest, and show business. Thanks to intense visualization, even the so-called “practical articles” became a
form of entertainment showing the latest fashion trends, types of food, and rare inside stories about the lives of various people. Extensive use of reader contributions allowed them to participate and get involved more earnestly and enthusiastically in the mediated community offered by the magazines. With various tie-ups, media mixing, and free gifts, the magazine as a whole had become deeply connected with other industries.

**Differences from “General Magazines” and “Cultured” Women’s Magazines**

In this way, during the 1920s, women’s magazines developed their own magazine style distinct from other magazine genres. This magazine style specifically contradicted the standard format of the so-called “general magazine” in all aspects. First, in terms of the content, the general magazine carried mainly signed editorial articles and belles-lettres. As Ōya Sōichi later recalled, high-quality “general” magazines of the time were “just like compilations of university professors’ papers that were difficult to read, or, at least one could say that they were not written for the readers’ sake.” The women’s magazine, on the other hand, included mixed sorts of writings, such as confessional stories, dictated talks, interviews, round-table talks, serial novels, comics, and pictorial sections, many of which were not bylined. As I will explain in detail in Chapter Five, including fewer bylined editorials and more reader submissions instead of employing “star” professional writers was one of the new editing strategies in interwar Japan.

Secondly, they were different from each other in the topics they featured. General magazines dealt with “serious” themes, such as politics, philosophy, aesthetics, economics, and even natural sciences. In contrast, women’s magazines featured various human-interest stories about diverse people ranging from ordinary people in the countryside to celebrities in show business or the

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75 Ōya 1955/1956, 55. Kitada also observes the same tendency among magazines for intellectuals of the time (Kitada 1998, 155–179).
sociopolitical world. Also characteristic of mass-market women’s magazines were miscellaneous how-to articles about anything concerning everyday life activities, such as housework, fashion, social skills, medical and health affairs, and manners for special life events, i.e., “trivials” that were never featured in general magazines.

Moreover, their editing techniques were diametrically opposed to each other. As shown above, mass-market women’s magazines consisted of radically oral-oriented texts, using a conspicuously colloquial writing system (desu/masu style) and including articles containing numerous quotations of various people’s utterances. Each issue usually had at least a few features consisting solely of submissions from ordinary readers. In contrast, general magazines mostly included editorial columns and articles in serious essay style, and creative writings that were all written by specialists, almost all of which were rendered in a detached, dry writing system (da/de aru style). In addition, the two magazine genres contrasted in their differing use of visuals. On the one hand, mass-market women’s magazines distinguished themselves from other types of magazines by their extensive deployment of images. Each component, even a column of readers’ letters, was accompanied by several illustrations or photographic images, some of which were even printed in vivid color. The lengthy pictorial sections were a signature of mass-market women’s magazines. An article in a “general magazine,” on the other hand, was not accompanied by visual images, except for a few photos of the author or an illustration of the main theme of the essay. Photographic components were usually absent in general magazines, although occasionally either extremely artistic, avant-garde, or politically heavily loaded reportages were attached as special supplements.76 Their cover pages contrasted with each other, too. Mass-market women’s magazines boasted colorful, eye-catching covers, while those of general magazines were simple and inconspicuous.

76 For the distinctiveness of the mass-market women’s magazine of the time, see Maeshima 2009a. For the interwar women’s magazine’s use of visuals, see Maeshima 2007 and 2009b.
Furthermore, the entertainment-oriented nature and commercialization of popular women’s magazines clearly surpassed “general magazines.” Each issue of mass-market women’s magazines had more than one supplementary item, accompanied by various media events. Some of their contents were even collaborations with other media or industries. With the exception of a few large-scale but still infrequent media events and occasional special supplements, such content was not common practice for general magazines. Placement of flashy advertisements within the magazines themselves as well as in other media was also common among popular women’s magazines, whereas advertisements for general magazines were rather sober.

**Differences from Other Popular Magazines and Pictorial Magazines**

Interwar mass-market women’s magazines differed from other contemporary popular magazines as well. Most other popular magazines were dedicated to a few specific interests, such as movies (magazines like *Eiga taimusu, Shōchiku kinema, Hōgakuza gurafu, Nikkatsu gahō*), theatrical plays (*Engei gahō, Teatoro*), detective stories (*Shinseinen*), historical novels (*Ōru yomimono, Kuraku*), historical storytelling (*Kōdan kurabu*), literature in general (*Bungaku kai, Shinchō, Bungei shunjū, Josei*), and fashion (*Sōen, Kimono no ehon*). On the other hand, mass-market women’s magazines did not specialize in one or two themes; rather, they consisted of a mass of relatively short components on a wide variety of topics presented in various oral-oriented writing and visual techniques.

In fact, it was the policy of Ishikawa Takeyoshi, the founder of *Shufu no tomo*, to include in one issue as many diverse components as possible. He reasoned that if a magazine relied too heavily on one kind of item, it might lose readers if there were something wrong with that particular

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77 Toward the mid-1930s, however, following suit of the mass-market women’s magazines, these specialized popular magazines, such as *Kōdan kurabu*, gradually expanded the range of their contents.
item. Even in the heyday of serialized novels, he saw to it that the magazine did not include too many popular novels in order to avoid dependency on one particular item.\textsuperscript{78} Indeed, women’s magazines that relied too much on one popular item saw a drop in circulation once readers got tired of iterations of the same style of component. For example, in the 1920s, Fujin sekai put excessive emphasis on sensational confession stories, and Fujokai on serial novels. As a result, thought it may not have been the only factor, both had to cease publication in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{79}

Moreover, mass-market women’s magazines were much more intensively visualized than other pleasure magazines, even those dedicated to visual articles. By the end of 1924, Shufu no tomo had devoted 20 pages to photography: in a 13-page opening photo-picture section and a 7-page photogravure section inserted in the middle of each issue. Even thereafter, the number of pages in each photograph section continuously grew until the mid-1930s. In fact, these women’s magazines pleased their readers with even more extensive use of photography than weekly pictorial magazines of the day such as Asahi gurafu or Sandē mainichi. The former had 7 out of 16 pages as pictorial section in 1923 (later all to be covered with photo articles), and the latter had 4 out of 24 in 1922 (8 from 1931). In 1933, 80 pages (14.2\%) out of 560 pages of popular women’s magazines such as Shufu no tomo were reserved for their pictorial sections. Shinseinen, a magazine famous for its detective stories and avant-garde photographic works, barely had 16 photographic pages at that time.

Arguably, limited entertainment budgets may have been the key to the success of mass-market women’s magazines; with a budget that could afford only one or two magazines a month, it was natural for readers to select a magazine with a variety of entertaining components, which also could be consumed as a collection of practical information, as provided by the popular women’s

\textsuperscript{78} Shufu no Tomosha, ed. 1967, 181, 710; Ishii 1940, 94, 97.
\textsuperscript{79} On Fujin sekai in this respect, see Komaki 1927, 68; Chiba et al. 1928, 106; Nakamura 1928, 11–12; Naimushō Keihokyoku 1929, x–31; Nii 1931, 273; Sugiyama 1935/1934, 119. On Fujokai, see Chiba 1933, 133; Sugiyama 1935/1934, 119.
magazine. As shown in the previous chapter, statistically the popularity of general entertainment magazines such as mass-market women’s magazines is obvious. The multitudinous components of popular women’s magazines must have contributed to attracting a wider range of readers than other popular magazines could.\textsuperscript{80}

**Differences from *Kingu***

Mass-market women’s magazines were even distinct from another best-selling popular magazine of the time, *Kingu*. Certainly, the two had some traits in common. First of all, both types of magazines consisted of miscellaneous short stories and were well integrated with other industries, which must have contributed to their unprecedented circulations at a time when people’s disposable income was limited. Contemporary critics noted these similarities. When they discussed popular magazines, they usually mentioned women’s magazines together with *Kingu*, and vice versa.\textsuperscript{81} Tosaka Jun even categorized them as the same type of entertainment-oriented magazine genre.\textsuperscript{82}

Their similarities were no coincidence. An editor then working at Kōdansha confessed that they designed the format and contents of *Kingu* on a mixture of the most popular magazines of the day in Japan as well as in the US. Combining the best elements from the enormous popularity of American magazines such as the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Ladies’ Home Journal*, entertainment magazines such as *Omoshiro kurabu* and *Kōdan kurabu*, and women’s magazines such as *Shufu no tomo* and *Fujokai*, as well as children’s magazines, they created the basic format of this new

\textsuperscript{80} Arguably, this financial backdrop is one of the reasons why, unlike in Europe or North America, pictorial magazines or pictorial newspapers were not as prevalent in interwar Japan as a source of daily news (see Chapter Two).


\textsuperscript{82} Tosaka 1937, 345. Likewise, Akita also regarded the women’s magazine as an entertainment-oriented magazine (Akita 1927, 69).
Satō Takumi speculates that *Kingu* must have adopted certain strategies from popular women’s magazines, such as its cover page design, commission-based sales, one-coin policy, supplements, free gifts, and various media events in order to systematically organize its readers together.

Yet, in fact, the interwar mass-market women’s magazines were not identical to *Kingu*, after all. *Kingu* was more inclined to directly teach moral lessons and politico-economic as well as scientific knowledge through components such as short quizzes on current affairs, basic concepts of national sciences, famous people in the worlds of politics, business, art, and academia; ranking lists (*banzuke*) of countries in terms of production of certain raw materials or industrial products, GNP, military power, or infant death rate; moral stories concerning great persons or famous historical episodes; speeches by well-known politicians and educators. While *Kingu* defined itself as a “family magazine” (*katei zasshi*) just like mass-market women’s magazines, articles on everyday life activities or stories based on ordinary people’s everyday lives occupied only one to two pages of the magazine.

One can see *Kingu*’s inclination toward moral lessons and reading materials rather than visuals or stories about stars in show business from a contemporary critic, Kishiyama Osamu’s analysis of the contents of the April 1930 issue of the magazine. According to him, the magazine’s components fell largely into the following seven categories: miscellaneous fragmentary components as amusement (32.0%), feudalistic moral-teaching fictions (25.6%), detective stories and similar “true stories” (23.4%), capitalist success stories (18%), nonsense (probably meaning “humorous or comic stories”) (12.8%), knowledge about natural science, international news, and the like (23.4%),

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83 Shashi Hensan Iinkai, ed. 1959a, 607–611.
84 Satō Takumi 2002, 26–33. According to Satō, *Kingu* followed *Omoshiro kurabu* (founded in 1920) for its emphasis on advertising, an idea the founder of Kōdansha, Noma Seiji, borrowed from American magazines such as the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Ladies’ Home Journal* (Satō Takumi 2002, 131–133. His speculation is predicated on Noma’s own statements appearing in Noma 1936, 562).
and speeches by famous people concerning bourgeois, feudalist morals (2.6%).\textsuperscript{85} One should keep in mind that “true stories” appearing in \textit{Kingu} tended to highlight moral lessons far more clearly than those in popular women’s magazines. Thus, as its catch phrase reads, \textit{Kingu} was edited so that it would be “interesting and useful” (\textit{omoshirokute tame ni naru}). While being amused by light stories and short quizzes expressed in an accessible manner, readers could obtain moral teachings and knowledge about issues within the “masculine/public sphere.”

In contrast, though mass-market women’s magazines did contain some knowledge and moral lessons, the way they presented them was more subtle and both the emphasis as well as the featured fields were different from \textit{Kingu}. As stated above, popular women’s magazines included only a few directly moralistic articles, and few directly informative and instructive components about “masculine” politico-economic issues, such as editorials, quizzes, ranking lists of world powers, or speeches by famous people. Instead, in these women’s magazines, the emphasis was put on the everyday lives of ordinary people: confessional accounts by and about readers; articles teaching practical tips for everyday activities such as cooking, sewing, knitting, manners, appropriate behavior and dress codes for different situations, and human relationships; reportages, photo reportages, dramatized “true stories,” interviews, and round-table stories of people ranging from the unnamed to the famous. In their celebrity-related articles, those in show business were more often featured in these women’s magazines than in any other kinds of periodicals except for movie magazines,\textsuperscript{86} and the favored themes included not only the brilliance of their recent performances or creativity, but also their human aspects such as their life histories, private lives, and so on. In the 1930s, popular women’s magazines did indeed start including some articles on politics and economics, both domestic and international. Their styles were, however, quite different from that of \textit{Kingu}. They

\textsuperscript{85} Kishiyama 1930, 171–172.

\textsuperscript{86} For movie magazines such as \textit{Eiga no tomo} (Friends of the Movies), see Silverberg 2006, Chapter 3.
applied interview or round-table formats, reminding us of the styles of present-day “infotainment” television programs, rather than using statistics or editorial articles.

In addition, their deployment of visuals was much more extensive than *Kingu*. In 1933, for instance, as mentioned above, major mass-market women’s magazines allotted around 80 pages to pictorial sections, which showed a great increase from 50 pages in 1931. The pictorial section of *Kingu*, on the other hand, was barely half the size of that of popular women’s magazines throughout the 1930s. In short, while still retaining their didactic nature, mass-market women’s magazines conspicuously focused on issues concerning the “feminine/private sphere” and entertainment in comparison to other popular magazines, including *Kingu*.

**The Mass-Market Women’s Magazines: A New Media**

Indeed, deploying more democratic and accessible editing styles such as colloquial language, visual elements, and reader submissions, heavily commercializing with other interconnected industries, and emphasizing issues regarding everyday life activities as well as entertainment, interwar popular women’s magazines constituted quite a new type of periodical of the day. An investigation conducted by Shakai Shinri Kenkyūjo in 1954 accidentally attested to the novelty of the mass-market interwar women’s magazines. Comparing *Kingu* and *Kōdan kurabu*, both founded before 1945, with the magazines published after that, such as *Heibon* (Mediocrity), the group of researchers analyzed that the latter placed a pronounced emphasis on visuals and entertaining light articles such as interviews, round-table talks, serial novels, and articles featuring movie stars. As I showed above, these characteristics already appeared in pre-WWII popular women’s magazines. Indeed, other kinds of popular magazines, such as *Kingu* and *Kōdan kurabu*, did include some entertaining stories written in an accessible style. They were, however, more

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87 Shakai Shinri Kenkyūjo 1954, 296–301. Ōya (1955/1959, 55) also presents the same observation.
inclined toward cautionary stories, the lives of socially successful people, quizzes about current affairs, and historical fictions. Therefore, these popular magazines were more didactic and were intended to be read rather than to be seen. The extent of shock brought to the print/reading culture by the mass-market women’s magazine can be well grasped if one compares criticism over this magazine genre with that against Kingu. As shown above, this nationally popular magazine relied on many devices developed by the popular women’s magazine. It was inevitable that both of them received severe condeminations from critics. However, the criticism over Kingu was directed toward its massive commercialism as well as its overall totalitarian attitude rather than toward its content or style per se.

In light of this comparison with other magazine genres, it would be safe to say that these mass-marketed women’s magazines anticipated the post-war popular magazine style. The astonishing popularity of mass-market women’s magazines probably derived from the fact that there were no comparably entertaining periodicals at that time. In this regard, it is highly suggestive that some of the best-known charismatic editors of popular magazines in post-WWII era Japan were those who had gotten their initial professional training at Shufu no Tomo Sha. For example, Hongō Yasuo, who was once the editor-in-chief for Shufu no Tomo after Ishikawa’s retirement, founded Myōjō (Phosphor) (1952) and Shūkan Myōjō (Weekly Phosphor), published from Shūeisha, both of which are known as the path-breaking new entertainment-oriented magazines in the post war era. Imaida Isao, who received training as editor under the guidance of Ishikawa and Hongō at Shufu no tomo, became the editor-in-chief of a pioneering fashion magazine, Sōen (Fashion Garden, founded in 1936 from Bunka Shuppankyoku) and launched several leading fashion magazines including Misesu (Mrs., 1960) and Ginka (Silver Flower, 1967). 88 One could say that the influence of interwar

88 On Hongō, Imaida, and major editors after 1945, see Umesao 1989; Shiozawa 1994; Terada, ed. 2003; Takahashi 2006. It is highly suggestive that features of post-war magazines such as Myōjō and Heibon, including the abundance of entertainment-oriented stories, visuals images, and round-talk
mass-market women’s magazines lasted even well after WWII in the publishing world.

An accessible editing style with extensive use of a colloquial writing system and visuals, promotion of readers’ active self-involvement in the magazine community, and an inclination toward everyday concerns and entertainment—these are all innovations created or developed by interwar mass-market women’s magazines that were to become standard strategies in the post-WWII publishing world. Therefore, it would not be quite appropriate to call this type of periodical simply a more developed version of the existing women’s magazine. Nor might it be enough to consider it to be merely a new magazine genre, for it changed the very concept of what a magazine should be like. It would be most accurate, then, to apply the title of “new media” to the interwar mass-market women’s magazines.

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articles, remind us of those of Shufu no tomo and other similar popular women’s magazines in the interwar period (Shakai Shinri Kenkyūjo 1954, 294–306).
Chapter 4: Rethinking Interwar Japanese Mass-Market Women’s Magazines: The Democratization of Print/Reading Culture and Gender Categories

As shown in the previous chapter, by the end of the 1920s the mass-market women’s magazine had developed into a distinctive magazine genre. With extensive visualization, an inclination toward human-interest stories, heavy emphasis on orality in writing styles, intensive commercialization, an orientation toward entertainment and diverse multifunctional components, popular women’s magazines provided readers with an innovative and unprecedented reading experience. This “new medium” influenced the print media and reading culture in interwar Japan, which sparked heated discussions on the mass-market women’s magazine. This chapter will present an overview of the influence the interwar popular women’s magazine had on the contemporary print and reading cultures and consider the significance and implications of controversies over the increasingly dominant, yet at the same time peculiarly underestimated position of this particular magazine genre.

Influence on Reading Habits

A New Media Introducing a New Mode of Reading

The novel form and content of women’s magazines affected their audience’s reading habits. In the case of “general magazines,” one needed to read each article attentively in order to understand their discussions over quite abstract topics in the fields of philosophy, politics, economics, business, current affairs, history, arts, and so on, all of which were rendered in a dry, detached tone with few to no illustrations. Moreover, each article tended to cover more than five pages, which necessitated that people concentrate on reading for appreciable lengths of time. By contrast, in the case of women’s magazines, while readers were still free to read each story very carefully as they would do
for articles in general magazines and those edited in a similar style, they could also enjoy the miscellaneous stories and pictorial articles as a leisure activity, or even simply to pass the time. While most other magazines, including the best-selling *King*, were still intensely text-oriented, the dismantlement of the dual-section format by the women’s magazines made them a kind of “visual magazine.” The intense visualization of mass-market women’s magazines introduced a new habit to the readers: that is, that of “looking” at articles as a leisure activity rather than “reading” them to obtain the latest knowledge or to learn about morals. Accessible and enjoyable short articles on familiar topics, such as everyday life issues and entertainment, rendered in an oral-oriented writing style and with a great number of visuals also made such a variety of reading modes possible.

Many critics in the 1920s and 1930s witnessed this shift in readers’ habits, and described it as a change from “reading” to “looking” among readers of popular women’s magazines. Such a change in reading style was pointed out already in the early 1920s. Critic Yamakawa Kikue’s “Sakkarin ryōri to fujin zasshi (Saccharin Food and Women’s Magazines)” appearing in the October 1922 issue of *Chūō kōron* is one of the early examples. She claims, “Knowledge knows no national boundaries; let alone sexual/gender bounds.” Therefore, she insists, women should “decline special treatment as women in the country of knowledge.” Instead, “[i]n order to obtain their share of all the knowledge necessary to human beings as well as to members of society, women need to get accustomed to training their brains by wading through quality magazines and books. This very effort is the first step to relieving women psychologically from their state of slavery.”¹ Such a remark implied that the habit of reading difficult materials had already become rare, at least among women.

The following remark by educator Miwada Motomichi in a round-table discussion appearing in the June 1928 issue of *Shinchō* is another such observation: “It would be more

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¹ Yamakawa 1922, 159.
appropriate to say ‘seeing a women’s magazine’ rather than ‘reading’ one.”

Miwada: In short, [to new ordinary readers,] magazines are a means of satisfying their desire for knowledge, and this knowledge is not always the same as that necessary in one’s life. It’s a kind of psychological leisure, so to speak. For instance, look at a nurse sitting by the bed of a patient. When she gets bored, she will pick up an old magazine or such. Also, a passenger who has spent a long time in a train will open an old newspaper. In this way, it is natural that hunger for knowledge enhances as human culture develops. The enormous popularity of women’s magazines will merely come from such a need to satisfy one’s appetite for knowledge. (Chiba et al., 1928, 105)

Critic and journalist Ōya Sōichi also offered similar comments on these new reading habits, this time, of both sexes:

As capitalism draws to an end, tendencies in ordinary people’s lives toward self-discipline and diligence gradually decline. In their stead, inclinations toward excitement and hedonism increasingly intensify. […] [I]t used to be a great pleasure and source of pride to make efforts to read whatever, no matter how abstruse. Now, however, one cannot find such tendencies even among the intelligentsia, let alone in the general public. Works that cannot be easily digested on the train are no longer read except by a few exceptionally

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2 Chiba et al., 105–106. As I already explained in Chapter Two, the participants in this round-table talk are the following contemporary commentators: Chiba Kameo (critic and journalist), Miwada Motomichi (educator), Miyake Yasuko (writer and critic), Nakamura Murao (editor, writer, and critic), Nii Itaru (writer and critic), Satō Haruo (poet, novelist, dramatist and writer), Tokuda Shūsei (novelist), and Yamakawa Kikue (socialist, feminist, and activist). Most of them were men: only two, that is, Miyake and Yamakawa, were women.
charitable persons. One can also say the same thing about the magnificent “essays” that once used to grace the opening pages of “quality magazines.” (1929/1959, 189–190)

Later, in 1955, Ōya noticed the prevalence of the habit of reading fragmentary magazine articles in one’s everyday spare time. Though he pointed it out as a new phenomenon in society, it had already been practiced since the 1920s as his own statement quoted above suggests.

**Multiplex Reading Habits**

Still, not all readers of mass-market women’s magazines regarded these magazines as a source of distraction. Some letters from readers stated that they considered women’s magazine as a substitute for their high school education (Shufu no tomo Dec. 1919, 156; Feb. 1920, 158–9), as a textbook for real society (Shufu no tomo Aug. 1917, 133), or even as parents (Shufu no tomo Dec. 1920, 197–198). These comments suggest that some read magazines in this genre attentively and seriously. Contemporary critics observed that, having no spare time to read newspapers every day, readers, especially female ones in the countryside, cultivated their miscellaneous knowledge by reading popular women’s magazines, which were full of various articles. And, indeed, these popular women’s magazines did offer some knowledge, albeit presented in an entertaining manner, and still included some clearly didactic components—although they no longer constituted the majority—in addition to ample amusing ones.

It was not only the variety of articles that allowed readers both to seriously peruse and to casually enjoy browsing mass-market women’s magazines. Since most stories were multifunctional,

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3 For more on reading habits while commuting by train, see Nagamine (2001, 43–50).
4 Ōya 1959/1955, 57
5 Miyake’s and Chiba’s comments in Chiba et al. 1928, 105.
as shown above, readers could relish the same article in diverse ways. Thus, articles on domestic chores expressed in the format of comic strips or photo narratives could provide readers with useful practical information about issues like how to entertain guests at home or how to prepare for the New Year, offer enjoyable narratives for their amusement and imaginary indulgence, as well as present a stimulating invitation to an ideal modern life surrounded by plenty of up-to-date commodities. As some critics pointed out, most components of popular women’s magazines must have worked as a guide to the abundance of commodity culture, particularly to those who were not so prosperous in the countryside and “would have no chance to visit Tokyo in their whole lives.”

Likewise, while reportage featuring a couple who moved to a colonial southern island, started their business and overcame various difficulties could be read as a journalistic documentary about “facts,” it could also pass as a thrilling adventure story. As contemporary philosopher Tosaka Jun’s insight into articles in popular magazines maintained, all articles based on “facts” concerning others’ private lives—including “true” stories, confessions, memoirs, interviews, and round-table talks—inevitably provided readers with “amusement (goraku).”

Moreover, a single reader’s way of reading magazines was not always the same. A person who sometimes flipped through a women’s magazine in her/his spare time might at another time pore over the same periodical in order to get some practical information or moral inspiration, just as is common practice today. Thus, interwar popular women’s magazines did not promote a particular manner of reading that took over earlier attentive reading practices; rather, they added to them. Interestingly, however, when contemporary intellectuals discussed reading culture of the time, they always emphasized the shift from a “reading” to a “browsing/looking at” approach, as will be

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6 Miyake 1928, 122.
7 Tosaka 1937, 343—348.
8 Hermes (1995) observes the same phenomenon among the readers, both men and women, of women’s magazines in the Netherlands in the 1990s.
examined later in this chapter. The fuss that critics made nonetheless about the habit of “browsing/looking at” popular women’s magazines attests to how novel and distracting this habit was to a certain group of people in the society of the time.

Democratization/Tabloidization of Print Culture

In “Light” Periodicals

In a sense, these mass-market women’s magazines were a new form of media for people in interwar Japan. Interestingly, however, one can also find some of the abovementioned features of popular women’s magazines in other print media of the time in Japan. As might be easily predicted, other popular magazines, then categorized as “light” or “vulgar” periodicals, were also quick to democratize their editing styles. As already mentioned, it is known that one of the most popular magazines of the time, Kingu, extensively and deliberately adopted many of the strategies developed by mass-market women’s magazines: miscellaneous content, the use of an orally-oriented style, plentiful visuals, free promotional gifts and supplements, large-scale advertising campaigns, systematization and cultivation of readers through various media events.

One should not forget that some new editorial and promotional methods, such as the use of postcards as supplements or the use of a colloquial writing style, were first adopted by boys’ and girls’ magazines. In particular, the introduction of supplements and the mobilization of readers through media events had already been widely practiced before the women’s magazine became

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9 For the present purpose, this dissertation will focus mainly on magazines for adults.
10 It is well-known in the history of Japanese publishing that Noma Seiji, the founder of the major publishing house Kōdansha, deployed a massive advertising campaign in launching Kingu, with the use of full-page newspaper ads, direct mail, fliers, pamphlets, huge posters, promotional marching bands (chindon ya), banner ads set up in front of bookstores across the nation, and so on (Satō Takumi 2002, 8). As we saw in the previous chapter, most of these techniques had already been practiced by popular women’s magazines.
11 Satō Takumi also pointed out some of these similarities between Kingu and women’s magazines (2002, 28–33).
mass-marketed in the interwar period. Postcard supplements offered by boys’ magazines were said to have promoted the popularity of postcards as items for collection since around the time the postcard was officially introduced to Japan in 1900. In the 1910s, magazines for teenagers and children, including Shōjo sekai, Shōnen sekai, Shōjo no tomo, and Nihon shōnen, all set up lecture and story-telling national tours.

In “Serious” Periodicals

It should further be noted that not only these “light” periodicals but “serious” ones also employed these methods. In particular, newspapers were quick in introducing new editorial methods for democratizing their components in order to obtain more subscribers. In fact, some such methods were first adopted among newspapers in Japan. The use of the American point system and the latest print technologies, as mentioned earlier, were a few such examples. It had been newspapers that had used advertisements the most intensively of all Japanese print media until mass-market women’s magazines supplanted their primacy in this field in the late 1910s. In addition, as early as January 1879, Tōkyō nichichi shinbun presented its subscribers with two kinds of maps, “Ajia zenshū ryakuzu (abbreviated map of Asia)” and “Chūō ajia shoshū bunkyōzu (map of provincial border lines of Central Asia),” as supplements in its New Year issue. These maps are considered to be the first use of supplements in Japanese periodicals.

Grandiose media events are the best-known examples of modern promotional strategies newspapers are credited with inventing. The first newspaper-promoted event was a fireworks festival

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12 For postcard supplements, see Satō Kenji 1994, 16–71. Especially 38–48; for the use of the colloquial style, see Maeshima 2009a.
15 Oka 1981, 119–120.
held by *Asahi shinbun* in Ōsaka in 1880 to commemorate its anniversary. Following this, the newspaper held various lecture tours by famous intellectuals, including Natsume Sōseki, exhibitions, as well as theatrical plays in different cities. The paper even sponsored extensive overseas tours (1906, 1908, 1910) and research expeditions to the South Pole (1910) and Manchu-Mongolia (1933).  

*Asahi shinbun*’s rival paper, *Mainichi shinbun*, also promoted similar events: a series of open lectures by professors at Kyoto Imperial University for the public, held in various cities (1908); Investigation of Currents around Japan (1913); Secondary School National Football Games (1918–); and the Japanese Art Exhibition (1923). Among the events sponsored by newspapers, the most famous would be the National Secondary School Baseball Championship (today’s Summer National High School Baseball Championship) and the National Secondary School Baseball Invitational Tournament (today’s Spring National High School Invitational Tournament), both of which still continue today as major seasonal national sporting events.

Moreover, as already mentioned in Chapter Two, major newspapers also sponsored diverse exhibitions such as children’s exhibitions and exhibitions about the new communications medium of radio. Around the time of the introduction of radio programming to Japan, each newspaper held public experiments and exhibitions concerning this new technology to fuel people’s interest in it. Although these events did not directly aim to promote subscribership, considering their impact on their participants as well as those who read about them in the media or heard about them by word of mouth, they must also have had some promotional appeal in the long run.

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16 For more detailed information about these events, see Asahi Shinbun Hyakunenshi Henshū linkai, ed. 1995d, 358–409.  
18 Founded in 1915 by *Ōsaka asahi shinbun* and *Tōkyō asahi shinbun*.  
19 Launched in 1924 by *Ōsaka mainichi shinbun* and *Tōkyō nichichi shinbun*.  
21 Sakata 2002, 162–175.  
22 On various media events held by newspapers, general magazines, radio stations, and the like between
Just like nation-wide newspapers, quality magazines also organized events on a massive scale. The most successful examples were the lectures by internationally famous people that were sponsored by *Kaizō*. The magazine invited Bertrand Russell in 1921 and Margaret Higgins Sanger Slee and Albert Einstein in 1922 to present lectures in various cities around the country. The magazine issues featuring these individuals and their lectures sold well. Of these, the New Year issue of 1923 entitled “Einstein Special Issue” recorded astronomical sales.\(^{23}\) In a sense, these massive media events organized by “serious” periodicals such as national newspapers and quality magazines anticipated the similarly large-scale events that would later be sponsored by interwar women’s magazines, such as *Shufu no tomo*’s invitation of Helen Keller to Japan for various lectures and talks in 1937.

“Serious” interwar periodicals also adopted some of the accessible, new editing strategies, if not so extensively or as regularly as popular women’s magazines of the time did. For example, round-table talks and supplements in particular were preferred even by quality magazines such as *Chūō kōron* and *Kaizō*. In 1934, Tosaka observed, “the round-table talk is rampant among all the magazines and the newspapers” (1937, 342). Likewise, seeing the competition among the New Year issues of quality magazines in 1935, critic Sugiyama Heisuke lamented:

> One can see “special prices” and “supplements” as usual. […] Even so-called “quality magazines” such as *Chūō kōron* and *Kaizō* seemed not to be able to resist using them. (1935/1934, 11)

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1877, when the first National Industrial Exhibition was held, until 1945, the end of WWII, see papers included in Tsuganezawa, ed. 1996.

\(^{23}\) Yokoyama 1966, 15.
“Home Section” in the Newspaper

In the newspaper, such accessible editing strategies were most intensively and consciously employed in the “Home Section (katei-ran or katei-men)” or “Women’s Section (fujin-ran or fujin-men).” Indeed, the newspaper was one of the first periodicals to pay attention to domesticity. Ōsaka mainichi shinbun, for example, inserted a “home section” (katei-ran) entitled “Homemaker’s bookmark” (Katei no shiori) as early as March 6, 1898. This was preceded by almost a decade by Saga shinbun with its serialized article on child-raising. Still, from the end of the 19th century to the early 20th century, such newspaper columns on homemaking were allotted only several lines or so. It was only after mass-market women’s magazines became popular during the interwar period that newspapers started treating the home section seriously as a promotional tool. The first newspaper to expand this section was Yomiuri shinbun. In 1926, the new president of the newspaper, Shōriki Matsutarō, invited specialists who had already established their careers as popular writers in women’s magazines to join the section’s editorial board. The main purpose of this new effort was to extend readership and save the foundering company. Noticing Yomiuri’s success, other major newspapers such as Tōkyō asahi shinbun and Ōsaka mainichi shinbun also included or extended their own home sections.

The contents of the sections were quite similar to those of mass-market women’s magazines. The chief editor of Yomiuri’s home section, Hirano Matenrō maintained that diversity

24 Kawashima 1996, 60. Ishikawa Takeyoshi, the founder of Shufu no tomo, later recalled that a newspaper in Sendai, Kahoku shinpō, had included a “Home Section (katei-ran)” that consisted of a boxed article featuring readers’ contributions on subjects such as domestic chores, child-raising, make-up, and medicines. This was one of the printed materials that inspired him to enter the publishing industry (Shufu no Tomosha, ed. 1967, 41).
27 “Matenrō” is a Japanese translation of “skyscrapers,” especially those in New York. Thus, his pseudonym implies his inclination toward or obsession with American journalism and American-style modernity.
in the home section was necessary to prevent an impression of tedium and to continuously attract readers. The themes he mentioned as suitable for the section were as follows: women’s thoughts; aspects of contemporary society; women’s liberation; critical analysis of hot issues both domestic and international; investigations about beauty, hairstyle, and fashion; leisure and entertainment; handicrafts; gardening; cooking; improvement of lifestyle; child-raising, medical and sanitary affairs; history of women’s fashion; women’s lifestyles abroad; female students; practical issues for housewives; science in the home; surveys of department stores; studies on the kitchen and consumer culture; and serialized readings (1930, 6–8). Though some of these sections were entitled “women’s sections,” the targeted readership was not restricted to women, just as women’s magazines at the time were not aimed exclusively at female readers. According to Hirano, the home section (at least that of Yomiuri) was edited so as to invite “all family members to enjoy at ease whenever they wish” (1930, 13). It should be noted that Hirano insisted that the section concerning “home” inevitably attracted not only women but also men, who were, after all, “co-managers of the home” (1930, 3). Thus, elevating the home section to a featured page in newspapers served not only to attract female readers; it was meant, in the end, to make the newspaper as a whole more inclusive or “democratic” by attracting all kinds of people. Hirano’s remarks on editing strategies and the target readership of the newspaper’s home section reminds us of Shufu no tomo’s editing policies set by Ishikawa, which was mentioned in the previous chapters.

One of the most popular features of the home section was the “advice column” (minoue sōdan). Letters from supposedly ordinary readers asking experts for advice appeared regularly in the newspapers and provided their readers with themes for light (sometimes serious) conversation in everyday life, some of which stimulated debates across the entire nation. At the same time, this column also caused a lot of controversy. For instance, a letter from an agonized woman who had got
pregnant after being raped by a robber aroused readers’ curiosity through its shock value. The advice column of the *Yomiuri shinbun* was so popular that one of its advisers, Yamada Waka, became the target of mockery at lunch or break times among white-collar office workers in Marunouchi. She was rumored to have been the model for the character of a judgmental advice column commentator in the serialized novel “Three Families” (*San katei*) by popular novelist Kikuchi Kan, which also appeared in the *Yomiuri shinbun*. When the novel was dramatized for the stage and the actor (female impersonator) Eitarō played her role, the audience, reminded of Yamada, burst into laughter. This anecdote epitomizes how widely the newspaper advice column was read by a range of different people.

Advice columns in newspapers were quite similar to human interest stories in mass-market women’s magazines. In fact, as contemporary critic Chiba Kameo has pointed out, while the advice columns may have started in vulgar “small newspapers” (*koshinbun*) in Tokyo, it was women’s magazines that first turned them into one of their features in the 1920s, stimulated by the success of human interest articles such as confessional stories. Thus, in a sense, newspaper home sections with various features on domesticity including advice columns in the 1930s were an adaptation of efforts made by women’s magazines in the 1920s.

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28 For episodes appearing in the advice column of the *Yomiuri shinbun* of this time, including the rape-by-robber story, see Katarogu Hausu, ed. 2002.
29 She was also one of the regular commentators for mass-market women’s magazines including *Shufu no tomo*.
31 Sugiyama 1935e, 369.
32 According to Chiba, *Miyako shinbun* was the first newspaper among existing papers to include an advice column (1933, 132). Okino Iwasaburō recalled that, as early as 1910, *Tōkyō mainichi shinbun* already had such a column (1933, 130). *Tōkyō mainichi shinbun* was originally published as *Yokohama mainichi shinbun* in 1879, and was the first daily newspaper in Japan. As a result of worsening business conditions, it became a subsidiary of *Hōchi shinbun* in 1909 and later was further absorbed by *Teito nichi nichī shinbun* in 1940. Thus, the *Tōkyō mainichi shinbun* of that era was completely different from today’s *Mainichi shinbun*, whose main predecessor in Tokyo is *Tōkyō nichi nichī shinbun*. On the development of various newspapers in modern Japan including *Tōkyō mainichi shinbun*, see Yamamoto Taketoshi (1978). On the small newspaper in the Meiji Era, see Tsuchiya 2002.
33 Chiba 1933, 133.
As shown above, the various attempts by interwar magazines to achieve more accessible articles and to promote circulation were not limited to popular women’s magazines of the day. Nor were they practiced only by popular magazines. Rather, they were tested, in varying degrees, by diverse periodicals, including “serious” ones. Therefore, it would be safe to say that the democratization or modernization of print media in Japan was not brought about entirely by the women’s magazine alone, but rather by various contemporary periodicals, or through their mutual influences. Meanwhile, the periodical genre that most extensively adopted and most drastically developed new editing and promoting strategies would be the popular women’s magazine. Democratized and accessible strategies, were, then, a result of the inevitable course of print media development in modern society.

The Controversies over Interwar Mass-Market Women’s Magazines

Criticism of the Interwar Mass-Market Women’s Magazine

In spite of their appearance in a broad range of media, contemporary intellectuals did not problematize democratizing strategies as a corollary of the natural development of print culture. Instead, they criticized these methods as “ways of women’s magazines.” Sugiyama Heisuke is one of those who repeatedly complained that the majority of periodicals were becoming too much like

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34 In fact, these features were observed not only in periodicals, but in diverse print media including books. For instance, in 1926, when Kaizōsha started subscription sales of the first one-yen anthology series of modern Japanese literature, it conducted a massive advertising campaign by chartering 15 taxis to solicit subscriptions all around and near Tokyo and providing booksellers with special banners and happi-coats (short jackets) with the publisher’s logo on them for publicity (Matsubara 2000). These one-yen literature collection series were to be called “enpon” ([one] yen books) and are sometimes translated into English as Japanese “dime novels” or “penny dreadfuls.” However, unlike American dime novels or British penny dreadfuls, Japanese one-yen book anthologies included not only popular literature, but also “serious” literary works. In fact, the founder of Kaizōsha, Yamamoto Sanehiko, was persuaded to inaugurate this series by Kimura Ki, who insisted on publishing a Japanese equivalent of the “Harvard Classics,” originally published in 1909 as “Dr. Eliot’s Five-Foot Shelf” (Kimura Ki 1967/1938, 4–25).
women’s magazines. Observing that most magazines’ New Year issues in 1935 (published in December 1934) included “enough supplements to compete with women’s magazines” for the purpose of attracting more readers, he cynically poked fun at general magazines by suggesting, “How about quality magazines’ starting a supplement competition against each other?”35 It would appear that, to him, supplements were not simply a generic strategy to increase readership; they were a promotional method specifically to be used by “women’s magazines.”

Aono Suekichi expressed a similar observation to Sugiyama’s in a more direct manner in his analysis of the history of magazine culture.

With its thorough commercialism, its concomitant sensory stimulation, entertainment aspects, and “practicality,” the women’s magazine […] recently came to hold sufficient power to lead, in a sense, magazine culture. One can observe, for example, that even major general magazines and newspapers have adopted such methods used by women’s magazines to one degree or another. (Aono 1933, 9)

It is noteworthy that many contemporary critics36 regarded new editorial and promotional methods as “those of women’s magazines,” even though other kinds of periodicals also employed them. Why did critics furrow their brows at the introduction of such “bad habits of women’s magazines”? Why did women’s magazines emerge as the sole target of their criticism? At an empirical level, this phenomenon suggests that it was precisely mass-market women’s magazines that most effectively developed and most extensively deployed novel democratic methods in editing

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35 Sugiyama 1935/1934, 18–19.
36 In addition to those cited in this study, such criticisms include the following: Takashima 1922, 55; Yamakawa 1922, 158; Akita 1927, 70; Chiba et al. 1928, 104, 106; Nii 1930, 105–107; Nii 1931, 272–277; Kimura 1933/1930, 175–176, 193–196; Aono 1933, 9; Ōya 1959/1929, 189–190; Ōya 1959/1934, 192–195; Ōya 1959/1935, 203–204; Ōya 1935, 5–22; Tosaka 1937, 342–349.
and promotion. At the discursive level, however, this suggestion requires further analysis. When we scrutinize the underlying logic proffered to support such criticism of women’s magazines, we are able to find what was at stake in these arguments, which, in turn, will shed light on the special characteristics of the democratization of print culture in Japan.

**Exclusive Condemnation of Popular Women’s Magazines**

As stated above, many critics condemned popular women’s magazines, which attracted a wide range of readers, including men. This does not mean, however, that these critics blamed all women’s magazines; nor did they insist on restricting the practice of reading only to men or to highly educated people. For example, some made nostalgic references to old women’s magazines, such as *Katei zasshi*, or the early *Fujin kōron*, both of which had male readers as well as female. In a round-table article on women’s magazines, novelist Satō Haruo favorably recalled how the already defunct *Katei zasshi*[^37] (which he evaluated as a “good magazine”) was read by both sexes in the Meiji period.[^38]

This [= *Katei zasshi*] was an attempt to produce a substantial family magazine. It was read of course by women, but also by men, as family heads. Indeed, it was a substantial, good magazine. However, it did not sell well and folded (Chiba et al. 1928, 104).

Critic Kimura Ki left similar positive comments on *Jogaku sekai*, which, unlike later women’s

[^37]: *Katei zasshi* was a magazine published from September 1892 to July 1909 by a famous socialist, Sakai Toshihiko. It was originally published by Yuibunsha in 1903, then later, by Katei Zasshisha, and Heimin Shobō. This is a completely different periodical from another magazine with the same title, *Katei zasshi*, published by Tokutomi Sohō at Katei Zasshisha from September 1892 to August 1898 (Muta 1992, 133).

[^38]: Chiba et al. 1928, 104.
magazines, included many articles attracting the interest of both sexes.\textsuperscript{39}

As we have already seen in Chapter Two, from around the time of the foundation of Fujin sekai in 1906, the custom of men reading women’s magazines gradually diminished. Nevertheless, it still remained, if only to a limited extent, even in the interwar period. Hanzawa Seiji, an editor of Fujin kōron at that time, proudly wrote that more than one third of the readers of that magazine were men before the magazine started including popular articles such as those on films in a similar manner to that of the mass-market women’s magazine.\textsuperscript{40} Thus, some women’s magazines actually gained fame even among critics and attracting male subscribers was considered the sign of a good magazine.

Not all changes developed or introduced by women’s magazines were condemned. In fact, during the 1910s and early 1920s Fujin kōron did inaugurate attempts to treat themes such as romantic love, marriage, and friendship between men and women in new ways. These were themes that had been regarded for a couple of decades as feminine, thus, “low” topics that should not be dealt with in quality magazines, which Fujin kōron was considered to be. With the November 1919 issue, Fujin kōron started offering a forum involving both sexes that allowed both female and male readers to submit their opinions to a “Free Forum” (jiyū rondan). Formerly, it was mostly male readers who were invited to participate in such public discussions in quality periodicals. Despite these novel strategies, the magazine was not criticized by the intellectuals.\textsuperscript{41} Rather, it earned a reputation as a “fairly sophisticated magazine (warai kōshōna zasshi)\textsuperscript{42}” or an “ideal magazine (riskōteki no zasshi)\textsuperscript{43}” among intellectuals. It should be noted, however, that this effort by Fujin kōron to include both sexes in the magazine community had already been anticipated by Shufu no

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item Kimura 1933/1930, 194. Ogawa (1962, 69–70) also made the same observation. See Chapter Two of this dissertation.
\item Hanzawa 1986, 67.
\item Frederick (2006, 88) also aptly pointed out the magazine’s creation of a forum that was open to both sexes.
\item Tokuda Shūsei in Chiba et al. 1928, 105.
\item Naimushō keihokyoku 1929, x–26.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
tomo, if in a somewhat different style.

Now, it should be noted that these innovations by *Fujin kōron* were attempts executed *within* the “standard” quality magazine format. Although the inclusion of domestic issues and inviting female readers to participate in open debates were indeed new additions to the quality magazine after the gender division among magazine genres became established, *Fujin kōron* still deployed a formal style of discussion and a detached mode of writing that was characteristic of existing “general” magazines. In *Fujin kōron*, these so-called “light” topics were discussed “seriously,” as topics worthy of social debate, but not in a “light” or accessible manner as the expression of contributors’ personal experiences and feelings, as was seen in popular women’s magazines. Moreover, unlike its mass-market counterpart, the magazine continued to feature articles on themes that were conventionally considered to be “masculine,” “public” and “refined,” such as philosophy, politics, economics, history, international relations, belles-lettres, and so on. In addition, early *Fujin kōron* had a policy not to include confessional stories, interviews, popular serialized novels with an abundance of illustrations, or articles on movie stars, all of which were typical features of mass-market women’s magazines. In this way, until the late 1920s *Fujin kōron* was more like women’s magazines of the Meiji era, which employed formal editorial styles and inclined toward serious topics in order to cater to the interests of both male and female intellectuals, than it was to its contemporary popular women’s magazines, which were fully democratized in terms of both the themes it dealt with and the editing style to attract a wider range of readers.

**Labeling and Belittling New Strategies as “Feminine”**

Critics of this period, then, did not just cling to the rigid, fossilized magazine styles of the previous period. Nonetheless, in their eyes, changes were to be made within the format of the male-oriented quality magazine. This theory is supported by the fact that the expansion of readership of
general magazines to less-educated people was not condemned among critics. As historian Nagamine Shigetoshi revealed in his study on readership in interwar Japan, *Kaizō*, *Chūō kōron*, and *Fujin kōron* had some less-educated readers, especially after reducing their price.\(^{44}\) With the launch of its drastic price reduction from 80 sen to 50 sen—the same price as the average mass-market women’s magazine—from its February 1927 issue onwards, *Kaizō* expanded its readership beyond the elite readers it had originally targeted. As a consequence, at a certain newspaper company, everyone “including a 16- or 17-year-old assistant [was] holding a 50-sen *Kaizō* under his/her arm.”\(^{45}\) One such reader, Takai Toshio, a female worker (*jokō*) at a fabric factory, recalled her encounter with *Kaizō*, stating: “It was my first time to read such a difficult book, so it was too hard for me to understand the contents, but I read it every day again and again.”\(^{46}\) As far as my research of major (and semi-) “quality” magazines of the time—including *Kaizō*, *Chūō kōron*, *Bungei shunjū*, *Shinchō* and *Fujin kōron*—is concerned, there seems to have been no criticism of the above-mentioned magazines expanding their reach across class and gender in this way.

Indeed, the expansion of readership of periodicals in general was not problematized in itself. Some critics even expressed their wish for a future when both sexes would read the same periodicals.\(^{47}\) They insisted that “in the world of knowledge, there are no national boundaries, nor sexual boundaries,”\(^{48}\) and thus, “the time would come when both sexes could read the same magazines.”\(^{49}\) The diffusion of readership they dreamed of, however, was based on maintaining quality “general” magazines as the standard magazine format. Thus, whether or not new editorial styles were criticized depended chiefly on which gendered category of magazine format the

\(^{44}\) Nagamine 2001, 161–201  
\(^{45}\) Takahata 1927.  
\(^{46}\) Takai 1981, 35.  
\(^{47}\) Takashima 1922, 61; Yamakawa 1922, 159; and Tokuda et al. 1928, 103, 110.  
\(^{48}\) Yamakawa 1922, 159.  
\(^{49}\) Takashima 1922, 61.
periodical belonged to. If changes in a given magazine reached beyond the format of the “quality magazine,” they could not escape critical reproach.

Therefore, when a mass-market women’s magazine included articles on issues related to the “feminine/private” sphere and expanded its readership to men, critics condemned the magazine for its vulgarity, because the articles were rendered in an oral-oriented colloquial style, were heavily visualized, and included much less serious, abstract discussion in a formal manner. Comparing it to Jogaku sekai, Kimura Ki devalued Fujin sekai because the newer magazine was specifically devoted exclusively to “women’s issues.”

Similarly, Fujin kōron’s gradual shift since 1928 toward a more democratic format that included a movie section, confessional stories, interviews, round-table talks, and heavy visualization in order to increase its readership was severely criticized by intellectuals for its “commercialization” and “lowering of content.”

Differentiation and Classification of Print/Reading Culture

By now it should be obvious that the predominance of the feminine particularly in terms of the editing style in the democratization of Japanese print culture as well as the accompanying changes in reading modes triggered a relentless and unprecedented condemnation of popular women’s magazines in interwar Japan. What, then, was the purpose of criticizing this new print media? Or, more importantly, what kinds of discourses concerning print/reading culture underlay these critical texts?

Maintaining a Hierarchy of Print Culture

The influence of popular women’s magazines on Japanese print/reading culture had

50 Kimura Ki. 1933/1930, 194
51 Nii 1931, 268; Satō Sumiko 1931, 295; Sugiyama 1935/1934, 137; Ōya 1959/1935, 249.
become so remarkable by 1930 that intellectuals could not easily ignore the dominance of these magazines. Critic Ōya Sōichi bluntly observed:

The hegemony of the publishing world has completely shifted from the high-quality magazine like Kaizō and Chūō kōron to these popular magazines [i.e., the women’s magazine and the general popular magazine] […] So-called quality magazines, such as Chūō kōron, Kaizō, Bungei shunjū, Keizai ōrai, and the like, were, from the industrial viewpoint, dethroned in the world of journalism. (1959/1935, 248, 249).

Similarly, Sugiyama Heisuke took “the fact that it is the women’s magazine that has the largest circulation in Japan today” to be the epitome of “the extraordinary expansion of the power of women in journalism.” According to him, the advice column boom among newspapers was one such phenomenon.\(^{52}\)

Still, even when critics admitted the conspicuous influence of mass-market women’s magazines in the publishing world, they habitually put the women’s magazine in a lower position than the general magazine. The following remarks by critic Aono Suekichi are typical of such views. According to Aono, whereas the popular women’s magazine achieved “the power to lead magazine culture” and even to influence the editing style of general magazines and newspapers, one should still consider the magazine genre to be “of secondary importance.”

In the development of Japanese magazine culture, the women’s magazine emerged a decade later [than the pioneering modern magazines]. […] and there is no doubt that this magazine genre should be of secondary importance. Nevertheless, its thorough

\(^{52}\) Sugiyama 1935/1934f, 455–456.
commercialism, and its accompanying sensational stimulation, entertaining and ‘practical’
characteristics, have achieved the power to lead magazine culture, in a sense. For example,
one can observe that even major general magazines and newspapers have adopted methods
of the women’s magazine to a varying degree. What a hell of an influence [this magazine
genre has had], compared to the old days of Jogaku zasshi! (1993, 9)

Likewise, while admitting the power of the women’s magazine as “one of the most powerful sectors
in commercialism” with its “odd significance,” Sugiyama Heisuke continued to regard the general
magazine as “the king of the magazine world.” In this way, in his numerous commentaries on print
culture and journalism of the time, he never failed to maintain a hierarchy of magazine categories,
placing the general magazine on top and the popular magazine, including the women’s magazine, at
the bottom.

Critics rationalized their devaluation of magazines by condemning the “light” content,
such as confessional stories, interviews, round-table talks, and articles about movie stars, of the mass-
market women’s magazine. They insisted that the contents of the women’s magazine were “vulgar”
and “too commercialized and entertainment-oriented.” Consequently, they criticized this

54 Sugiyama 1935/1934b, 121.
55 Such binary opposition of “high” general magazines and “low” women’s magazines can be observed
in the following essays, that is, most of the magazine-related commentaries: Koizumi 1922, 156; Akita
1927, 69; Chiba et al. 1928, 105, 112, 114–115; Hiratsuoka 1928, 82–84; Naimushō Keihokyoku 1929,
Sugiyama 1935/1934c, 132–137; Sugiyama 1935/1934d, 138–145; Ōya 1959/1935a, 5–22; Ōya

It is telling that the similar resistance against and contemptuous attitude toward the democratization
or popularization of editing style can be found concerning the editorial changes outside of magazines
in the women’s page (“fujin-men”) of contemporary newspapers. For instance, Hirano Matenrō, the chief
editor of the “Women’s Section” in Yomiuri shinbun, self-mockingly wrote as follows: “There would be
no job as difficult, troublesome, and socially disrespected as editor of the Women’s Section in a
newspaper” (Hirano 1930, 2). In this way, while emphatically promoting the “Women’s Section (“fujin-
men or fujin-ran”)” (also called “Home Section/katei-men or katei-ran”) to increase subscribership,
editors of such sections did not seem to be proud of their jobs. It is very suggestive that such a
magazine genre for its lack of “serious” content.

Chiba: Of course, practical knowledge about domestic chores or child-raising is important. But, unless women’s magazines include much more philosophical, political, or legal content, they cannot improve the knowledge or position of the women who read such magazines so much and so intensely (Chiba et al. 1928, 105)

Tokuda: I agree that the level of women’s magazines is very low. Particularly it is low in terms of philosophy and so on. […] They should be simplified a bit more and should insert more cultural material. In these regards, the women’s magazine is not artistic. (Chiba et al. 1928, 104, 122)

Chiba: Contemporary women’s magazines are teaching readers about technology and science, but not about politics, economics, or women’s social or philosophical issues. If they improve in these regards, these magazines might be elevated as a whole. (Chiba et al. 1928, 120)

Also, some denounced women’s magazines for not being scientific or even as practical as they proclaimed themselves to be, referring to their drug advertisements and readers’ submissions about their personal experiences with folk medicines.  

contradictory phenomenon that media studies scholar Hayashi Kaori called “a paradox that the periphery of Japanese newspaper industry leads to popularity” (Hayashi 2007, 265) can be observed already in interwar Japan. Thus, the discursive position of “Women’s (Home) Sections” and that of women’s magazines share the same gap between their popularity and their lack of respect, being put at the bottom of the hierarchical order of sections/periodicals.

56 Chiba et al 1928, 105, 109; Yamakawa 1930, 112; Nii 1931, 275.
Given such a hierarchical view of the different magazine genres, it was natural for critics to imagine a gradual “evolution” from a “low” popular women’s magazine style to a “high” quality magazine style. In their view, the feminine/private magazine mode should ultimately become extinct, while the masculine/public style should maintain its hegemony over print culture.

Thus, as things gradually develop, the time will eventually come when there is no need for the so-called women’s magazine. The evolution and improvement of women’s knowledge, taste, and belief can only be realized when both men and women read the same magazines. (Takashima 1922, 61)

Satō: A woman who is looking for knowledge in a true sense can simply read magazines for men, without relying on those for women. (Chiba et al 1928, 100)

Miwada: As long as knowledge is divided into two parts, one for men and the other, women, it means that women will occupy the low position [in society]. As time goes by and things evolve, the same knowledge will be shared by both sexes. (Chiba et al. 1928, 103) 57

Marxist thinkers also held an evolutionist view of print culture. 58 While they disagreed as to the stage that Japanese women’s magazines currently occupied, 59 they all agreed that these entertainment periodicals would develop from “feudalist” through “bourgeois commercialist” or

57 One should note that at other times Miwada also insists on the coexistence of women’s magazines and other magazine genres (Chiba et al. 192, 117).
58 Murofuse 1922; Yamakawa 1922; Yamakawa 1928; Yamakawa 1930; Hayasaka 1930, 115–119; Kishiyama 1930, 163–180.
59 Murofuse (1922) claimed that contemporary Japanese women’s magazines had reached the transition from a feudal ideology to a bourgeois one, whereas Kishiyama (1930), Hayasaka (1930) and Yamakawa (1922, 1928, 1930) saw them as the embodiment of bourgeois commercialism.
“sensationalist” to “proletarian.” After all, in Marxist arguments too, mass-market women’s magazines were positioned at the lowest phase of the evolution of print culture. Considering such low evaluations of the content of women’s magazines, their editors’ repeated emphasis on the “sophistication” “cultivation” and “practicality (usefulness)” of their magazines might well have been attempts to avoid the denomination of their various components as “light” entertainment.

**Democratization of Print Culture and Gender**

It should be noted that while they were condemning women’s magazines for their “low” taste, many intellectuals revealed their fear of mass-market women’s magazines’ dominance over reading culture as well. For instance, soon after sarcastically encouraging high-quality magazines to introduce more intensive use of supplements to achieve better sales, Sugiyama Heisuke disclosed his real worry as follows: “Should the readers of so-called ‘quality magazines’ be seduced by supplements, the contemporary world would be too brutally frank.”

The following conversation between two intellectuals exemplifies the bewilderment, resignation, and irritation among intellectuals concerning the drastic change that was occurring in reading culture.

Miwada: In my opinion, in the near future, the time will inevitably come when the women’s magazine will need to change its overall attitude. I mean, if the women’s magazine becomes more sophisticated.

Chiba: Then, as a consequence, magazines for men would sell much less, wouldn’t they?

Miwada: Well, they may well not sell as much as now… (Chiba et al. 1928, 115)

60 Murofuse 1922, 160–161; Hayasaka 1930, 119.
Their logical assumptions about the future of the publishing world inevitably lead to the conclusion that the women’s magazine will likely become the basic template for the magazine in general. Yet, neither of them seems to accept the idea that “magazines for men,” which are sometimes referred to as “compilations of lectures,” might be supplanted by women’s magazines, which might be considered compilations of miscellaneous gossip, even if they may include some more editorials on “serious” issues.

Likewise, in the above round-table talk, when writer, editor, and critic Nakamura Murao took up the issue of the potential for the women’s magazine to supersede “economically unsustainable patients (keizai-teki niha sonzai dekinai byōnin),” namely, loss-generating “general” magazines such as Kaizō and Chūō kōron, and, instead, become a good venue for literary works including “high-quality” ones, other participants in the talk firmly rejected this idea, saying, “there is no sign [of such a possibility] at all,” for, they insisted, artists should publish their work not in “women’s magazines or entertainment magazines containing indecent components,” but that as pioneers of culture they should publish in “high-quality magazines,” even if they have to “resign themselves to poverty.” These dialogues suggest a correlation between the hierarchization of periodicals and literary works, that is, a differentiation between artistic “pure literature” and vulgar “popular literature” or “mass literature.” Here again, while reluctantly recognizing the power of mass-market women’s magazines, intellectuals still made desperate attempts to devalue them and maintain the status of general magazines as the standard of print culture.

In order to maintain the hierarchy of print culture, intellectuals persistently classified

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62 Satō Haruo’s phrasing (Chiba et al. 1928, 115).
63 Citations are the comments of Chiba Kameo, Satō Haruo, and Tokuda Shūsei in Chiba et al. 1928, 114, 115.
64 One should not forget that the genealogy and nuances of “popular literature” and “mass literature” are not identical. Suzuki Sadami 1994; Frederick 2006, Chapter 1.
categories of magazine genres by criticizing the “lowly” “vulgar” taste of the popular women’s magazine. As we have already seen in Chapter Two, the decade around the 1890s was a turning point when the division between the feminine and the masculine in magazine content intensified, followed by a similar gender separation in their formats. Since then, topics related to private life, such as love, domestic chores, child-raising, fashion, and family life, came to be considered as “lower” and “less serious” than the masculine themes related to philosophy, politics, economics, arts, and the like. The new editing and promoting strategies developed among “feminized” women’s magazines, such as the intensive use of a colloquial writing style, its concomitant development of orality-oriented article genres including interviews and round-table-talks, heavy use of visuals such as illustrations and photos, flashy advertising methods across media, and tie-ups with other industries. In the interwar period, however, the now mass-market women’s magazines dealing with such “lowly” private/feminine issues in “vulgar” editing styles started attracting even the intellectuals (and the males), who were supposed to be reading more “masculine,” “serious,” and, “high-quality” general magazines. The reaction of intellectuals against these popular women’s magazines reveals the subversive impact this periodical genre had on the publishing world.

**Maintaining a Hierarchy of Reading Culture**

By extension, critics also hierarchized modes of reading, which were also severely affected by the new formats and contents of print media, namely, the mass-market women’s magazine. In their view, reading should ideally be practiced with the goal of enlightening readers and improving society in terms of both knowledge and spirit. This is also related to their view of the role of magazines as an intellectual as well as a spiritual guide for readers.\(^{65}\)

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\(^{65}\) In addition to the critics mentioned in this chapter, additional commentaries defining the function of reading as a means of improving culture, education and taste can be found in Takashima 1922, 56, 58–59; Koizumi 1922, 156; Yamakawa 1922, 157; Chiba et al. 1928, 105–106, 120–122 (comments by
[Although they are commercial companies,] publishers cannot be discussed on the same level as speculators, for their products promote cultural improvement. (Takashima 1922, 56)

Today’s women have two ways to feed their minds: one is through school education, and the other is by intellectual training through newspapers and magazines. (Yamakawa 1922, 157)

Accordingly, critics disparaged the practice of reading in spare time for pleasure or relaxation and denounced the type of content that promoted such a reading style as low-taste and vulgar. A round-table talk entitled “Critical Discussion on the Women’s Magazine (Fujin zasshi no hihankai)” appearing in the June 1928 issue of Shinchō even included as an item on the agenda “whether it is alright for the women’s magazine to offer readers practical information as a sideline to providing leisure or entertainment, or whether it should rather have as its primary mission to educate and lead women.”

Even those who did recognize the importance of the habit of reading for recreation did not entirely dismiss the enlightening function of reading. For instance, in the above-mentioned round-table talk in Shinchō. Miyake Yasuko, Miwada Motomichi, and Nakamura Murao all showed some understanding of the mass-market women’s magazine, pointing out that women or people living in the countryside who were busy and had little leisure might well need entertaining and easy-to-read

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Chiba, Miyake, Miwata, Tokuda, and Satō); Nakamura 1928, 9–11; Naimushō Keihokyoku 1929, x–27; Chiba 1930, 93; Nii 1930, 107; Yamakawa 1930, 112–113; and Tosaka 1937, 342–349.
66 Chiba et al. 1928, 120.
women’s magazines. Nakamura even insisted, recognizing the entertaining function of the magazine in general, that “not only the women’s magazine, but most magazines have as their raisons d’être the purpose of offering a source of interest or entertainment to their readers.” Still, none of them could entirely discard their expectations that popular women’s magazines should provide guidance to their readers.

Miwada: In any case, I would like the publishers—that is, the so-called capitalists—to reflect on their projects so as to improve women as much as possible. (Chiba et al. 1928, 109)

Miyake: [In response to Tokuda and Miwada’s statements that there is a need to introduce real liberalism into the educational world, because a stodgy atmosphere is still infecting girls’ schools:] In that respect, students at rigid girls’ schools in the countryside are in a sense relieved by the women’s magazine [with its liberal way of thinking]. (Chiba et al. 1928, 121)

Enterprises with cultural significance, such as newspapers or women’s magazines, should play a leading role in shaping the readers’ psyche, which is desultory like the wind. (Nakamura 1928, 10)

Likewise, while Ōya Sōichi did not completely deny reading as a leisure activity, he was, after all, not so different from other critics in expecting practical merits from reading as education

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67 Chiba et al. 1928, 103, 122. Satō Haruo acknowledged the entertaining elements of these magazines, but nevertheless criticized their “low” quality (Chiba et al. 1928, 104, 122).
68 Chiba et al. 1928, 119.
Reading is important not only as a means of cultivation and a weapon of life, but it is also the soundest form of entertainment. Although the popular magazine and the women’s magazine are not necessities for life, their cost performance as a simple leisure activity is much better than watching plays or movies, not to mention visiting geisha houses or café bars. Besides, this leisure activity of reading is not pure consumption, but rather always involves some sort of counter-performance, and thus is, indeed, worthwhile. (Ōya 1959/1936, 205)

Thus, their condemnation of women’s magazines derived from the fact that they saw the standard of an ideal magazine style as that of the general magazine, and regarded “attentive reading” as the norm. Reading, these critics claimed, should be a practical activity that cultivated one’s mind and sentiment, but should not to have as its goal to purposely relax oneself, let alone merely to kill time.

**Reader Trouble: Maintaining a Hierarchy of Readers**

Criticism of leisure reading went further and its target often shifted from the magazines themselves to their readers, particularly female ones. Critics blamed readers of women’s magazines for helping such a “bad” reading habit to spread, as the following assertion by writer and critic Miyake Yasuko shows: “Some magazines are second-rate; it suggests that their readers are second-rate.” Sometimes this logic is reversed: people with low taste read popular women’s magazines,

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69 One can find similar comments on this issue in another essay by Ōya, “Jūnarizumu to tokumei hyōron” (1935, 255).

70 Chiba et al. 1928, 102.
therefore such low quality magazines exist.\footnote{A similar sliding scale of logic can be observed in contemporary criticism of \textit{Kingu} and its readers. In creating such a scale, these critics formed the binary concepts of “mass reader” and “intellectual readers” (Nagamine 1997, 27–30; Satō Takumi 2002, 26–65).} The ranking among magazines and reading styles carried over to that of “levels” of readers.

Miwada: Since the majority of women are still unrefined, the magazines [they read] become unrefined. (Chiba et al 1928, 100)

Chiba: \textit{Fujin no tomo} is still decent now. \textit{Fujin kōron} used to be good, too. But such lofty magazines don’t sell. I guess that shows how low women are. (Chiba et al. 1928, 105)

The stratification of readers according to their taste or what they read is a practice often observed among critics, including Marxists. Yamakawa Kikue’s observation of “levels” of readers, for instance, clearly reveals the ranking of readers in her mind.

[As for what ordinary working class people read,] I don’t know exactly, but they don’t buy [women’s magazines] in the first place. They won’t even read a newspaper. […] They could read a few pages, but they don’t have the patience to read any longer reading materials. […] Yet, unlike bourgeois young ladies, people with some talent among the working class develop quickly by leaps and bounds and become able to read and write difficult ideas. But, currently, ordinary working class people are beyond redemption. (Chiba et al. 1928, 108)\footnote{Looking back at reading culture before WWII, Ōya Sōichi wrote in 1955 that, in those days, one could use what people read as a measure of their intellectual level; there were readers of “general magazines that were compilations of difficult to read university professors’ papers, or at least were obscurely written with no effort to make them readable”; there were readers of \textit{Kingu}; and those of \textit{Ie}
Yamakawa observed “bourgeois young ladies” usually read “capitalist” popular women’s magazines, while taking left-wing general magazines and books as the most advanced readings. The hierarchy she assumed is, thus, obvious: those without the habit of reading, readers of popular women’s magazines, ordinary newspapers, and those of Marxist general magazines and books, in ascending order of significance.

Some contemporary critics presented more openly their contempt for women, blaming them for the “low level” of the women’s magazine. According to Takashima Beihō (Buddhist critic and educator), Murofuse Kōshin (critic), and Ichikawa Genzō (educator), for example, one could not treat the majority of Japanese women of their day as the equals of men in knowledge and sentiment, and it was these women who were guilty of the prosperity of these vulgar women’s magazines.

Except for a few educated women, most Japanese women today are behind in terms of knowledge and coarse in terms of sentiment; they cannot be compared with men at all. […] Women’s fault for allowing such low-level women’s magazines to exist and prosper is definitely not insignificant. (Takashima 1922, 56, 59)

One could say that women haven’t caught up with the scientific age. Therefore, their instincts are still animalistic. At least, they include significant animalistic elements. […] Thus, women, at least women of the present day, are far behind men. Chatting, showiness, tearful appeals, and such superficial things drive women. (Murofuse 1922, 160)

no hikari. He also pointed out that such a distinction among readers and reading materials was no longer as clear, and reported with some surprise that one could observe among Japanese emigrants in Brazil a clearer difference between those who put on airs by reading Kaizō or Chūō kōron every month versus those who read Kingu and Shufu no tomo (Ōya 1959/1955, 55).
However, since Japanese culture is still at a low level, women do not have the ability to read specialized magazines that men do. As a result, the women’s magazine remains in its old form, a compilation of miscellaneous bits of knowledge. (Ichikawa 1928, 85)

In this way, their criticisms often betrayed their cruelly biased, almost misogynistic view of women. Such a view was not restricted to male intellectuals, but shared by their female counterparts as well. In the following statements, for instance, despite her good intentions to support and empower women, Yamakawa Kikue revealed the fallibility of her judgment of her fellow women when recommending them to behave like male intellectuals in order to achieve gender equality.

Knowledge knows no national boundaries, let alone sexual/gender bounds. […] Therefore, we women should decline special treatment as women in the realm of knowledge. In order to obtain our share of the knowledge necessary to function as human beings as well as members of society, women need to get accustomed to training their brains by wading through quality magazines and books. This very effort is the first step to relieving women psychologically from their state of slavery. (Yamakawa 1922, 159)

Some critics even tried to distinguish themselves from these “lowly readers” by making a special point of clarifying that they did not usually read such magazines themselves even though

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73 Likewise, though in a more calm tone, feminist critic Hiratsuka Raichō (1928, 83) also criticized female readers, holding them responsible for allowing “bourgeois taste (burujowa shumi)” and “commercialism (shōgyō daiichi shugi)” to prevail among popular women’s magazines. For Hiratsuka Raichō and early feminists in Japan, see Sievers 1983; Mackie 2002/1997; Bardsley 2003 and 2007; Tomida 2004; Lowy 2007.
they were discussing them in their writings.\textsuperscript{74}

I am very ignorant about today’s subject, the women’s magazine. (Koizumi 1922, 155)

Needless to say, I do not read the women’s magazines that are so commonly published these days. Nor do I have any desire to read them in the future. In fact, I would go so far as to say that I even think it would be better if no men or women read the numerous women’s magazines in circulation today, especially the popular ones. (Murofuse 1922, 160)

Nii: Actually, I do not usually read women’s magazines, but this time skimmed over them a bit [for this round-table talk]. (Chiba et al. 1928, 98–99)

Even Tosaka, who was attentive to the positioning of women in contemporary Japanese society, considered Japanese female consciousness to be low and believed that it was the cause of the popularity of low-taste women’s magazines.

[That the women’s magazine is vulgar] is of course because the consciousness of Japanese women is low. But that is a result of the low social position of women; that is, because they are put in a lower position in this male-oriented society. (Tosaka 1937, 349) \textsuperscript{75}

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\textsuperscript{74} These critics’ strategy is quite similar to that of intellectuals criticizing popular magazines published from Kōdansha in that they legitimize their superiority to readers of popular (women’s) magazines by differentiating themselves from the “second-class” or “unrefined” audience of such “lowly” periodicals (Nagamine 1997, 27–30; Satō Takumi 2002, 26–65).

\textsuperscript{75} For other commentaries on the “vulgarity” of readers of popular women’s magazines, see Yamakawa 1922, 158; Yamakawa 1928, 77; Chiba et al. 1928, 105 (Miwata’s comment); Nii 1931, 276, 278.
Note that although in the same essay he himself pointed out that women’s magazines were no longer exclusively for women, but rather had become general popular magazines, Tosaka nevertheless problematized only their female readers, not both sexes, when discussing the relationship between the quality of magazines and their readers.

It is worth noting that quite a few critics ascribed this new habit of “seeing” printed matter to “uneducated women,” even though in reality, as they themselves noticed at other times, men and even intellectuals were also readers of women’s magazines. As with cultural phenomena in any modern society, where almost every aspect of socio-cultural norms and order is at some point taken up for reconsideration, it was women who were expected to play the role of “repository” of tradition, to stand for cultural authenticity or purity, and hence, their defaulting upon this perceived duty was severely censured. Thus, it is not unreasonable to interpret the criticism of women’s magazines and their “female readers” as an attempt on the part of certain intellectuals to maintain the established high reading culture as the norm by accusing those who deviated from it.

New Print/Reading Culture Rooted in Everyday Life

Attempts to Overcome the Rigid Hierarchy of Print/Reading Culture

Still, it should not be overlooked that there were some intellectuals who tried to overcome

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76 There were some exceptional cases as well. For instance, Tokuda Shūsei (Chiba et al. 1928, 104) and Tosaka Jun (1937, 343–344) problematized the “vulgarity” of ordinary readers in general, both men and women.


79 One should note that some critics such as Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, Chiba Kameo, and Tokuda Shūsei did not insist on the eventual extinction of women’s magazines by merging into general magazines, while they criticized women’s magazines for their “vulgarity” and postulate rigid hierarchy among periodicals in which these magazines are in the lowest position (Hirabayashi March 1927, 71; Chiba et al. 1928, 102 [Chiba’s comment]; Chiba et al. 1928, 104 [Tokuda’s comment]).
this hierarchical or evolutionist view of print/reading culture by offering an alternative. Writer and critic Miyake Yasuko was one such example. She acknowledged the women’s magazine’s own raison d’être:

Miyake: Isn’t it all right for the women’s magazine to be like the department store? Women [repeat the same kind of work over and over every day, and so they] are able feel good by having just a little bit of change in their lives from browsing these magazines which cost only 50-sen and include various photos and information about fashion. (Chiba et al. 1928, 104, 105, 122)

Social activist and scholar of French literature Komaki Ōmi presented a further insight: he admitted that the women’s magazine was a magazine of its own, with completely different characteristics from general magazines. For this reason, he insisted, rather than becoming extinct in the future, the women’s magazine would spread even among many men.

The reason for the prosperity of today’s women’s magazines is partly due to their “lengthy” novels, but stems mostly from their abundance of practical articles, which is where they differ from the more theoretical male magazines. That is, their popularity lies in their universal practicality. This is why I think the women’s magazine will become a weekly publication [i.e., more frequently than the current monthly format] and will gain many readers among men as well, especially among fathers who have children but no seniors at home. (Komaki 1927, 68)

Nakamura Murao, who often contributed to popular women’s magazines, criticized the
snobbish critics most severely, pointing out the absurdity of classifying and creating hierarchies among magazines. In the above-mentioned round-table talk on the women’s magazine in Shinchō, he insisted that each magazine genre had its own features, and thus could not be simplistically compared with the others and placed one above the other. Like Komaki, Nakamura rejected the evolutionist view of publication history as well as a hierarchy among periodicals, and believed in the harmonious coexistence of different kinds of publications, especially the women’s magazine and the general magazine.

A month later, perhaps unsatisfied with the round-table discussion, Nakamura contributed a long article appearing in two successive issues expressing his own opinion about the women’s magazine. In the essay, he exposed the untenable bias of most condemners of the women’s magazine who categorically wrote off this magazine genre as vulgar without even reading the target of their criticism.

In the first place, it is already wrong to rate whether a magazine is high-quality or not, based on one’s own basic claims. Magazines are magazines, after all. Indeed, some are somewhat decent and others are somewhat vulgar. Yet, there is no such thing as high-quality or low-quality when it comes to magazines. How can one dare to say that Kaizō or Chūō kōron is first-class as opposed to Fujokai or Shufu no tomo? While they are indeed different in their functions or characteristics as magazines, how can one judge which is higher-grade than the other? Aren’t they confusing the [issue of] quality with the level of difficulty? I think it is rather problematic to think that anything that is difficult is high-quality. (Nakamura 1928b, 7)

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80 Chiba et al. 1928, 121.
81 Nakamura 1928a, 15; Nakamura 1928b, 6.
82 See also Nakamura’s comments below, which clearly observed different reading desires among
It seems, however, that critics like him who repudiated a hierarchy in publishing/reading culture remained quite exceptional. Nakamura’s essay did not receive any significant response from intellectual readers of the magazine and the discussion faded away.

**Establishment of a New Print/Reading Culture**

In this way, except for a few cases, intellectuals of both sexes condemned the women’s magazine and its (female) readers and attempted to maintain a “traditional” or “conventional” hierarchy among magazines, which had been established only a few decades earlier. Despite their desperate efforts, nonetheless, this popular magazine genre and the new reading habits that accompanied it seem to have already spread among people of various social and sexual strata, as contemporary surveys of readership as well as reader contributions to the women’s magazine eloquently suggest (see Chapter Two and Chapter Five).

Moreover, it is interesting that some of these critics, if not all, admitted that they themselves enjoyed reading women’s magazines. Komaki Ōmi stated that he found the practical articles about child-raising, seasonal disease, and food in women’s magazines to be very useful.

If one removes the sordid, provocative articles, the women’s magazine is quite full of useful practical components about child-raising, seasonal diseases, or food, which is a daily pleasure for indoor people like us writers. […] I would like the magazine to teach us more tips for every morning such as how to cook rice without burning it, or how to make a tasty

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readers without projecting a judgmental hierarchical evaluation onto them: “Nakamura: However, unlike readers of entertaining magazines and women’s magazines, readers of periodicals such as Fujin kōron, for instance, have more of a thirst for knowledge rather than for ordinary curiosity or entertainment. They have different desires from each other, I think. (Chiba et al. 1928, 120).
miso soup. For men nowadays are sometimes better than women at cooking. (Komaki 1927, 68)

Nakamura Murao even confessed that “women’s magazines were far more enjoyable than *Kaizō* or *Chūō kōron.*”

In terms of my own interest, all magazines—not only the women’s magazine, but also magazines like *Kaizō* or *Chūō kōron*—are equal in their inability to satisfy all of my needs. […] If I were to read magazines [for pleasure], the serialized novels or other articles appearing in the women’s magazine would be far more accessible and pleasurable to read than the boring psychological novels or serious commentaries on current issues appearing in *Kaizō* or *Chūō kōron.* (Nakamura 1928b, 7)

While we need to take the comments of these women’s magazine contributors with some caution, the words of intellectuals such as Nakamura or Komaki at least suggest that a feeling of affinity with and interest in domestic issues—matters in the “female sphere”—as well as magazines dealing with these themes had gradually yet steadily spread even among male intellectuals to some extent. This tells us how deeply rooted the new practice of reading/browsing introduced by this entertainment medium, the popular women’s magazine, had become among various people in prewar Japan. It is quite ironic, then, that the intellectuals’ dream world in which “everyone would read the same periodicals” was realized by the very target of their criticism, the mass-market women’s

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83 See also his following comments: “Reading women’s magazines, I can get, in a sense, numerous materials from which I can learn a lot for my life. I can get entertainment as well as knowledge about various issues concerning everyday life. Maybe I have too many interests, but I find many articles on trends or fashion, cooking, child rearing, and washing in these magazines to be impressive and useful, and I can get knowledge from them that immediately serves my everyday life.” (Nakamura 1928b, 8).
magazine.
Chapter 5: Staged Egalitarianism: “Transparent” Writing System and the Reader’s Involvement in the Magazine Community

Today, anyone opening a Japanese periodical can find numerous elements featuring the voices of the readers: there are round-table discussions among invited readers, interviews with readers, articles dealing with readers’ experiences on certain featured topics, announcements of events for readers, and ads containing user/reader comments on products, not to mention letters. Even ordinary articles usually include the voices of various readers—or ordinary people presented as hypothetical readers of the periodical—a typical technique for a type of article known as the human interest story. Frequently, readers appear as “models” for fashion or lifestyle articles, or as “creators” in publisher-led competitions. While such editorial and promotional strategies are not uncommon outside of Japan, the tendency for Japanese periodicals to involve readers directly in the magazine community might well be one of the most intensive cases in the world.

In fact, efforts to encourage readers to participate in magazine articles or events have a fairly long history in the country: active use of readers’ voices was already evident at the beginning of the 20th century. In what way, then, did this custom emerge and develop in modern Japan? Does the strong emphasis on reader-featured stories and events indicate the empowerment of the reader in the magazine community? How did this editorial and promotional method of focusing on readers change their relationship with editors, professional contributors, and among themselves? What sort of readers’ community was created through the emerging reader-oriented components of the magazines? This chapter will address the transition of the readers’ role in modern Japanese popular periodicals and its interconnectedness with the use of a particular colloquial writing style, which,

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1 If one takes newspapers also into account, this practice can be traced further back to the early Meiji period, though it was first limited to urban areas. On cases of “small newspapers,” see Tsuchiya 2002, Chapter 5.
again, revolved around women’s magazines.

**An Accessible Writing Style and the Reader’s Participation in the Magazine Community**

**Introduction of Colloquial Writing Styles into the Magazine World**

In the early 20th century, as it still is now, accessibility was the key factor in encouraging a great number of readers to get involved in the magazine community by means of contributions or participation in various magazine events. But before they could invite readers to become actively involved in the magazine community, Japanese periodicals were in desperate need of fundamental preparation for this shift through the establishment and diffusion of a colloquial writing system. As in many other places in the world before modernization, pre-modern Japan observed a divide between the spoken language and the written one, although some colloquial terms had made their way into popular literature before the beginning of the Meiji period (1868). Even after political and social modernization was more or less established in the country, this discrepancy between the colloquial and the literary persisted for a while until major colloquial writing systems were officially instituted slightly after the turn of the century.²

Meanwhile, intellectuals used the “Meiji Common Writing (Meiji futsū bun),” a sort of reformed classical writing style widely used in the Meiji era. Though simplified in comparison to its predecessors, this style was still archaic and far from the spoken language, containing numerous literary Sinitic terms and rhetoric, as well as archaic grammatical elements. As a result, most articles in the so-called “first national magazine,” Taiyō (founded in 1895), written in the Meiji Common

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Writing, were likely to be incomprehensible to quite a few citizens, who had almost no opportunity for a traditional formal education based on Japanese and Chinese classical literature.\(^3\) Therefore, it was inevitable that readers of this magazine were limited to a relatively elite community of those who had received secondary or higher education either through modern Western knowledge–based or traditional classical Chinese–(or literary Sinitic–) based institutions. Though designated “the first national magazine,” it was actually limited, then, to these privileged few.

After attempts over several decades, a basic system for colloquial written Japanese was established around 1905, when the government selected two options as the official writing styles to be used in the first national textbooks for elementary schools.\(^4\) Numerous spoken language–based styles that had been tentatively implemented by progressive intellectuals and writers now converged into two kinds, defined by their phrase endings or postpositional particles.\(^5\) The one is the more literary “dalde ara” style, and the other, the more colloquial “desu/masu” style.

The introduction of colloquial styles did not penetrate evenly among the various periodicals. The quickest among periodicals to adopt these colloquial styles for entire issues were magazines for children and those for women. As soon as the two colloquial styles became official, magazines for teenagers started employing them in many of their components, particularly in their reader contributions. According to Iwata Kazumasa, readers’ contributions to a leading boys’ magazine of the time, _Shônen kurabu_, shifted their writing styles from the literary to the colloquial starting in around 1903.\(^6\) Women’s magazines quickly followed suit. They first started to adopt colloquial writing styles with readers’ contributions between 1903 and 1905, followed by other

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\(^3\) Suzuki Sadami (1996) presented the same observation in terms of the difficulty of texts written in such a quasi-classical writing style.

\(^4\) The first national textbooks were compiled between 1903 and 1904, and started to be used at schools in 1904.


articles around 1910. It was not until 1920, when Ōsaka mainichi shinbun first started using the colloquial writing style, that nation-wide newspapers gradually adopted this new style.\(^7\) In the case of the “general” magazine, Taiyō had about 10% of its anonymous articles still written in the archaic Meiji Common Writing even in 1918.\(^8\) Thus, the movement to adopt colloquial styles by women’s magazines preceded general magazines and major national newspapers by about a decade.

**Writing Styles and Gender**

By the end of the 1910s, most periodicals had abandoned the Meiji Common Writing System and instead were using either or both of the two basic colloquial styles. The two major colloquial styles were, however, employed discriminately according to magazine genre. On the one hand, magazines for male intellectuals (i.e., “general” magazines) almost exclusively utilized the “da/de aru” style. This style was invented specifically for the purpose of translating Western texts into Japanese by mixing two postpositional particles, one based on a vulgar or casual speaking style, and the other, a revived literary style that had been obsolete and was almost abandoned by the mid-19th century.\(^9\) Echoing the style’s origin as an artificially resuscitated form often used with abstract terms of Chinese origin, texts written in “da/de aru” style give the reader an impression of detachment. As a result, this style was, and still is, employed in “serious” writings, such as newspaper articles, official documents, academic papers, and the like. Thus, magazines for intellectual men, major national newspapers, and periodicals following these formats, became conspicuous for their use of this detached style as well as for their “serious” or “austere” content, including articles on

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\(^7\) Following a modest attempt by a local supplement for Hyōgo prefecture to change its writing style from a literary to a colloquial one in 1918, Ōsaka mainichi shinbun started to use a colloquial style for a section of translated telegrams from Euroamerica in the morning edition of the October 21, 1920, issue. After that, the newspaper increasingly utilized this new style in other sections, a trend that was in turn followed by other papers (Shashi Hensan Inikai 1952, 209–212).

\(^8\) Suzuki Sadami 1996, 86–91

philosophy, art, economics, politics, and so on.¹⁰

On the other hand, magazines targeting children, teenagers, and women, conspicuously adopted the “desu/masu” style. Unlike the previously described “dalde aru” style, “desu/masu” style was based on an actual form of spoken Japanese used in the Tokyo area at the beginning of the Meiji era, that is, roughly in the latter half of the 19th century. Therefore, the style contains many deictic terms,¹¹ including various ending particles, vocative expressions, and interjections, similar to spoken Japanese.¹² Since texts written in this style were considered to “reflect” the spoken word, the style was also regarded as suitable for components filled with people’s utterances, that is, mostly articles with “light” content concerning private and domestic issues spoken in the featured people’s own words. It was quite natural, then, that texts rendered in this style were likely to lead the reader to feel a strong realistic presence of and some sense of intimacy with their narrators.¹³ By the mid-1910s, magazines for youth and women had become defined by their use of the oral writing style and their “light” content.

It should be noted that such an imbalanced introduction of colloquial styles according to

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¹⁰ Maeshima 2009a.
¹¹ “Any term or expression that refers to the context of an utterance is considered deictic. All terms that point to time, place, speaker, and listener (such as the words ‘now,’ ‘1,’ ‘you,’ ‘there’) are deictic” (Childers 1995, 76). Drawing on but further developing the concept propounded by Charles Sanders Peirce, communication theorist Ishida Hidetaka defines diexis as a word that is both symbolic (where the relation between a signifier and a signified is based on codes), and indexical (where a signifier has a factual connection with its signified) (Ishida 2003, 73). On the close relation between discourse, deixis, and first- and second-person pronouns, see Benveniste 1983/1966–1974, 234–241, 242–252).
¹³ It goes without saying that all utterances are discourses recounted by their narrators, hence, “performative,” as Jacques Derrida, Barbara Herrnstein Smith, and Judith Butler have pointed out, expanding on J. L. Austin’s speech act theory. Thus, constative statements are not as objective as they appear, but rather, are performing the act of making a statement. Still, one can acknowledge a scaled distinction between an utterance of apparently objective expression that conceals the existence of a narrator on the one end, and a relatively more colloquial style that appears to reflect an actual oral utterance, on the other. See J. L. Austin 1975; Derrida 1992 & 1985; B. H. Smith 1980, 209–232; J. Butler 1990 & 1993.
magazine genre was not at all the result of a “natural” course of events. Certainly, women and younger people tend to use colloquial language more frequently than adult men, while desu/masu style is used by both sexes, especially on formal occasions. For one thing, women and youth are more often expected to express their humbleness and respect for the addressee(s), and, for another, they have fewer opportunities than adult men to participate in formal occasions such as presenting political speeches, or writing articles including philosophical contemplations, which require the “da/de aru” style. Yet, one should not forget that any writing style is, however colloquial it may appear, ultimately different from any language spoken in reality.

In this respect, it is notable that, during the development of colloquial styles, the connection between magazine genres and certain styles was not static. For example, until around 1907, it was the general magazine and not women’s magazines that utilized the heavily oral “desu/masu” style. Until this time, a well-known and popular early general magazine, Taiyō, employed three different writing styles, Meiji Common Writing, the detached “da/de aru,” and the more intimate “desu/masu.” While Meiji Common Writing was employed the most, there was no disproportional partiality between the use of the two colloquial styles. The “da/de aru” style was not prominent until 1907 in Taiyō. Similar inconsistency can be observed in the case of the literary magazine, Waseda bungaku. Likewise, until around 1908, the rate of the intimate “da/de aru” style used in women’s magazines was considerably low. Thus, the common explanation of “desu/masu” style as a “writing style used by children and women” because it directly reflected tendencies in their spoken language is inaccurate. Rather, the “common sense” association of a certain writing style with a specific type of user was in fact constructed or reinforced, which, in turn, affected people’s actual ways of speaking.

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14 Suzuki Sadami 1996, 83–101. In a sense, then, which colloquial style was to be used was determined by the attributes of the primary readers. Thus, once magazines were divided according to the age and gender of their target readers, their primary writing styles became fixed correspondingly.
15 Yamamoto Masahide 1971, 533.
16 Miyako Inoue (2006) pointed out a similar phenomenon concerning “schoolgirl speech” in the Meiji
This instability also suggests that still in 1907 a division between the public/serious/male sphere and the private/light/female sphere had not yet been firmly established.

In fact, it appears that contributors to women’s magazines were quite reluctant to introduce colloquialism. Tendencies among the writing styles frequently used by female contributors (for some women’s magazines) suggest their hesitation to employ these new colloquial styles. Observing the considerably large number of articles written in Meiji Common Writing in *Jogaku zasshi* (1885–1904), Izumo Asako infers that female intellectuals who wrote these articles were concerned that their writings might be marked as “feminine,” or “trivialized,” once the colloquial style was introduced; for with introduction of such a new writing style, it would be more likely to be “desu/masu” style than “da/de aru” style that women and children were expected to use, based on a confused conflation of the colloquial writing style and gender as well as an assumption that the colloquial style should be a simple reflection of spoken language. These female intellectuals’ worries reveal the emerging distinction between the public/serious/male sphere and the private/light/female sphere in writing styles.

In the end, their worries became reality. By 1910, the heavily gendered and age-grouped division of magazines by writing style had become fully established. “Serious” periodicals—including male intellectual magazines (or “general” magazines) and nation-wide major newspapers—as well as their later followers including women’s magazines such as *Fujin kōron*—

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17 One exception was the case of the writings of Wakamatsu Shizuko. Wakamatsu, a renowned translator of juvenile literature such as Frances Hodgson Burnett’s *Little Lord Fauntleroy (Shōkōshi, translated between 1890 and 1892)*, which is known as one of the great contributions to the development of the modern colloquial writing style, used mainly English in her essays, for, unlike most of her contemporaries, she had been educated in English at Ferris Jogakkō (Ferris Women’s School, today’s Ferris University). Her husband was Iwamoto Yoshiharu, who was the second president of Meiji Jogakō (Meiji Women’s School) and the founder of *Jogaku zasshi*.

used mainly “dalde aru” style or (though increasingly less frequently) Meiji Common Writing, both attributing “abstract” and “detached” tones to those periodicals. In contrast, other “light” periodicals such as boys’ and girls’ magazines and women’s magazines mostly employed “desu/masu” style for their oral-oriented articles, making them more accessible and friendly to readers, inviting them to submit their own writings to the magazine, connecting the readers through this seemingly “transparent” writing system. Thus, whether a given magazine was “serious” or “light” came to be defined also by its writing style.

In this system, yet again, the “serious” writings were positioned as the norm. In other words, “light” or “vulgar” magazines were marked by the intimate colloquial style together with readers’ active participation in the magazine community through their contributions. This is probably why it was widely lamented and caught the attention of intellectuals in the 1930s when even “serious” periodicals started including round-table talk articles rendered in the intimate “desu/masu” style, which had been considered to be the “feminine” writing style. That is, inclusion of round-table talks constituted a violation of the gendered writing system.

**Early Reader Contributions: Contests, Q and As, and Reader Letters**

These new colloquial styles that were phonetically much closer to spoken language and easier to master than the Meiji Common Writing System enhanced accessibility to these magazines,

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20 It had been commonly believed that heavily oral articles developed in the magazine only after radio broadcasting was inaugurated in 1925 and started to feature the round-table talk in 1926 (Ishikawa Hiroyoshi et al. 1995, 291. On the history of early radio broadcasting in Japan, see Takeyama 2002, especially 11–42; Ishikawa Hiroyoshi et al. 1995, 828–830). However, my research has proven that women’s magazines had already included articles in the form of interviews and round-table talks, consisting mostly of participants’ utterances, since the 1910s, which preceded the introduction of radio programs (in 1925) and “talkie movies” (in 1928) to Japan. Thus, the increase of oral articles in women’s magazines can be explained by their emphasis on orality in the writing itself rather than by the influence of new media such as radio or “talkie” films.
which arguably resulted in a rapid increase in their circulation. Because these colloquial styles were so easy to use, compared to the former literary style, they also promoted more direct participation by readers in the magazine community through submissions of letters or stories to the publishers.

As more articles began to use colloquial writing systems, reader participation in the magazine world also increased. Early components featuring readers’ contributions were sections of contest or castigation, inquiry and advice, and reader letters. The oldest of these, at least among magazines, was probably the contest section in the children’s and women’s magazines. The contest section, in which readers’ works were selected, evaluated, and often awarded prizes by specialists or editors, had existed even before the introduction of colloquial styles. *Eisai shinshi* (*New Magazine for Geniuses*, founded in 1877) is probably the most famous early youth magazine consisting mainly of reader essay competitions. Around the same time, *Jogaku zasshi* (*launched in 1885*) also included a reader submission section. According to scholar Inoue Teruko, insertion of selected readers’ poems, most of which were traditional forms such as *waka* poetry, was one of the most effective strategies used by *Jogaku zasshi* to promote direct access to its readers. Other women’s and youth magazines also included similar contest-style sections based on readers’ works, and their subjects ranged from poetry to humorous short stories to causeries. Readers competed for the best records, a custom that

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21 As the establishment of the women’s magazine as a periodical genre, its rapid and enormous gain in popularity, and the introduction of colloquial writing styles roughly coincided, it is difficult to prove causal relations among these factors. However, there are numerous episodes that suggest a connection between the increasing popularity of the women’s magazine, colloquialism, and the concomitant increasing involvement of readers in the magazine world. For example, in 1914, when *Jogaku sekai* abolished a composition competition to which readers submitted various free essays, mostly written in a colloquial style, many readers voiced their complaints and pleaded for its revival. Probably because of such strong requests from its readers, the editorial board quickly reinstated the section. From this episode, one can infer how enthusiastically these readers were involved in this particular readers’ submission section by vigorously writing their opinions and feelings in a colloquial style.

22 Inoue T. 1971, 105.

23 On the case of boys’ literary magazines, see Kôno 2003.
is still practiced today among some literary and manga (comic) magazines in Japan, and functions as a sort of correspondence study. Some regular participants became professional writers, and several, such as Naitō Chiyoko, even turned into star writers.24

The question-answer section was also one of the few early gateways for readers to actively participate in the magazine world, and was later to evolve into a blueprint for advisory columns in newspapers in the 1930s. One of the earliest examples of this kind would probably have been Fujin sekai’s “Ikuji mondō (Q&As on Child Care)” and “Eisei mondō (Q&As on Hygiene).” The following is an excerpt from the former:

Q. A girl [i.e., the writer’s daughter] born this January won’t stop crying. Is this some kind of disease? What should I do? (Ushigome Kōriyama)25

A. She probably has a digestive malfunction. Crying in the night might mean that she has a nervous disorder. In any case, first take care to provide good nutrition (Doctor Katō Terumaro). (Fujin sekai May 1906, 37–38)

Both literary and colloquial styles were used in such inquiry columns; the former style gave the texts a concise impression like a telegraph communiqué, while the latter made the exchanges look as though they were literal transcripts of excerpted short conversations.

Among the three early magazine components that allowed reader involvement, it was the section of reader letters that became the most invigorated by the introduction of colloquial writing styles. This segment was inaugurated by seemingly “light” periodicals, among which the earliest

24 After actively contributing to Jogaku sekai, Naitō Chiyoko (1893–1925) became a star professional writer for the magazine. On her life and career, see Moriyama 1999 and Yokota 1997. On girl writers including her, see Saga (2009, 2011 [a], 2011 [b], and 2011 [c]).
25 “Ushigome Kōriyama” is the name of the city where the inquirer lived.
seem to have been the so-called “small newspapers (koshinbun).” Using various not yet established colloquial writing styles, the readers of these popular local urban newspapers contributed many letters, offering the hottest news in the cities, expressing their opinions on various social issues, and exchanging ideas with other readers.\(^{26}\) However, this early attempt at enhancing communication among and involvement of readers, did not last long. From the repeated bans on the practice of selling newspapers by “reading them out” on the street (yomiuri) during the Satsuma Rebellion (Seinan sensō, the Seinan Civil War) in 1877 and the vaguely coincident disappearance of this colloquial writing style in popular newspapers, media historian Tsuchiya Reiko speculated that the short life of this early colloquial style in some small newspapers, including the Yomiuri shinbun, probably resulted from government censorship during this period. That is, the newly-founded modern Meiji government pressured newspapers to abstain from printing any reader submissions to daily periodicals, presumably out of the fear that rumors would be unfavorable to the authorities.\(^{27}\)

Among periodicals for adults,\(^{28}\) it was arguably the women’s magazine that revived the early attempt of these small newspapers and established a permanent section for reader letters. With its New Year issue of 1907, one year after its founding, Fujin sekai launched its reader letter section, and was soon followed by other existing women’s magazines such as Jogaku sekai (in April 1909). Since then, it has become standard for new women’s magazines to include a section of letters from readers regularly from their launch.\(^{29}\) The synchronicity of the inclusion of reader letters and the introduction of colloquial styles to women’s magazines suggests that this accessible, easy-to-write style may well have inspired editors to create such sections to promote active involvement by their

\(^{26}\) Yamada Shunji 2002; Tsuchiya 2002.
\(^{28}\) Periodicals for young people as well as literary magazines seem to have preceded the women’s magazine’s attempt to establish a section of reader letters. Among periodicals for women, Shōjo sekai started its reader letter section in April 1902, and Joshi bundan, in February 1905 (Hamazaki 2004, 388–391). On the case of periodicals for boys and men, see Kōno 2003.
\(^{29}\) For instance, Fujin no tomo (founded in 1908), and Fujokai (1913).
readers in the magazine world. Notably, these letters were, unlike the contributions to contest sections or enquiry sections, rarely “evaluated” or “advised” by editors and specialists. Thus, with the introduction of colloquial style to the magazine, readers not only started to express their opinions and feelings, but also gained more independence as contributors—even if in a still limited way—compared to the previous period.

**Reader Contributions as Full Articles**

Components authored by readers steadily increased and the length of individual contributions grew. Gradually, reader contributions diversified and were no longer limited to contests or “reader letters” sections. Several sections consisting entirely of reader submissions appeared soon after the introduction of a colloquial writing style into the magazine world. “Katei no chōhō (Tips for Home)” in *Fujin sekai*—later retitled “Wagaya no jikken (Experiments at Our Place)”—was one such early attempt.

©  **How to Prevent Food from Spoiling by Boiling**

Kawakita Shizuko, from Hongō

Food spoils easily in the summer. At our home, we boil 30 *monme* [ca. 112.5 g] of starch syrup and one *shō* [ca. 1.8 l] of soy sauce, leave it to cool down once the syrup gets melted enough, and then boil any food in this special soy sauce. Preserved in this way, the food won’t spoil as quickly as when it is stewed with sugar. (In the “Wagaya no jikken [Experiments at Our Home]” column of *Fujin sekai* June 1914, p. 126.)

Though the length of each contribution was restricted to only several lines, the emergence of this section was not insignificant in terms of the themes dealt with by reader writings. Readers were no
longer the objects of specialists’ evaluations or suggestions; they were treated as participants in the
magazine community who were able to extend their help in the magazine-making process by
expressing their own ideas, suggestions, and advice, even if it was still limited to topics concerning
domestic chores.

*Fujokai* furthered this trend, by allotting one to three pages to each contribution. Before
becoming chief editor and owner of *Fujokai*, Tsugawa Tatsumi had prior experience with reader
contributions when editing a magazine publication for experienced educators from Dōbunkan whose
themes he himself was not so familiar with. The result turned out to work dramatically well.\(^{30}\)
Considering the magazine’s highly specialized character, however, the strategy did not impact the
publishing world as a whole. Nonetheless, it was here that Tsugawa learned the importance of
harnessing the creative power of his readers. When he later became proprietor of *Fujokai* in 1913,
Tsugawa applied the same strategy to this women’s magazine, this time with strong conviction and
intent.\(^{31}\) His insights were effective and the section based on reader contributions soon became one
of the most popular features of the magazine. As space is limited, I will show only the beginning part
of one such example below:

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**My Life: Last Year in Tokyo, and This Year in the Countryside**

Ichō-musume (Kumamoto Prefecture)

© *From Tokyo to the Countryside*

Our life differed a lot financially this year from last year. First of all, while we used to
live in the city of Tokyo, this year we moved to the suburbs of Kumamoto City. Second,
we had only one child last year, while this year we have two. (Our daughter was born last

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\(^{30}\) Tsugawa 1930, 52–62, 292.

\(^{31}\) Tsugawa 1930, 292.
September.) Moreover, there was a change in my husband’s income: he quit his job in Tokyo at the end of last year and got a new one here, which resulted in a 10-yen decrease in monthly income. So, though we have one more child, since we stopped hiring a maid here, now the four of us, namely, my husband, two children and I, live on an income of 30 yen per month. […] As we have decided to do without a maid, our children have naturally become more independent, doing everything by themselves, which is good practice for them as well. As a result, their bodies have become much stronger than when they were in Tokyo. […] (Fujokai December 1916, p. 59–60)

*Shufu no tomo* (launched in 1917) further developed such use of reader contributions as full-fledged magazine components, known as the “confessional story (*kokuhaku kiji*),” an example of which will be examined later in this chapter.

**Increasing Visibility of the Reader in the Magazine Community: Fewer Bylined Articles by Professionals**

Such was the increase in visibility of reader participation in the interwar women’s magazine that it appeared as if professional writers’ and editors’ voices had significantly retreated in this magazine genre. Statistics support this observation. The May 1917 issue of *Shufu no tomo*, i.e., the third issue since its founding, had 5 articles out of 32 signed with the authors’ name and job title: that is, 15.6% of all the articles were presented as clearly written by experts. Other women’s magazines of the same month, on the other hand, included more articles accompanied by the authors’ names and position titles. For example, in *Fujokai*, 9 out of 43 articles (28.1%) were bylined, as were 21 out of 43 (48.8%) in *Fujin sekai*.

Of course, the fact that an article was not bylined does not in itself exclude the possibility
that it was written by a professional. Moreover, there might have been a more practical reason behind the relatively low percentage of bylined articles in Shufu no tomo. It is quite likely that as a new and relatively small publisher, Shufu no Tomosha in its early years did not have strong connections with well-known experts whom they could ask for contributions. After all, almost all the authors of the signed articles in the abovementioned issue of Shufu no tomo were old acquaintances of Ishikawa, such as married couples Abe Iso’o and Komao and Ebina Danjō and Miyako, whom he had known since his apprenticeship at the publisher, Dōbunkan, soon after his move to Tokyo from his birthplace in Ōita, Kyūshū. Moreover, while relatively less emphasis on experts and their social titles could be seen in the early days of Shufu no tomo in comparison with its rivals, the magazine did not entirely abandon such traditions. In fact, it seems that Shufu no tomo later resumed the conventional practice of including articles and columns by experts, while at the same time maintaining a focus on reader contributions.

On the other hand, Ishikawa Takeyoshi, the founder of Shufu no Tomosha, himself insisted that the smaller number of signed articles appearing in his magazine resulted from a conscious editorial policy on his part. That is, this was an intentional stress on reader- (and content-) oriented editing style rather than a star expert-centered one. According to Ishikawa, the magazine initially incurred displeasure among educators due to this deliberate editorial policy not to rely on well-known experts, a common editing practice among magazines issued from big publishers such as “Dr. Nitobe in Jitsugyō no Nihon or Mrs. Hatoyama in Fujokai.”32 Alongside the constraints on articles by professionals, Ishikawa also consciously reduced the number of articles by writers and reporters employed by his company. Moreover, when such articles appeared, the names of the authors were

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32 Ishikawa 1940, 100. Besides the cited texts, similar accounts can be found in Ishikawa (1940, 101-102). Likewise, Ishikawa lamented that, since at first Shufu no tomo, unlike other existing magazines, did not use famous educators, some authorities misunderstood that they were editing an “obscure” periodical, which, he thought, led to a ban on the July 1920 (Taishō 9) issue containing a confessional article on a raped woman in anguish (Ishi’i 108).
presented anonymously under titles such as “reporter/writer (kisha),” “female reporter/writer (josei kisha),” or “correspondent (tokuha kisha).” Although most of the articles in the early days of Shufu no tomo were written by Ishikawa himself out of a scarcity of staff, he made a point of not assigning his name to the articles, and later, when the editorial staff increased, he concealed the names of his staff writers as well. This was quite a contrast to other chief editors of the day, such as Tsugawa Tatsumi at Fujokai, who loved to include their own signed stories (sometimes even with their photographs) in their magazines.

While there might have been several other factors that could also have been involved in the change of editorial policy, this move was intentional, according to Ishikawa’s own words. Following Motoyama Hikoichi of Ōsaka mainichi shinbun and Murayama Ryūhei of Ōsaka/Tōkyō asahi shinbun, who “tried to remain behind the business,” Ishikawa made efforts “not to go to the front as much as possible” in order to practice “reader-oriented editing.”

“Do not write a single line that is not for the readers.” This was a remonstration for us on the editorial staff. [...] Editors of Shufu no tomo were and still are suppressing their egos

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33 One could explain this phenomenon in Shufu no tomo partly by its founder Ishikawa’s modesty, though we must be careful not to become complicit with his mythification. It is known that he not only avoided casual drinking parties with people in the publishing world, he also made it a custom not to appear as a host at events organized by his publishing company for readers (Ishii 1940, 299). Ishikawa hated even attending and making a speech at his own daughters’ high school (Kurosawa 1967, 650–652). On his antisocial tendencies, see Ishii (1940, 170, 264, 269–270.). Ishikawa’s introversion seemed to intensify after the Daitōsha incident in 1927, when Ishikawa and his wife Taka had their lives threatened by a right-wing association called Daitōsha in protest of Shufu no tomo’s promotion of the idea and practice of birth control (Shufu no Tomosha 1967, 156–158; Ishikawa in Shufu no Tomosha 1967, 159). In fact, like his former colleague and later rival Tsugawa Tatsumi, Ishikawa also appeared with readers in pictures taken at events, or wrote articles carrying his name in the early 1920s. However, perhaps because of this threat on his life, he ceased publicizing himself in the magazine thereafter.

Alternatively, the purpose of editorial strategies suppressing the appearance of authors’ names with their articles and instead including more anonymous texts may also have been to prevent headhunting of writers/reporters at his company by rival publishers, which was quite a common custom in the interwar period (Tsugawa 1930, 50–51, 165–168, 187–188, 283–285, 400–405; Ishikawa 1940, 33, 46.).

34 Ishikawa 1944, 18, 20.
35 Ishikawa 1944, 193.
in their jobs. Without this attitude, the magazine might have been more highly regarded [by critics]. I do not know how much the magazine was despised just because we have practiced reader-oriented editing, always keeping in our minds the attitude “on behalf of our readers” and completely suppressing ourselves. (Ishikawa 1944, 192–193)

This “reader-oriented” editing was, Ishikawa insisted, an antithesis to the conventional attitude of magazine-editors that they should attempt to teach and lead readers, putting themselves and professional contributors above the reader-contributors.

My vocation is to serve the family and society. I have tried to serve each one of our readers through Shufu no tomo. In the old days, magazines were arrogant with respect to their readers. They regarded readers as one or two pegs lower than themselves. They treated readers like teachers addressing their students. However, Shufu no tomo was different from such magazines. Our job is to serve our readers. We exist thanks to our readers. Unlike old magazines, we are thankful to have readers read our magazine. This is not servility. This is service. (Ishikawa 1940, 45–46)36

Considering that Ishikawa admired Northcliffe and the Curtises, who endeavored to produce more reader-oriented periodicals (tabloids in Britain and magazines in the US, respectively), this shift to a new editorial style is likely to have been a conscious decision on his part, inspired by the near-contemporary editors overseas.37 What was at stake here, however, was that this change in editorial

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36 On the arrogance of editors in the previous decades, see also Ishikawa 1940, 112.
37 On Ishikawa’s reference to the Curtises (Cyrus Curtis and Louise Knapp Curtis), Edward William Bok (an editor at Curtis Publishing), and their two major magazines (Ladies’ Home Journal and Saturday Evening Post), see Ishii 1940, 95–97, 261. On his reference to Lord Northcliffe, see Ishikawa 1944, 28. On his reference to Horace Greeley, see Ishii 1940, 28–9. Horace Greeley was a journalist
trends, whatever its reason, contributed to the creation of a new magazine that allowed readers a space for participating in the magazine world, much more actively than ever. Since this new editorial strategy initially developed in Shufu no tomo soon became imitated by other mass-market women’s magazines and was, as usual, eventually adopted by other types of periodicals, from now on, I will consider the nature of this new editorial style and its implications by focusing mainly, though not exclusively, on this particular women’s magazine in the remainder of this chapter.

**Intimate Personal Address: A New Editorial Policy**

**Friendly Tone**

The “reader-oriented” magazine was made possible not solely by the suppression of bylined articles and the use of the colloquial writing system; it was realized also through the choice of simple words and a friendly and accessible tone employed by the editors. A biography of Ishikawa reported that he once told the writer Ishii Mitsuru: “When readers encounter words whose meanings are not intelligible at all in a magazine they like, they feel affronted. So I made an effort to make our magazine accessible to any reader, using plain, simple sentences as much as possible.”  

As implied in the above quotation, to Ishikawa accessibility meant articles written in plain language without using difficult, abstract words or unfamiliar loan words originating from foreign languages. This strategy was totally against that of “general magazines,” which, Ishikawa observed, included “piles of such difficult articles that they were rather painful to read and, moreover, it was questionable if the writers themselves even really understood what they wrote.”

Ishikawa explained that his magazine earned a good reputation for its “kind and lucid” articles because they were written in...
detail from the viewpoint of readers or learners, not from that of lecturers or teachers.40

This friendly writing style was employed in almost all genres of articles in the magazine, ranging from reader contributions to interviews and reportages. Even bylined editorial articles were written in this friendly style in *Shufu no tomo*. While bylined articles were rare in the magazine, it nonetheless regularly carried a few such articles, including the editor’s opening column or preface (*kantōgen*) and the “editorial diary” (*henshū nisshi*), even if they were allotted only one or a few pages respectively. These rare bylined articles were also rendered in a friendly, intimate style without using difficult specialized terms as if the writer were speaking directly to the reader, just as in a personal letter.

The overwhelming friendliness of this style, initiated by *Shufu no tomo* and spread among other popular women’s magazines, is obvious when compared to texts written by the chief editors and advisors of other contemporary periodicals. Take, for example, an essay by Yoshino Sakuzō, noted author and regular contributor to the general magazine *Chūō kōron*.

**Reading Rev. Ōya Kōzui’s “Crisis of the Empire” [Ōya Kōzui shi no “Teikoku no kiki” o yomu]**

*Doctor of Law*  
Yoshino Sakuzō

(1)

To tell the truth, I cannot consider the paper by Rev. Ōya Kōzui entitled “Crisis of the Empire” appearing in the previous issue an essay of worth. Yet, because the author is the well-known Rev. Ōya, and since it appeared at the right time, the essay seems to have caused no small sensation in society. Therefore, I will scrutinize his essay and reveal my own opinion concerning the same issue.

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40 Ishikawa 1940, 113.
After reading his essay, I first noticed the sincerity and honesty of the author. […]

However, what I next felt was that his essay was probably not the result of careful consideration, or at least not yet elaborated upon. […] (Yoshino Sakuzō, Chūō kōron April 1917: 82–83)

Relying on the detached “dalde aru” style as well as many abstract terms originating from either literary classical Chinese or Sino-Japanese words coined in Japan, such as “imperialism (teikoku shugi),” “in my humble opinion (guken),” “sincerity and honesty (seijitsu shinshi),” and “careful consideration (jukuryo seisatsu),” the tone of this text sounds very assertive and solemn in the original Japanese. His discussion develops in a quite logical order, using signal words such as “first (daiichi ni)” and “secondly (daini ni),” as one often sees in the case of formal public speech or academic papers or dissertations.

The new friendly style introduced by Shufu no tomo differed even from that of other contemporary women’s magazines, too. Employing the more colloquial “desu/masu” style, articles in most women’s magazines in the 1910s were more accessible than the above one appearing in a “general magazine.” Their content was concerned with issues related to the private sphere, that is, women’s personal lives, domestic chores, and so on—issues that must have been more connected to the individual reader’s life than those addressed by philosophical articles in general magazines. Yet, quite a few were still rather abstract, and focused on the logical flow of an argument rather than on performative intimacy. In opposition to this customary lecturing style, Ishikawa insisted on the need for a more readable, friendly style, so as not to intimidate readers.

Take, for example, the following example by Hatoyama Haruko in Fujokai:
“There are Such Shortcomings in Western-Style Marriage [Seiyōfū no kekkon niwa kakaru ketten ari]”

Hatoyama Haruko, President of the Association for Women’s Discipline

◎ Ideals before Marriage

While Western-style marriages are gradually increasing these days, upon close consideration, they turn out to have many shortcomings. At the same time, Japanese indigenous marriage does have some advantages that one cannot easily discard. Thus, I will address this issue in this article. [...] 

◎ Do Not Make the Same Mistake As Theirs

[...] There are some young people who believe that both marriage and family life cannot be meaningful without Western-style [love-based] marriage, but one cannot necessarily say this unconditionally. Thus, while making allowances for the Western-style marriage system, I believe that we should continue to gradually improve the defects in the Japanese marriage system, while being careful not to lapse into the ill influences that Western people themselves are suffering. (Fujokai February 1917, 10–17)

Articles by experts appearing in women’s magazines in the 1910s would leave the impression on the reader that the authors were preaching or making moral speeches at a morning assembly, as implied by word choice such as “system (seido),” “thus (kara),” “therefore (node),” and “should (senebanaranu),” with writers addressing readers with solemn, assertive particles such as “I believe (omou no de arimasu).”

The rigid, solemn style of the above texts posed quite a contrast to the more accessible, friendly style of the writings in Shufu no tomo, which were rendered in a more colloquial writing style with various vocative expressions. The style is most conspicuous in the opening to the section
of reader letters, which was not usually signed, but it would have been obvious to any reader that the text was written by an editor, most likely the chief editor Ishikawa.

The summer season has come: the season in which one seeks out the shade. Voices of the cicadas showering from the treetops and the color of the clouds in the sky both remind us of the heat. How are you? It is around this season when your beloved children develop a fever, catching a chill in their sleep. It is also around this season when they get a stomachache from the cold water. Please be careful, as sometimes a little thing leads to something irrevocable.

I wish that I could see your wholesome faces when this new issue reaches you. To those who go to the sea or to the hot springs in the mountains, hopefully this magazine will become a friend to entertain you during your leisure time away from home. […]

Thanks to your kindnesses, this magazine has developed month by month. Again, thank you very much for your deep patronage. As the magazine developed, various inconveniences occurred at the office, so we moved to Akagimono-machi 34, Ushigome-ku, Tokyo on June 25th. We would appreciate very much your continuing goodwill. […]

(Shufu no tomo August 1917, 132)

In this way, the opening address in the early reader letters section almost always started with seasonal greetings and thanks to the readers for their patronage, then offered some feedback from readers, announced new projects and events, shared what was going on in the editorial department, and ended again with thanks or wishes for the readers’ wellbeing. The wording was clear and plain, and the content was based on specific, concrete issues, that is, it was highly contextualized. In short, the address resembled an intimate, personal letter to each individual reader. Ishikawa
habitually used this friendly tone even in most other articles, a practice that must have sounded quite conspicuous among the other contemporary magazines filled with their solemn, sermon-like writings.

Although the intense similarity in style to a personal letter was gradually toned down later in most regular articles except for the reader letters section, the overall friendliness and accessibility resulting from the plain wording remained thereafter in the magazine, which was soon adopted by other women’s magazines.

**Intimate Relationship between Readers and Editors**

In this way, *Shufu no tomo*’s friendly and accessible tone brought about a change in the relationship between readers and editors/professional contributors. Editors and experts no longer represented intellectuals who were doing their best to “enlighten” readers. Instead, they became “friends” or “dependable siblings” who addressed various issues personally to the readers in a relaxing, intimate tone. In fact, some texts written by the editors did actually function as “personal answers” to their readers’ letters. The component that most saliently presented intimate exchanges between editors/writers and readers was the “Magazine Club (*shijō kurabu*),” which was inserted at the end of each issue.

“Magazine Club” was a section featuring readers’ responses to other components of the

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41 As we have already seen, the “desu/masu” style of writing leads readers to feel as if the narrator were speaking to them, which establishes an intimate, “I-you” relationship between the narrator and the reader. In this sense, the “desu/masu” style can be said to be a sort of “discourse” as opposed to “history/story.” On the “I-you” relationship, see Benveniste (Kishimoto Michio, et al., trans.) 1983, 203–216, 217–233. On the distinction between “discourse (discours)” and “history/story (histoire),” see Benveniste (Kishimoto Michio, et al., trans.) 1983/1966–1974, 203–216, 217–233.

magazine, their reactions to other readers’ letters, and the like. Except one several month hiatus, the section was found in almost every issue of the magazine from the second issue onward. In fact, intimate exchange between readers and editors had already existed even before the launch of Shufu no tomo. What was remarkable in Shufu no tomo’s reader letters section was the inordinate number of letters that received responses from the editorial board and their extremely friendly, intimate tone. While reader letters sections had existed for about a decade by the time of the founding of Shufu no tomo in 1917, most exchanges contained in them took place among the readers and not so much between the editors and readers. For instance, only 2 out of 17 contributions from readers (3 causeries or essays and 4 letters) in the May 1917 issue of Fujin sekai were responded to by editors. In contrast, the corresponding section in Shufu no tomo of the same month showed 12 reader letters, of which half received comments or replies from the editor. Furthermore, each editor’s response was much longer and composed in a far more friendly, intimate tone than those in the other women’s magazines of the time. Editors’ responses to readers’ letters remained friendly even after the magazine became the best-selling periodical in the country.

Sometimes an editor of Shufu no tomo (presumably Ishikawa himself) would reply to a reader’s letter with suggestions, but never in an intrusive, intimidating manner. Let us take a look at an example from the February 1920 issue. A woman wrote a letter to the magazine, in which she confessed an agonizing situation: she had married a man and conceived a girl child. Before long, however, her husband died of a cold before they could officially register their marriage. In order to earn enough money to raise her child, she left the baby with her parents and started working in the “water trade” (night-time entertainment industry). There she got acquainted with a man who offered to pay her way out of the business, but she couldn’t decide what to do, since he already had a wife.

43 Only the following issues did not contain any section for readers’ letters: July, August, September, November 1918, and February 1919.
and children. If she accepted his offer, she could not help but feel guilty about his wife, but if she declined, she would feel sorry for him (Feb. 1920, 154–155). In response, the editor expressed his deep sympathy and offered the following suggestion:

Your sad life experience moved me with sincere sympathy. In the face of such a beautiful mind as yours, the person who offered to pay your way out of the business should feel embarrassed and mend his ways. If you follow your will and leave him, and return to the right lifestyle, people around you will be saved, too. We on the editorial board will support you as much as possible, but first, how about confessing your worries and wishes to that person? And please report the results of your confession to us again later.

Though it may appear to us rather patronizing or officious, to readers in the early 1920s, such an answer would have sounded quite accessible, supportive, and much less intimidating than the solemn sermon-like addresses from editors found in earlier magazines. One can infer from the numerous letters asking for the editor’s advice on their troubled lives how close readers felt to the magazine. In fact, they received so many letters from readers asking for advice that the publisher even established a Department of Counseling (Hōshibu, lit. Dept. of Reader Services), in which professional consultants and staff specializing in counseling concerning topics such as law, nutrition, medical science, child care, and human relationships, gave useful information and suggestions in response to each letter, including those that could not be published in the magazine. People with worries or inquiries could also visit the Service Centre at the publishing office to receive the same services.44

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Reader Involvement in Magazine Making

As seen in the above example of Shufu no tomo’s establishing a department dedicated specifically to reader consultation upon the readers’ request, readers of these new women’s magazines could even make their own suggestions for new components or events, or at least such their suggestions did occasionally appear in the magazine. In response to an article entitled “20 Requests from Husbands to Young Wives” appearing in the previous issue, for example, a “reader in Kyūshū” suggested an article on the subject of “20 Requests from Wives to Husbands” (Apr. 1917, 134). This suggestion received a positive response from the editor and was realized immediately (Apr. 1917, 82–85). In the next month’s issue, another reader, pleased to notice that a reader’s suggestion had been accepted, jokingly commented; “I wonder to whom you [the editor] will make request [to speak out their opinions] next time and [whereby] surprise us” (May 1917, 134). In addition, the first serial novel introduced to the magazine was presented as a response to a reader’s request. Countless suggestions and requests were submitted from readers and most of them were realized.

Of course, these suggestions and the decision to implement them or not were all under the editor’s control, i.e., the information presented in the periodicals was all mediated. Nonetheless, examples such as above ones must have pleased readers and encouraged them to become more involved in the magazine-making as active initiators. References to readers’ suggestions and their implementation were likely to function to demonstrate to readers that their feedback could influence

45 At first, although it carried a simple type of illustrated novel (e-monogatari), Shufu no tomo did not include the extremely popular type of serial of the time known as the “home novel” (katei shōsetsu) Several months after its launch, a reader pleaded with the editors for the inclusion of a “home novel” (Oct. 1917, 197–198). Three months later, the first episode of the magazine’s first “home novel,” “Shichimenchō (Turkey),” by one of the best-selling novelists of the time, Okamoto Kidō, appeared in the New Year issue of 1918.

46 Early examples are as follows: a request for how-to articles about making a tie and knitting socks (July 1920, 197–198); a request to report on nuns who led a purely pious life like Kujō Takeko, a highly respected celebrity of the time (Nov. 1920, 156).
the magazine’s content, suggesting an empowered readers’ role in the magazine-making.\footnote{47}

In addition, communication between professional contributors and readers also took place in this section. Personal letters from specialists about their travels or business trips were often put in this section to be shared with readers. Among some early examples, there was a post card from novelist Matsuo Ranshū from his vacation on the Izu coast (May 1919, 142–143), a post card from another novelist, Watanabe Katei, from a research trip to Tokushima (Nov. 1919, 157), and a personal letter to Ishikawa Takemi from Kobayashi Miyoko, who was studying journalism at Columbia University in New York (Jan. 1920, 171), to name a few. On the other hand, readers also sent personal messages to such professional writers through this section, although this was a practice that existed even before Shufu no tomo. Letters from readers to experts like the following example appeared in almost every issue in the magazine.

Ever since seeing the picture of Kidō-sensei [presented in the magazine], I have felt closer to your serial novel “Turkey (shichimenchō).” Kidō-sensei, please do not torment Sumiko-sama [= the main character] too much. (A Sympathetic Woman)

That said, the didactic nature of the magazine and its embodiment, the editors, did not completely disappear. As Kimura Ryōko and Yomoda Yumi point out,\footnote{48} not a few readers referred to the magazine and its editorial staff (especially, the chief editor Ishikawa) as “sensei (teacher),”

\footnote{47} According to Oates, the mass inclusion of readers in the magazine community in England first became conspicuous in women’s magazines such as Bella and Best (both founded in 1987) during the 1980s (Oates 1999). It is notable that a heavily reader-oriented type of magazine making was already in practice in the late 1910s in Japan with popular women’s magazines.

“school (gakkō),” 49 or “parent (oya).” 50 As for the editors, they also retained the self-awareness that they had a duty to open the eyes of their readers. In his autobiographical essay published in the 1940s, Ishikawa revealed his opinion that people in the publishing world should “lead the world by the pen.” 51 Thus, on the side of both the readers and the editors, the didactic aspect of the periodical never completely vanished.

Nevertheless, it should not be overlooked or underestimated that the magazine changed the relationship between editors and readers to one that was more intimate and equal than before. Quite a few readers maintained that the magazine was just like a best friend. 52

I am very weak and ill. Though I am only 28 years old, I have lived my life in constant tears because of pain in my feet and back. However, since I started reading your magazine, I have been comforted every day. Without any bosom friends, I have consoled myself over my misfortunes with this magazine, viewing it like a best friend or an elder sister.

The reference to the magazine as a “best friend or elder sister” symbolically indicates the position of this periodical relative to its readers: while it was equal to or standing over its readers slightly, the magazine still invoked a sense of intimacy with them. Though showing such friendly intimacy toward a magazine or editorial body had been observed before among girls’ magazines, it was a new phenomenon to see such an intimate bond between magazine and readers in an adult

49 References to teacher and school from the issues between 1917 and 1920: Dec. 1919, 156; Feb. 1920, 154. Letters mentioning the magazine’s educational function: June 1917, 133; July 1917, 209; Sept. 1917, 132–133; Oct. 1917, 199; April 1920, 181.
51 Ishikawa 1944, 160.
52 May 1917, 133; June 1917, 133; Sept. 1917, 133; Jan. 1918, 227; April 1920, 179–180, 182–183; May 1920, 158; June 1920, 158–159; Oct. 1920, 194, 196–197.
periodical, which, as will be examined later, crossed class, generation, gender, and region.

**A New Reader-Oriented Editorial Policy**

In a sense, this change in the relationship between the magazine/editors and readers, that is, the shift toward a more equal and intimate relationship, could also be defined as the introduction of a new editorial strategy that seems to contradict its egalitarian surface: a division between editor, professional contributors, and reader-contributors. Until the launch of *Shufu no tomo*, it was a common custom for any kind of periodical, including newspapers, “general” magazines, and women’s magazines, as well as teen magazines, to feature articles written by “star” writers such as chief editors (*shuhitsu*, or *shusai*, lit., “master”) or “advisors” (*komon*). Their writings had an enormous impact on readers and greatly affected the circulation of the magazines to which they contributed. Historically, the “star editor” system had been the prevailing custom in modern Japanese periodical publication. The oldest form was to feature the chief editor (*shuhitsu* or *shusai*) as the star writer of the periodical. Tokutomi Sohō of *Kokumin shinbun*, Yano Ryūkei of *Hōchi shinbun*, Takita Choin of *Chūō kōron*, and Arimoto Hōsui and Matsuyama Shisui of *Nihon shōnen* were well-known examples of this genre. The second conventional editing style was to spotlight a star writer, or *komon*, as mentioned above. Well-known examples of writers/editors falling in this category were Murakami Gensai of *Fujin sekai*, Hatoyama Haruko of *Fujokai*, Hani Motoko of *Fujin no tomo*, Yoshino Sakuzō of *Chūō kōron*, and Nitobe Inazō of magazines published by Jitsugyō no Nihonsha, including *Jitsugyō no Nihon*, *Nihon shōnen*, *Shōjo no tomo*, *Shōnen sekai*, and *Jogaku sekai*.

Such a system, however, contained a potential danger: once their star writers lost popularity or were no longer able to contribute, circulation of the magazines could easily drop. This is exactly what happened to *Nihon shōnen* in its competition against *Shōnen kurabu* in an incident that later came to be known as the “Kashō jiken” (the Kashō Incident) after the popular illustrator who was
involved. Thanks to attractive stories and respected columns by star editors such as Arimoto Hōsui and Matsuyama Shisui or famous intellectuals including Nitobe Inazō, as well as popular serialized novels accompanied with illustrations by star artists, *Nihon shōnen* had long enjoyed the status of the top boys’ magazine from the time of its foundation in 1906 until the mid-1920s. In 1926, in order to heighten its prestige by outmaneuvering its emerging rival, *Shōnen kurabu* (founded in 1914), *Nihon shōnen* stole the enormously popular illustrator, Takahata Kashô, from its competitor. Turning this predicament to its advantage, however, *Shōnen kurabu* discontinued the star system and instead inaugurated a separation of editors from professional contributors that put emphasis on frequent use of anonymous articles instead. In this new system, a magazine could maintain steady popularity without relying on specific star writers/editors/illustrators and could continually refresh feature components by recruiting young yet unknown creators at relatively low cost. The effectiveness of this new editing policy turned out to be impressive. Despite its acquisition of the star illustrator, *Nihon shōnen* eventually surrendered its position as the number one boys’ magazine to *Shōnen kurabu*.\(^{53}\)

In the 1930s, since about the time of the eclipse of *Nihon shōnen*’s popularity, some journalists called for a more accessible style as well as an anonymous editorial method to replace the star system.\(^ {54}\) One media scholar considers the above case of *Shōnen kurabu* to be the first attempt at such a new editing system in the magazine publishing in Japan.\(^ {55}\) As observed above, however, one could say that it was rather interwar women’s magazines such as *Shufu no tomo* that first initiated

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\(^ {53}\) On the details of this shift in editorial policy and the course of the competition between *Nihon shōnen* and *Shōnen kurabu*, see Ueda 2001, 98–104.

\(^ {54}\) Makino 1931, 203–210. This shift from the star reporter (or star chief editor) system to editorial anonymity first became common in newspaper editing. According to media historian Yamamoto Taketoshi, the systematic production of news stories rather than relying on individual charismatic reporters occurred around the time of the Russo-Japanese War, when newspapers shifted their focus from serious articles on political subjects to entertaining elements (Yamamoto Taketoshi 1996, 42).

\(^ {55}\) Ueda 2001.
this new editing policy in Japan. Involving their readers in the process of magazine creation, Japanese interwar popular women’s magazines gradually fostered an ever more intimately connected magazine community among a group of people of unprecedented diversity.

**Formation of an Intimate, Egalitarian Community**

**Expansion of Readers’ Backgrounds: Class and Gender**

With the intensive use of a colloquial, intimate style and the introduction of a reader-oriented editing policy, *Shufu no tomo* extensively developed reader-oriented articles into a signature component to the extent that it deconstructed the definition of the woman’s magazine as a periodical solely dedicated to women. A former editor of *Fujokai*, Ishikawa expanded the allotted space for reader contributions, diversified the themes they dealt with, and opened up the section to those who had not conventionally been regarded as readers of women’s magazines. Indeed, as we can see the above cited example, *Fujokai* had already treated wider topics than ever before in its reader contributions: they dealt not only with tips concerning domestic chores, as had their predecessors, but also addressed issues of women’s lifestyle in general, such as how to live life as a working woman, or how to get along with mothers-in-law. Yet, in the case of *Fujokai*’s articles, the themes were still confined to aspects of women’s lives, especially those from the middle-class, for the reader-contributors were, as with other women’s magazines of the time, all presumed to be women.

In contrast, the participants in the letter section of women’s magazines diversified with the efforts of *Shufu no tomo*. One can find various kinds of female contributors in the readers’ letters section: not only housewives of middle-class and privileged households, who were conventionally regarded as the primary readers of the women’s magazine, but also young school girls, a mother-

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56 The March 1920 issue (p. 155) provides one early example of this kind. Since space is limited, I will present below only examples from the early issues of *Shufu no tomo*, mainly between 1917 and 1920.
in-law eager to learn about current issues, highly educated privileged women, those who did not have the opportunity to receive a higher education due to their families’ financial conditions, factory workers, a woman who became a geisha to support her family, and so on. One can even see an elementary school pupil among the contributors.

Readers of and contributors to women’s magazines were no longer limited to women, since Shufu no tomo’s reclassification of this magazine genre as a “family/home magazine.” Since its “feminization” around the turn of the century, women’s magazines restricted contributions to women. Some women’s magazines, including Fujin sekai, even made it clear with special instructions that men were prohibited from participating in the magazine. This constraint was broken by Shufu no tomo. As early as June 1917, a letter from a man appeared in the magazine, maintaining that he was “an avid reader of Shufu no tomo even though I am a man.” After that, letters from male readers consistently appeared in the magazine. In 1920, for instance, out of 170 letters in total, 23 letters came from male readers. In other words, 12% of all letters—that is, 1 letter out of 8 every month—were sent from male readers. If we were to include letters from female readers saying that they were reading the magazine with their husbands, male siblings, or fathers, the ratio of male readers mentioned in the readers’ letters section would increase further.

Because of his belief that the family was the fundamental unit of society and country, and perhaps with the added intention of raising circulation, Ishikawa encouraged potential male readers to write letters and contributions to the editors, insisting that the magazine was intended for a family

58 Feb. 1920, 155 (a house mistress/teacher of a girls’ boarding school).
61 Nov. 1920, 159.
62 11 years old: April 1920, 178–179; 4th grade in elementary school: Nov. 1920, 154. The latter’s letter implied that she read the magazine with her mother.
predicated on a married couple as well as for those who wanted to be married in the future. For Ishikawa, “home is the enterprise conducted by the collaboration of man and woman,” for which both sexes need to discipline and cultivate themselves (shūyō) even before marriage.63

Just as with female readers, the social class and regions of addresses of male readers as well as their reasons for reading this women’s magazine varied. Some of them were intellectuals such as lawyers and university lecturers in cities, while others were farmers in the countryside. Some read the magazine to get spiritual instruction or to learn how to get along in life. Others read for leisure. Thus, readers were spread across all ages, regions, classes, education levels, and genders. Besides letters from female readers, one can find in its pages numerous letters sent from male readers, both married and single, like the following:

At first, I thought this magazine to be for women. But now, considering it as a Married Couple’s Friend, I always look forward to the publication of the next issue every month. Although a guy like me might be unsuitable as a member of your magazine community and I am afraid it might be a bother for you editors to read my letter, I am writing this to let you know that some in the lower class also read your magazine with delight and amusement. […] (July 1920, 194)

If we consider the number of men reading the women’s magazine with their female family members, the total number of male readers mentioned in the readers’ letters section increases even more. Some of the male contributors lived abroad or were in the field overseas and sent for the magazine through their wives.64 Some readers reported how they enjoyed reading the magazine with

63 Ishikawa July 1919, 158–159.
64 For example, the following letters from women mentioned their male relatives as readers: July 1917, 207 (a husband in the US); Oct. 1918, 158 (a husband on the front); Oct. 1919, 155–156 (a sister and
other members of the family.\(^{65}\)

Nowadays, my parents also read this magazine. On the arrival of a new issue, it is Father who first looks at it before I do. (Nov. 1919, 156)

In the evening, my husband and I read the magazine together repeatedly, commenting on articles or resolving ourselves to carry out those things that we find are good and relate to our life. (July 1920, 192)

As I read *Shufu no tomo* in this way, the whole family gathers around and listens to me with huge interest while carrying out their work. (Dec. 1919, 156)

Even marital status did not prevent people from becoming avid readers of the magazine. As seen in the following letters, there were single male readers as well. Some of them were reading the magazine in preparation for a future family life.\(^{66}\) Others were reading it simply because the magazine was interesting to read, as indicated in the following letter.

\(^{65}\) For example, June 1917, 132; Aug. 1917, 133; Jan. 1919, 142; Jan. 1920, 175; Feb. 1920, 159; May 1920, 155–156; June 1920, 155–157; July 1920, 194; Oct. 1920, 197. Letters referring to the practice of sharing the women’s magazine with all family members, including elderly couples, their sons and daughter-in-laws, and their grand-children, continued to regularly appear during the interwar period. On the variety of male readers in terms of age, class, and occupation, see Chapter Two of this dissertation and Nagamine 1997, 187–188, 193–194.

\(^{66}\) For example, June 1917, 133; July 1919, 158; Sept. 1919, 145 (2 letters); Jan. 1920, 175; Feb. 1920, 157–158; April. 1920, 182; Sept. 1920, 159.
It was the New Year issue of the 8th year of Taishō [=1919] that I saw your magazine for the first time. Seduced by “The Gold Fan (Kinsen)” by [Watanabe] Katei-sensei, I reached for the magazine and glanced through articles other than this novel. Then I found many components useful for men as well. Since the following month, I have been looking forward to the new issue of your magazine every month. […] Although, as a single guy, I wandered around aimlessly, thanks to the guidance of your magazine, my dreams were awakened and I have become a new man. (Jan. 1920, 175)

The wide range in backgrounds of the writers of letters to Shufu no tomo corroborates the common interest of male and female readers in a single periodical probably for the first time since readership was divided according to gender, age, and class, or educational level around the beginning of the 20th century.

Expansion of Themes

Reader contributions were not restricted to the letters section. Soon a wide range of readers started contributing longer, more detailed accounts voicing their feelings and experiences. One could now see personal life stories not only from female perspectives, but also from male viewpoints. At the same time, the writings submitted by readers also expanded in theme. Experiences of people from more diverse strata of society than ever were covered, some of which could not be simply categorized as “feminine” issues in a conventional sense. Now readers started expressing their own life experiences and drama in their own lives beyond, but not excluding, the domestic, or “feminine” sphere. Other readers expressed the joys of their family or business lives, such as happy marriages, birth of their children, recovery from illness, unfortunate first love, bitter experiences of adultery,
escapes from overwhelming debt, or success in their jobs. These readers’ writings on their own lives were so popular that they became one of the main factors that promoted Shufu no tomo to become the top-selling periodical in the country. This new type of reader contribution came to be called the “confessional story (kokuhaku kiji)” and spread among many other popular women’s magazines.67

Following the attempt in Shufu no tomo, other women’s magazines also gradually expanded the themes featured in reader contributions. Readers were no longer passive “receivers,” nor mere “recipients” of judgments by specialists. Neither were they confined exclusively within the domestic sphere to themes of housework and child-raising. A new accessible, seemingly “transparent” writing system as if reflecting the “reality” as well as a democratic editing policy allowed readers to exchange their ideas and feelings based on their own everyday life experiences, regardless of sex, class, birthplace, or living place.

As we can see in the above example from Fujokai, at first, articles based on readers’ contributions were mere literal statements, focusing solely on an explanation of the situation in question, without any narrative development. From such stories, we can infer the authors’ feelings and thoughts as they stated. But since they were rather short and, in many cases, written in a detached, matter-of-fact manner, they would not have aroused any kind of emotionally strong sentiment among readers. As time passed, however, the storytelling strategies of readers’ contributions became more complex and gradually started to stress narrative development. First, the sheer length of each contribution increased to several pages, which, more importantly, allowed the writing to develop chronological, detailed accounts of writers’ experiences and sentiments. Now readers learned not only the summary outcome of the contributor’s experience, but also the whole set of turbulent life events, sometimes lasting over many years, that had befallen the protagonist/writer. In addition, the

67 Similar changes occurred in the section of readers’ letters to the editor. More page space given to each letter allowed readers to express their own personal experiences and turmoil of feelings in greater detail. This also formed one of the sources of what came to be known as the “confessional story.”
characters appearing in each story were no longer restricted solely to the protagonist. Reading the words and actions of multiple individuals involved in a single story, readers could trace the kinds of sentiment—especially anguish and philosophical enlightenment—experienced by the protagonists through the course of their experiences.

These narrative features can be observed conspicuously in the following excerpt. The original story, appearing in 1921, spanned three pages.

Confession of My Failed Marriage: A Heartbroken Man Who Handed Over His Beloved Wife to His Younger Brother

--- Kōjin-sei (Yamaguchi)

◇ My Rash Marriage

Surely no one who has read Natsume Sōseki’s novel Kōjin (The Wayfarer) can forget the serious description of the psychological states of philosopher [and protagonist] Ichirō, whose imagination gradually became consumed by his suspicion of his wife and brother. Yet, not so many would have read that novel with sympathy, sighs, and emotions as deep as mine, for I myself have an agonizing memory just like Ichirō’s.

I was born in the countryside. My father was a sales broker of crops. […] [After graduating from a local municipal commercial school and obtaining business experience by helping at his father’s work, the protagonist launches his own business. As business improves, his younger brother, who graduated from the same school as he did, came to assist him at the job. At first, his mother and younger sister do household chores for him, but they are too busy to look after two homes. So the protagonist decides to marry a woman introduced by a certain matchmaker.]
Likening My Destiny to That of the Protagonist of *Kōjin*

[Although the protagonist was advised to see the woman first before making his final decision, he had to forego their first and last arranged meeting due to an urgent business trip, so he asked his brother to assess his bride-to-be in his place.]

[...] I told my brother. “Go and see the woman for me. Since you will call her ‘Sister,’ it is important for you to like her as well.” Having jokingly said this, I left for H-City.

“She is exactly the kind of person you will like,” my brother reported to me. Thinking back on it now, I think his cheeks may have flushed when he said it.

[Before long, the protagonist married her.]

[...] I would often stay away from home due to business. Once I went to H-City, sometimes I had to stay there for a couple of nights. Thus, my wife and brother spent many nights alone together under the same roof. More than once, when I would suddenly come home at midnight, I saw them with sparkling eyes, yet, on the surface, a demure attitude. I also came to hear unpleasant stories about them from my colleagues. They were like mysteries that seemed to be solved if one looked at them with suspicion.

After Divorce, My Wife Became My Brother’s

[One day, the protagonist had his brother read a pocket edition of Sōseki’s novel *Kōjin*, in which the protagonist’ elder brother is suffering from suspicions about the deep relationship between his wife and younger brother (protagonist), and later, finally asked his brother about his feelings for his sister-in-law.] Tears were flowing down his pale cheeks. “You dirty bastard!” I shouted by fits. “Then, tell me this at least. On the day when you came home after seeing M-ko, you said ‘you will like her,’ right?” Somehow composing myself, I continued to speak. My brother nodded slightly. “… What you
really meant by that was that you fell in love with her, huh? OK, then, I will give M-ko to you. Go back to Father’s place now.” Tears streamed from my eyes.

That night, my wife, M-ko, confessed everything to me, too. Listening to her carefully, I realized that it was indeed I myself who caused all the suffering. It was like the fault of a huntsman who, blinded by greed, chased a deer without looking around at the mountains or valleys.

My poor wife had mistakenly believed my brother, who had visited her house with the go-between, to be her future husband, that is, me. And from that time, she had deep feelings for my brother whom she thought to be me. Thus, when she saw me for the first time on the night of the wedding, she felt quite disappointed, as if she had been cheated, while she felt a quickening of her heartbeat when she caught my brother’s eyes. […]

In this way, after talking with my father, I gracefully divorced my wife, let M-ko become my brother’s wife, left my shop in Y-Town to them, and returned to my father’s place. Now I am going to get married to another woman; this time, our marriage will be based on mutual understanding. At least some good came out of my mistake. Although I could not concentrate on business, distressed by this issue, I took almost no hit by the price plunge.  (Shifu no tomo. April 1921, 106–108)

In this way, by the early 1920s, the confessional story had become a kind of short novel told by a first-person narrator. Thanks to constant references to specific times and places where the story was set, though sometimes abbreviated for anonymity, readers could easily feel a connection to actual times and places in the real world. A direct correspondence between the described world and the real world as well as detailed realistic descriptions intensified the “trustworthiness” and

68 In the text cited above, for example, this tendency appeared clearly in the part describing the two
“authenticity” of the narrative, just as they usually do for historical fiction and other kinds of romances.\(^69\) It came to provide readers with the similar type of narrative pleasures and safe imaginary adventures that popular novels offered, which also implied that dramatic moments were not just the stuff of fiction, but were to be found in the everyday lives of ordinary people.\(^70\) As I have shown in my analysis of this type of story in more detail elsewhere,\(^71\) such stories, usually with “happy endings” coming to people who have undergone some hardship, provided readers with what Ien Ang (1985) calls “melodramatic imagination,” with which they could overcome material meaninglessness in modern society,\(^72\) while teaching “vernacular sociology,” that is, a kind of thinking and writing that explained everyday life in terms of “the ascendant elite’s new social

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\(^69\) Radway 1984, 204–205. On the use of detailed description to intensify the realism of narratives, see also Bird 1992 (15, 17). According to David T. Z. Mindich, such realism, or what he calls empiricism, was not restricted to gossipy journalism: rather, it was also observed among relatively more serious newspapers, which contributed to constituting a tendency toward “objectivity” in modern American journalism (1998, 100, 103–106). In the post–Civil War US, the inclination toward “realism” became conspicuous both in visuals and text. As symbolized by photography, realist literature, and realistic articles in newspapers, not only in the arts, but also in the field of journalism, people of the time were increasingly interested in a “‘true’ representation of life” (Mindich 104). Many literary realists of the time, including Walt Whitman, who wrote, “The true poem is the daily paper,” started their careers as journalists (Mindich 104–105). David Shi points out that the literature of realism can be partly traced to advertisers’ claims that the effects of their products are real (1995, 95).

\(^70\) This point is well captured in the cited text’s allusion to the famous novel by Natsume Sōseki. While one could see this type of text as evidence that modern novels such as Sōseki’s had become popular among ordinary, not particularly highly educated people, it is also highly likely that such dramatically rendered “reader confessions” may well have been written by, or modified by the editors.

\(^71\) Maeshima 2011.

\(^72\) In her analysis of serialized TV melodramas (soap operas), Ien Ang (1985) drew on Peter Brooks’ observations on the boom of melodrama in 18th- and 19th-century France, which suggests parallels with the confessional story’s popularity. According to Brooks, people in this period turned to melodramas in order to fill a spiritual void and a need for the sublime (1976, 11–23). During this period, ways of life based on a strong faith in Christianity were being increasingly questioned and collapsing, while a new social imbalance emerged, resulting from the rise and spread of modern rationalism and industrialization. Presenting a world of spiritual equality, in which the virtuous always won in the end, as in the Japanese confessional story, French melodramas provided audiences and readers with a sense of hope amid a harsh reality where success for the poor and righteous became increasingly difficult to achieve. One could consider, then, that 20th-century Japanese “true stories” such as the confessional story functioned as quasi-melodramas in the sense that they provided a morally supportive narrative in ever-changing modern times.
relations (small families, companionate marriage, possessive individualism, and so on), and social practices (scientific birth control, domestic hygiene, professional training and so on)."  

**Egalitarian Community among Japanese Language Users**

Addresses from across the country appended under the writers’ names suggest that there was almost no geographical restriction for readers to become contributors to interwar popular women’s magazines. One can even find letters, other contributions, and applications to competitions from various regions including not only Japan and its colonies, but also outside of the territory of Japan at that time, from as far away as the US, Canada, China, Indonesia, and so on. The letters submitted to the May 1920 issue present a typically wide geographic range of writers’ addresses: Hiroshima, Bōnan, Zushi, Yokosuka, Kyoto, Kanagawa, Nasu (in Japan), Taiwan and Manchuria (colony and quasi-colony of Japan, respectively), and Medford, Oregon, in the USA (names of the addresses are as written in the original). In the readers’ letters section of that month, the editor encouraged contributions from readers abroad, while apologizing that “the magazine received so many letters from readers across the world that not all of them could be included due to limited space” (May 1920, 159). When a reader abroad inquired about the possibility of paying the subscription for

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74 For example, Korea: Sept. 1917, 133; Oct. 1917, 199; Sept. 1919, 146; Taiwan: Apr. 1920, 181; May 1920, 157.

75 On the early examples, see the following (addresses in parentheses are written as they appeared in the magazine): Mainland China: June 1917, 134 (Manshū [Manchuria]); April 1920, 177–178 (Ryojun [Lüshun]); May 1920, 155–156 (Ryōyō [Liaoyang]); Aug. 1920, 158 (Sankaikan [Shanhaiguan]). North America: Nov. 1919, 159 (Canada, Victoria); April 1920, 183 (Los Angeles in the US); May 1920, 158–159 (Medford, State of Oregon, USA); Aug. 1920, 157–158 (British Canada); Sept. 1920, 157 (Canada, Steveston); Dec. 1920, 156 (Oakland, North America). There were also letters from readers who wanted to send issues of the magazine or related goods to their relatives or friends abroad: June 1919, 142 (to a sister in the US); Oct. 1919, 155–156 (to a younger sister and her husband in the US); Jan. 1920, 172 (to a friend in Hankou [present Wuhan]).
20 years, Ishikawa pleaded with the inquirer to reduce the duration to 10 years at the most, considering the unforeseeable future of the magazine. In this way, restrained yet proud, the magazine gave recognition to the magazine’s entrenched popularity as well as the number of international subscribers to the readers.

Letters from people in remote places far away from “Inland Japan (naichi)” describing their everyday lives and everyday feelings, must have appealed to the readers’ sense of exoticism and given them a feeling of intimacy toward the writers and their home regions. A letter from Taiwan read:

It’s getting hotter little by little. How are you, Mr. Editor? When it comes to Taiwan, people who do not know it well would immediately think of a place overgrown with tropical plants, an eternally hot place regardless of the season, or a dangerous place overrun by malaria. But it’s not such a frightening place. Indeed, Tainan Province has some traits of the tropics, but the northern parts are not so different from inland Japan [naichi]. The only difference is just that one can see here the houses and customs of the aboriginal people [dojin].

The beauty of cities in Taiwan is incomparable to Japan. All the houses were built of red brick and not a few buildings are big. My husband is working at a public school [elementary school] in the countryside of Xinzhu Province. Our village has only two Japanese houses, that is, a police box and our place. [...] These days, girl students in our neighborhood visit us, so I teach them knitting. They are quite good at it. [...] (April 13th. Taiwan Xinzhu Province, Masaoka Kahoru). (June 1921, 155–156)

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76 Ishikawa 1940, 56.
77 The information in parentheses, immediately following the text, stating the date, place, and author’s name, is presented here as it appears on the magazine page. The information about the publication date in the following parentheses is my addition. The practice of occasionally inserting letters from readers in Japan’s colonies to describe their lives, as if emphasizing the cultural diversity of the empire,
While most contributors were ethnically Japanese, ethnically non-Japanese writers were not excluded. From time to time, non-Japanese readers in the US, Europe, or China would send their letters to the magazine. In most of the cases, their letters appeared in the magazine as translated versions. A little later, from around the end of the 1920s and particularly since the mid-1930s, non-Japanese indigenous peoples of the Japanese overseas territories \( (\text{gaichi}) \) occasionally added their voices through letters or round-table talks to the magazine, though their appearance was relatively limited.

Sometimes a single person would repeatedly mail letters to the editor. An American Japanophile, Mrs. Barker, was one of them. After a visit to Japan, she sent a letter to the magazine, maintaining that she did not feel as though she were in a foreign country during her trip, but that it was just like visiting friends or relatives, and wished for friendship between the US and Japan (Aug. 1920, 154). About a year later, readers heard from her once again. Her next letter appeared in the June issue of the next year.

80 Another example of an ethnically non-Japanese contributor to the magazine is Hannah Riddell, a British Christian missionary who founded a hospital Kaishun Byō’in, in Kumamoto, specializing in treatment of Hansen’s disease. As a Christian interested in social services, Ishikawa was greatly impressed by her life, inserted articles about her and her activities and collected donation of hats for the patients from readers (Ishikawa 1940, 43–44). On her controversial life, sometimes hailed for her devotion to the patients of a then-considered-incurable disease, at other times criticized for her luxurious lifestyle, extreme exhibitionism, political shrewdness, and imposition of strict austerities on the patients in her hospital, see Julia Boyd 1996; Jingo Tobimatsu 1993 (reprint of the original published by Kaishun Byō’in in Kumamoto in 1937); Uchida Mamoru and Shiga Kazuchika ed. 1976; 78 A few such early examples were letters from an American woman (Aug. 1920, 154) and a French woman in Dairen [Dalian] (Sep. 1920, 155–156).
79 The followings are examples of such round-table talks: Sep. 1936 (Taiwanese indigenous people); Sep. 1938 (Korean women); Nov. 1938 (Chinese and Japanese men and women).
Dear editors of *Shufu no tomo*,

Thank you very much for presenting me the issue of *Shufu no tomo* that included my letter addressed to your readers in Japan. I appreciate it very much as well that you gave me an opportunity to give my best regards to the Japanese people through your magazine. I will treasure this as long as I live, in remembrance of the wonderful days that I shared with my friends in your country during my visit to Japan. [...] On the occasion of the New Year, I wish eagerly from the bottom of my heart for the day that Japan and the US will be bound by ties of friendship. [...] (January 1st, 1921, State of Minnesota, the USA, “Powdered Green Tea Shop” Mrs. Barker) (June 1921, 154)

Reading these letters from all over the world, including both Japanese and non-Japanese, readers could imagine themselves as members of an international, multicultural, or cosmopolitan community without distinctions where the only qualification necessary to join was enough command of the Japanese language to read and write contributions. As long as they could understand the Japanese language, anyone was regarded and treated as a member of this magazine community—or, at least, so it appeared. It might be more accurate to say that the only requirement for membership was an interest in Japan and a willingness to join the magazine community, for in the case of non-Japanese contributors, they did not even need Japanese language ability. Some of their letters were translated from other languages into Japanese for the readers.

**Sympathy among Readers**

In general, readers’ letters provided feedback on the content of previous issues or reactions

to letters and longer personal “confessions” of others, as well as insights as to how they entertained or consoled themselves by reading the magazine. In the democratized women’s magazine, however, the reader did not just offer feedback to the magazines in their letters. They gradually started to exchange deeper communication with editors, writers, and other readers than ever before. This trend was, once again, led by Shufu no tomo. At first, the communication was conducted mainly in the form of exchanging information about matters of everyday life or advertising gatherings and events they organized. Information about medicine and good hospitals was the most often discussed topic in the early reader letters section, between about the 1910s and early 1920s.

Readers also exchanged emotional sympathy with each other. As shown above, they frequently described troubling experiences they had, confessed their anguish, and even asked for advice from the editor and/or other readers. The following series of letters is an early example of such communication. In the March 1920 issue (159), one worried woman submitted a letter asking for advice.

Please excuse me for posting such a personal letter in your precious magazine space. I ask you to extend your sympathy to me and give me some advice through the Reader Letters section. I am currently working at a silk reeling factory. While working at a public office, my husband is now studying for an exam to become a clerk. My teacher at the factory school recommends that I go to Tokyo and become a governess there, but my husband won’t approve of this idea. […] I would like to live in Tokyo, while at the same time, I am worried about it and think it would be better to remain at the factory. Please, Editor, have

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81 May 1917, 134; June 1917, 133; July 1917, 208, to name a few.
83 For example, May 1917, 132, 133.
some compassion for me, a woman suffering such worries, and give me some advice. (A Worried Woman from San’in)

In response to this letter asking for advice, the editor maintained that both a factory worker and a teacher are working persons, each occupation deserving of respect, and made the following suggestion: “Please endeavor to work at your current occupation to become a first-class model female factory worker” (March 1920, 159). Two month later, this was followed by a further letter of response from another reader.

Dear editor,

Reading every issue of your magazine with sincerity, I’ve come to learn that I am not alone in an unhappy situation. In particular, the “Worried Woman” in San’in, whose letter appeared in the March issue, had a quite similar experience to mine, although I am single. I myself am working at a local electric company. The spring before last, I quit a girls’ school without completing the program. Since then, I’ve spent many days in anguish crying that I should have enjoyed life as a young girl, and in the end I have become a factory worker. There was not a single day when I didn’t cry with self-misery. However, that was silliness. Now that I have come to know this magazine, I’m going to the factory every day with hope now that I have this magazine as my only best friend. (March 6th, Kanagawa, Itoko) (May 1920, 158)

There also was no gender boundary in such sympathetic emotional exchanges, as seen in the following example of a woman’s letter reacting to a male reader’s letter in the previous issue.
Dear Mr. “A Man in Tokyo Prefecture,”

How pitiful your life is! In reading your letter, I cried such hot tears that I could not keep reading and buried my face on my desk. My three-year-old daughter, Keiko, looked at me quizzically, with a sad face. That evening, I showed it to my husband, saying “there is such a poor person.” After he read it, I saw a shining teardrop in his eyes. For a while, unable to say a single word, we just cried in sympathy, considering your feelings, you poor man. We also lost our three-year-old daughter in the autumn of the 6th year of Taisho [=1917] and our deep sorrow never ends. But compared to your sad experience, our misery is nothing. We feel deeply sorry for you. If we lived near you, I wish I could put a flower on the grave of your family. I wish you health. […] (July 1920, 192)

In this way, feeling the existence of other people who were enduring various hardships by reading their letters, readers created an intimate virtual community in which they were connected closely with each other through ties of sympathy, often crying for others.

**Beyond the Magazine Pages: Open Charity Events**

As *Shufu no tomo* gained a nation-wide readership, it also became a source of more important and urgent information: one can gradually see an increase in searches for missing persons or old friends with whom contact had been lost, and advertisements looking for partners or adopted children (Oct. 1919, 158). One reader, for instance, was searching for the father of her friend, who was missing.84 another, for a friend’s husband who had left home after getting married without any

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84 Oct. 1920, 198–199. In the next two months, the magazine presented 19 letters offering information concerning this inquiry (Nov. 1920, 158–159). Fortunately, the inquirer received useful information and sent a thankful message to the magazine (Dec. 1920, 154).
particular reason and whose whereabouts had been unknown since he sent a letter from Taiwan.\textsuperscript{85} As for the latter case, the month after the letter was posted in the magazine, it received submissions about possible matching persons from all over the country, including overseas territories of Japan. The magazine, then, functioned like a nation-wide media just as major contemporary newspapers did.\textsuperscript{86}

Communication among readers was not confined to the two-dimensional level; interaction went beyond the pages of the magazine. Some readers reacted to letters or accounts from those with troubles so deeply that they actually helped these poor people in reality. For example, several months after a letter from a distressed maid who got impregnated by her master appeared in the magazine (May 1919, 143), a reader sent a letter to the editor offering to become a matchmaker for her (Sep. 1919, 146). Gradually, readers started helping each other not only by offering useful information or encouraging comments to others, but also by giving more concrete, material presents such as money or practical gifts, especially to the financially less fortunate.

At times, such activities were initiated by readers’ suggestions. Raising funds for readers in trouble or sending old (or new) issues of the magazine every month to those who could not afford them was commonly practiced. Soon after a letter from a widow in need with six children appeared in the reader letters section, another reader sent a letter offering this woman a one-year subscription to the magazine (May 1920, 159). This kind of charity continued to be conducted among readers through the reader letters section well into the 1930s. For example, when a third-grade elementary pupil in Okayama asked for help for her sick mother, whose medical payments for rheumatism no longer allowed her the funds to purchase a monthly subscription of \textit{Shufu no tomo}, which she had

\textsuperscript{85} Sept. 1920, 154–155. As early as the next month’s issue, the editor received letters from two witnesses, one from Tainan in Taiwan, and the other from Dalian in China (Oct. 1920, 198).

\textsuperscript{86} The magazine’s function as a source of more humane journalism was quite effective, especially on such critical occasions as the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923.
been reading for years since 1924 (Oct. 1932, 573), as quickly as the next month offers of used issues and thank you messages from the girl and the editor appeared (Nov. 1932, 546). Most of these letters of appeal for help, including the last example above, were accompanied by a call from the editor for the attention and kindness of other readers.

As seen above, presenting money or gifts to those in need constituted a kind of charitable activity. Sometimes such charitable acts were motivated by voluntary feelings on the part of the readers, as shown above. At other times, and more often, they were led and encouraged by the editors, as if they were magazine-related events, and became gradually larger in scale. The first charity event of this kind was a donation of hats to patients of leprosy. When the first article on this charity event appeared in the June 1917 issue, the magazine used the reader letters section to call for the donation of hats to a certain hospital that specialized in leprosy (June 1917, 131). The section promoted this volunteer activity for four months and managed to raise 261 hats within a few months (Sept. 1917, 131–132). The July and September issues published the donors’ names along with thank you messages from the head of the hospital (July 1917, 205; Sept. 1917, 131–132). The listing of the addresses and names of all the donors must have appealed to their pride and brought fresh attention to the wide reach of the magazine community, which spread all over the country and even beyond its national boundaries. Such honorary reference to the donors would also have stimulated readers’ desire to participate in the magazine community even more actively as donors or contributors. As shown above, feeling strong sympathy for those suffering hardship, readers tried to send encouraging words as well as donations to these people.

Sometimes a donation campaign grew into a long-term commitment to the recipients. One of the earliest charity campaigns of this kind was the donation project for Yoshiko, the young daughter of a consul in Nikolaevsk. When Japanese troops were dispatched to Siberia after the

87 “Big Charity with One Old Hat” (June 1917, 91).
Russian Revolution in 1917, a group of Russian partisans indiscriminately massacred the Japanese residents at Nikolaevsk between March and May 1920 (an incident known as the Nikō jiken). Facing this tragedy, all the family members of Consul Ishida killed themselves leaving the youngest daughter, Yoshiko, alone alive in Japan. The massacre was extensively reported in the Japanese media. Shufu no tomo featured the incident, too, but mainly focused on the family of the consul and the little girl (Aug. 1920, 105–113), a typical strategy among new mass-media to publish human interest stories focusing on a few specific persons. In the same issue, a letter from a friend of the wife of Consul Ishida was posted in the reader letters section (Aug. 1920, 155–156), and was followed by an appeal from the editor to readers to raise charity funds for this poor orphaned girl, Yoshiko (Aug. 1920, 156). The results of the donations were reported in the reader letters sections of the September, November, and December issues of 1920.88 Within a few months, the magazine had collected donations from readers totaling 993.4 yen (Nov. 1920, 154–155), for which a relative of Yoshiko wrote a thank-you letter (Dec. 1920, 159). The money was deposited into a bank as education insurance for her future. About a decade later, the grown-up Yoshiko received the money and sent a letter to the editor expressing her gratitude. The massive campaign-like charity activities led by periodicals had counterparts in contemporary Britain as well as the US.89

In this way, the both male and female readers of interwar popular women’s magazines were actively involved in the formation of the magazine community, both within and beyond the printed

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89 Ishikawa may well have gotten the idea from similar British and American efforts due to his interest in Western print media, especially from these two countries. In addition, having been a Christian since his teens, however pious he might or might not have been, Ishikawa was familiar with the concept of “service” and “charity” in a religious sense. In his writings, he repeatedly cited these concepts as the essence of his publishing enterprise. The Japanese words “charity (jizen)” and “service (hōshi)” have strong associations with Christianity, though similar concepts were not nonexistent before missionaries from the West (mostly from North America) came to Japan starting in the late 19th century. Ishikawa often used these terms, especially “service (hōshi),” frequently with direct reference to his belief in Christianity (Ishii 1940, 264–265, 297, Ishikawa 1940, 42–47, 119, 240–241; Ishikawa 1944, 48).
page, which at the same time must have contributed to giving readers a sense of unity and emotional connectedness to each other. This kind of large-scale charitable activity was repeatedly practiced whenever disasters or wars occurred, for example after the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923\(^{90}\) or during the second Sino-Japanese War. Sending articles of comfort (imon bukuro) to soldiers on the front, then, should be considered a variation of such volunteer events rather than a special wartime collaboration between the publisher and the authorities, as has often been described in previous studies on these activities.

**Limits of an Intimate, Egalitarian Utopia**

**Disempowerment of the Reader**

As shown above, the visibility of readers in both magazine content and events beyond the two-dimensional limitations of the popular women’s magazine was outstanding in the interwar period. It is quite tempting to conclude that the power of readers in the magazine community increased in this type of periodical as well as in those imitating its style. Such an assertion, however, requires some caution. Indeed, the position of readers in women’s magazines did appear to be empowered as far as their role as participants in magazine making. As for the nature of their contributions, on the one hand, they were now not merely a passive audience of provided texts, but rather they became (potential) creators able to offer writings on their own ideas and experiences to the magazine. Their writings were no longer judged by experts or commented on by editors. Occupying almost the same amount of space and presented in a format with the full names of the writers at the beginning of each piece of text, reader contributions were treated in roughly a similar manner to those by specialists or professional writers. The decrease in writings by experts further

\(^{90}\) On the support activities for victims of the Great Kanto Earthquake organized by *Shufu no tomo*, see Ishida (2004, 169–184).
enhanced the visibility of readers in the women’s magazine. Readers could even initiate new components or events. Such active, conscious commitment to the magazine (and its related events) must have left readers with a strong feeling that it was they who made the magazine world go around, and that it was no longer exclusively the publisher’s domain.

Not only did readers seem to be more empowered than “experts” such as editors and professional writers, they also looked as if they were treating each other equally without regard for class, education, region of residence, gender, and even ethnicity. There was no conspicuous difference in format between submissions from highly educated contributors and less educated ones. As already stated, both genders participated in the magazine community, no matter how old they were. Communication and exchange, both imaginary and material, were observed among a wide range of readers. Even contributors’ marital status did not result in obvious differences in the manner in which their writings were treated, for interwar mass-market women’s magazines declared themselves as “family magazines,” necessary for anyone interested in domestic matters, married or not.

Still, however, closer scrutiny of the interrelatedness between the attributions of the contributors and the format of their writings would reveal that there were some less visible, yet undeniable, discrepancies among contributors. The most perceptible among them were the differences between texts by experts or professional writers and those by readers. Though appearing almost the same at a glance, the former tended to occupy larger amounts of space than the latter. The font size of the story titles, headings, and authors’ names accompanying the invited writings by professionals were also larger than those written by ordinary people. While professional writers and experts were introduced by their specific social titles or qualifications, such was not the custom in the case of reader contributions. Instead, they were presented with reference to their address of residence. Though their occupations were occasionally mentioned, seldom, if ever, were there
detailed references as to their specific positions.

Likewise, readers were not treated quite as the equals of editors, either. However reader-oriented a magazine might now may appear, and however invisible the editors became, it was still the editorial staff who selected contributions for publication and decided what themes would be dealt with in them. Editors no longer openly evaluated reader submissions, nor did they openly make comments or give “lessons” to the readers, relinquishing their former position as “leader,” “instructor,” or “inspirer” of the readers. Rather, through the use of more accessible forms of expression and an intimate tone, they tried to reposition themselves as “friends” or at least “friendly and reliable consultant figures” to the readers. Yet, it was the editors, after all, who controlled the entire content of the magazine as well as its related events.

The ostensible expansion of reader contributions in terms of content can also be regarded as a cunning means of restricting them. Indeed, now readers could write about various issues: they could narrate their own personal experiences together with their feelings, offer useful information or advice concerning diverse topics ranging from daily life to the way to navigate the world, or encourage other people through their writings. Yet, the space where they could exercise their creative or imaginative powers was highly restricted. Unlike in the previous decade, it became quite rare for readers to become professional writers, novelists, or poets by means of their submissions to magazines, because their creative work was confined within specific monthly features. In these sections, moreover, long creative texts, such as novels or essays were no longer published, unlike in previous days. Thus, readers were now allowed to write only about their own first-hand experiences, but were not expected to produce creative works or commentaries to impress and fascinate other readers. In other words, the boundary between professional writers and amateurs widened, reflecting the intensified professionalism during the interwar period.91

91 In this regard, it can be said that it was Fujin kōron rather than Shufu no tomo that opened the public
Discrepancies among Contributors

In the printed pages of the popular women’s magazines, the seemingly equal relationship between the sexes was not balanced either. This is especially obvious in the makeup of the editorial board: not only were they regarded as “different” from male workers, female editors were not allowed to have control over various women’s magazines. The most powerful editors of the time were all male. Although the number of female editors increased, only five out of eleven women’s magazines listed in “Recent Tendencies of Women’s Magazines” (a report about an investigation on women’s magazines conducted by the Bureau of Police and Public Security at the Ministry of Home Affairs) had female chief editors and most of these were working at relatively small periodicals targeting highly educated women. In contrast, almost all the chief editors of popular women’s magazines were male, except for Ōta Kikuko of Fujokai. And even Ōta was said to have been under the control of the publisher’s male president and former chief editor, Tsugawa Tasumi. The editorial board of Shufu no tomo was also male-centered. While more and more women worked for the magazine, the chief editors were all men, a practice that would continue even long after WWII.

Similarly, even among readers’ contributions, one can observe disparities in terms of their treatment.

sphere to both women and men relatively equally, for the former magazine published not only reader letters, but also opinion essays or columns by readers. Still, one should also remember that the types of people who were able to enter this egalitarian public sphere were extremely limited to those privileged few who were well-educated enough to be able to write such logical articles on even abstract issues. In other words, while Shufu no tomo’s magazine community excelled in terms of the breadth of social range and the number of its readers, women’s magazines in the form of general magazines, such as Fujin kōron, were superior in terms of equality within the magazine community.

92 The five magazines with female chief editors were Fujin no tomo (The chief editor: Hani Motoko), Fujokai (Ōta Kikuko), Nyonin geijutsu (Hasegawa Shigure), Fujin undō (Oku Mumeo), and Fujin shinpō (edited by the Japan Women’s Christian Temperance Union) (Naimushō Keihokkyoku July 1929, X 25–27).

93 Naimushō Keihokkyoku July 1929, X 25. As a rare female chief editor and reportedly the first one of a magazine, she was interviewed by a newspaper reporter (Ōba 1990, Chapter 2).

94 Chiba et al. 1928, 113; Nakamura July 1928, 12–13.
Quite a few female authors were introduced by their husbands’ titles, such as “Mrs. XX, the wife of [the husband’s professional title].” One cannot find an opposite example, that is, introducing a male author with his wife’s social title, among the articles of this period, although, naturally, when the authors were professional writers or specialists, they usually appeared by their full names with their job titles, such as violinist or professor. Thus, an ordinary woman was identified not as an individual but by her role in the family (mother, wife, or daughter), a practice that is still not uncommon in Japanese popular media.

While the places mentioned as contributors’ addresses varied, they tended to be big cities around the country. In addition, when their addresses were within metropolitan cities, their specific locations, even details like the names of the districts, were mentioned. On the other hand, if contributors were from other regions, only the names of their towns were specified. In the case of those in Japan’s peripheries, especially its (quasi-) colonies, there was no reference even to the names of the prefectures. For instance, when a letter or contribution was mailed from Korea, the contributor was introduced simply as a person living “in Korea.” There is no clue as to exactly where in the Korean Peninsula the person lived.

The ideals of egalitarianism and cosmopolitanism advocated in the texts in question functioned not only to include, but also to exclude certain groups of people from this seemingly universal utopia called the modern world. Not all classes appeared as frequent contributors in the interwar popular women’s magazine, either. While contributors to the interwar popular women’s magazine were no longer limited exclusively to the highly educated or the upper- to upper-middle classes as in former periods, most participants were from the lower middle class or higher. In the pages of these periodicals, it was almost impossible to find “voices” representing people from lower

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95 For example, Sep. 1917, 133; Oct. 1917, 199; Sep. 1919, 146, to name a few. This custom continued well into the 1930s (see Aug. 1930, 477).
classes in society who suffered from poverty and struggled to survive. Nor were people from all ethnic groups featured in the magazine. Whereas there were some submissions from colonies and quasi-colonies of Japan, it was quite rare to find texts written by non-Japanese people. While contributions by Japanese emigrants and their children in North and South Americas and the like sometimes appeared, letters from Caucasian “friends,” such as the above-mentioned Mrs. Barker in the US (Aug. 1920, 154; June 1921, 154) and a French woman living in Dalian (Sept. 1920, 155–156), were included only occasionally, as if simply to furnish a multicultural or cosmopolitan tone to the magazine community. As for non-Japanese, non-Caucasian people, their voices were hardly ever “heard” in this seeming egalitarian magazine community, just like those of ethnically Japanese people living in slums. When such people did appear in articles, they were the target of observation or reports by others. In this way, there was a distinct hierarchy even among this seemingly egalitarian interwar women’s magazine community.

Cultural and historical specificities tended to be elided as well. When all the writings were presented in the colloquial style, reflecting the “standard language” (hyōjungo), most dialects disappeared. Moreover, since all the stories were rendered in certain narrative patterns, similar to folklore, one could obtain knowledge about various people’s lives through their voices only by skimming their stories, yet the knowledge was restricted to the limitations of the narrative patterns, no matter how much specific detail was described in them. Consequently, readers faced countless similar accounts with different specifics, ignoring the socio-historical-cultural backgrounds of each example. This was especially the case with accounts of indigenous people in the colonies. In the 1930s, Shufu no tomo and other popular magazines published articles that dealt with their lives and sometimes even included their own voices. Yet, most topics were rendered in Japanese just as domestic issues from the countryside, without any explanation of their cultural specifics. Furthermore, the vestiges of their own voices were literally eliminated in the Japanese texts. Thus,
the intimate colloquial writing style betrayed the seeming “transparency” on its surface.

**Staging the Intimate, Egalitarian Utopian Empire**

By now it should be obvious that the increasing visibility of readers in the magazine community was, in effect, double-edged. Indeed, they were now active participants in this community and able to express their concerns publicly in their own “voices” (writings). Their positions as contributors to the magazine had been considerably upgraded, and they were being treated in almost equal fashion to the professionals. They could even make suggestions to the publishers and influence some content or events. The publishers of periodicals had to pay more attention to their readers’ demands and desires. Yet, the promotion of the reader within this imagined community was still highly restricted, with discrepancies among contributors, both professional and amateur, and editors. Thus, empowering and disempowering of the reader were at work simultaneously.

The seeming egalitarianism and cosmopolitanism among contributors and featured people in the magazine community was “staged” as well. While addressing “all readers,” the popular women’s magazine actually echoed the voices only of certain groups of people, although their range spread much wider than before. As long as people could speak Japanese and could afford the magazine—whether new or used, or through group purchase—they could submit their contributions, expressing their feelings, thoughts, and experiences by themselves and share them with other readers. However, those who were so poor that they were out of the reach of the print media or those who were perceived as ethnically or culturally different from the dominant “Japanese,” would not appear as ordinary contributors. When they did appear at all, they usually served as the targets of observation or analysis, or, when they were allowed to speak (in Japanese), as “special guests.”

In this respect, it is quite telling that photo reportages and round-table talks featuring
ethnically non-Japanese people living in the Empire appeared in the 1930s, when Japan became increasingly isolated in international politics, as if attempting to reinforce the idealized “multicultural” national self-image. Still, it should not be overlooked that even when their voices started appearing on the magazine pages, one can find hardly any sympathetic or intimate responses to them from the readers, which is quite notable in this otherwise deeply empathetic magazine community. Thus, emotional exchanges among readers and contributors were neither reciprocal nor even. They were, in fact, quite unbalanced. In a sense, then, one could conclude that by employing a seemingly “transparent” intimate colloquial writing style, the interwar mass-market women’s magazine provided the Japanese publishing world with a more cunning means of controlling or manipulating the readers within the magazine community, leaving them with a strong sense of empowerment as conscious participators in this community that was represented as an inclusive, cosmopolitan utopia, while at the same time, faintly but surely revealing its discrepancies.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

In the previous chapters, I have examined the changes in print/reading culture brought about by the interwar mass-market women’s magazine and considered their implications in the context of the interrelated category formation of periodical genres and genders, as well as the emergence of seemingly “democratic” (i.e., inclusive and egalitarian) editorial and promotional strategies in Japan.

The first chapter (the Introduction) gave an overview of previous studies on mass-market women’s magazines in interwar Japan and highlighted their limitations. While its enormous popularity was occasionally mentioned, the mass-market women’s magazine in interwar Japan has been largely marginalized in both Japanese and English-language academia. On the one hand, due to the tendencies to focus on big publishers famous for their “general” magazines and those still powerful in the present-day industry, historical studies of modern Japanese publishing treated interwar popular women’s magazines and their publishers as a mere ephemeral example of the early stage of democratization of periodicals. Women’s history studies, on the other hand, were so concerned with reconstructing the intellectual women’s “voices” from their texts that they tended to underestimate the interwar mass-market women’s magazine. When scholars investigated interwar popular women’s magazines, they tended to problematize their collaboration with the war-time governmental policies. Since the 1990s, however, historians have started paying more serious attention to the interwar mass-market women’s magazines, either as an important periodical genre worthy of enriching research in modern Japanese publishing history, or as useful “historical materials” in considering the discursive formation of various modern concepts and practices. Several recent groundbreaking studies even pointed out the importance of the mass-market women’s magazine in interwar Japan. Yet, no prior studies have investigated the interwar mass-market women’s magazines
on their own, nor considered their significance as a periodical genre in the contexts of history of modern Japanese print/reading culture and their intersections with category formations of gender and cultural hierarchy.

As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, close examination of diverse periodicals published from the late 19th century to the late interwar period in Japan, the contemporary commentaries on them, and surveys on their readership and circulation revealed that the women’s magazine was, just like other periodical genres, not static in its contents (themes), editing style, or readership. Rather, it changed over time. Contradictory as it may appear, the so-called women’s magazine was not a periodical genre exclusively targeting female readers. With few differences from the “general magazine” for male intellectuals, the Japanese women’s magazine in the late 19th century also attracted male readers. Gradually, however, toward the end of the 19th century, topics related to the domestic sphere and private life came to be considered “feminine”: they retreated from general magazines and instead appeared only in women’s magazines. The early 20th century had observed gendered differentiation among magazines in terms of their editing style as well. Publishing mainly articles on topics related to the domestic sphere and reducing the number of articles on the public sphere, mostly written in the colloquial desu/masu style and often accompanied with illustrations, by the 1910s, the women’s magazine had fully become “feminized” and clearly differentiated from the text-oriented general magazine that included articles on issues concerning the public sphere, written in either the classical writing style or the da/de aru style, perceived as colloquial yet more “detached” and “formal” than the desu/masu style. Now it had become embarrassing for men to read a women’s magazine, for the general magazine became perceived as “standard.”

The transformation of the Japanese women’s magazine did not cease and continued even during the interwar period. Their adoption of vivid modes of textual and visual expressions, namely,
more orality-oriented articles accompanied with snap photos such as interviews and round-table talks, their inclination to discuss topics related to entertainment and domestic/private issues, epitomized by illustrated serialized novels, articles concerning show-business, human-interest stories, and informative yet enjoyable practical articles, and heavy emphasis on readers’ involvement—such new editing and promoting strategies developed in interwar mass-market women’s magazine such as Fujin sekai, Fujokai, Shufu no tomo, and Fujin kurabu—started appealing to a wide range of readers regardless of their age, social class, educational level, and even gender. While retaining its guise as the “women’s magazine” originally targeting female readers, the periodical genre functioned as the home entertainment magazine, which could be called “transfeminization” of the women’s magazine.

As the previous chapters showed, by the 1930s, the mass-market women’s magazine had become a distinct, supremely popular magazine genre with the most innovative editorial and promotional strategies of its time. It included diverse and voluminous articles rendered in a very colloquial writing style and accompanied by illustrations and photos printed using the latest technologies, which allowed readers to practice a new reading style of “browsing/looking at” pages rather than attentively “reading” them. This new editing style and the concomitant “browsing” reading mode was to become the standard in the post-war print/reading culture in Japan. With enjoyable practical articles, human interest stories, and various entertaining writings and visuals, its readers could obtain the information necessary to survive the ever-changing modern society for a relatively low price, while being entertained at the same time. In interwar Japan, such combination of comprehensive information and entertainment was unobtainable from “serious” periodical genres such as the newspaper or the general magazine, or even from other popular magazines that were more text- and moral-oriented or dedicated to a specific sort of entertainment. The revolutionary changes in the interwar women’s magazine’s editorial and promotional strategies were made possible by its extensive collaboration with the newly established nation-wide systematized industries of
distribution and advertising. The society’s ardor for the modern “cultured” lifestyle also secured the magazine genre’s long-time stable popularity even after the launch of the “national magazine” *Kingu* in 1924.

Thanks to its accessible editorial and promotional styles, the mass-market women’s magazine attracted readers from quite a wide range of social classes, including men, who had strayed away from women’s magazines after their “feminization” around the turn of the century. At the same time, these accessible styles gradually became dominant in the Japanese publishing industry. While a similar move toward more accessible styles could also be observed among other contemporary periodicals, including “serious” ones, as I pointed out in Chapter Four, it was the “transfeminized” mass-market women’s magazine that received the severest criticism, demonstrating just how subversive it was to the existing print/reading culture, which had situated the masculine as “general” and the feminine as “deviant.” My research of the contemporary commentaries on and readership surveys of the mass-market women’s magazine also revealed that, despite intense criticism from the intellectuals, the new reading culture introduced by this periodical genre had become firmly rooted among various people in the interwar period.

Chapter Five considered the democratic nature of readers’ involvement and its limits. Extensive readers’ involvement was one of the new editing and promoting strategies highly developed in the interwar mass-market women’s magazine. The women’s magazine offered opportunities for readers to actively participate in magazine-making by contributing letters, writings, ideas or designs for competitions, and also made it possible for them to join the magazine community indirectly as readers of the articles or visitors to the related events, which, along with the articles, became increasingly commercialized and extensively advertised. Although seemingly democratic and egalitarian, this magazine community, in fact maintained an unequal relationship between its editors and readers, to the extent at which the readers participation in the magazine-making was
limited and controlled by the editors. There were disparities among the readers as well. Certain groups of people—namely those suffering poverty and those ethnically non-Japanese citizens of the empire—were underrepresented in the magazines. Their voices hardly appeared in the magazine, and, instead, they were usually the target of “discussion” or “observation,” and not the focus of “sympathy,” which was otherwise often bilaterally exchanged between readers and article contributors or people featured in articles.

As I showed in the previous chapters, during the interwar period, the mass market women’s magazine played a pivotal role in the transformation and innovation of print/reading culture in Japan. It is notable that the discursive formation of such a seemingly inclusive, egalitarian utopian image of the empire, enabled by the accessible, intimate writing style perceived as “reflecting” actual utterances, became established during the interwar period, when a modern lifestyle increasingly based on consumer culture was gradually materializing and when the call for a sense of national unity was being stressed more and more as the country’s position in international politics reached a critical point. This seemingly democratic editorial and promotional style maintained among periodicals (at least among popular magazines) during the wartime and further developed thereafter, provided the foundation for the format that is dominant still now in various media not just in periodicals alone. It would be important to examine how this inclusive-looking mediated community and these seemingly “transparent” modes of expression were related to the formation of various discourses during and after the interwar period.

Thus, while examining a wide range of materials ranging from various periodicals, contemporary commentaries, surveys, to readers’ memoirs, this dissertation reconsidered the position of the interwar mass-market women’s magazine in the modern Japanese history of print/reading culture and its situatedness in the wider socio-historical contexts, particularly, the discursive formation and transitions of categories of gender (masculine/feminine) and cultural
hierarchy (high/low). While offering in-depth analyses of the development of textual modes of expressions in the mass-market women’s magazines, however, this study could not examine fully the development of visual modes of expression, which should definitely be one of the future research projects. Moreover, since it problematized mainly the nature of the interwar Japanese popular women’s magazine as a print medium, the research did not examine discourses and representations of articles and/or visuals appearing magazines. Nevertheless, I hope this research provides a firm foundation for such further studies concerning changing mediated formations of gender roles, nationalism, ideal modern lifestyles, from, during, and after WWII, without failing to pay careful attention to the interconnected overlaps between different historical phases as well as complexities within individual phases.\footnote{Sharalyn Orbaugh’s studies on wartime and postwar cultural practices and artifacts (2006, 2007, 2012, 2014) are fine examples of such nuanced recent investigations that are attentive to both continuity and discontinuity as well as textuality, performativity, and audience.}

Furthermore, the nature and significance of the mass-market women’s magazine in Japan should be further investigated and considered more carefully. It should be noted that, from a broader viewpoint, this phenomenon of democratization of print culture was not restricted to Japan; rather, it was occurring almost concurrently in other places around the world.\footnote{In the UK, the change is identifiable in the late 19th century with the emergence of “new journalism,” which was promoted first in magazines including \textit{Tit Bits} (launched by George Newnes) and \textit{Answers to Correspondents} (founded by Alfred Charles William Harmsworth, later also known as the 1st Viscount Northcliffe), then in daily newspapers such as the \textit{Daily Mail} launched by Harmsworth. This trend eventually led to the establishment of tabloids such as the \textit{Daily Mirror} (also founded by Harmsworth) in the early 20th century. In the US, while the penny press had already started emphasizing colloquialism in the 1830s, this tendency intensified from the 1890s with the emergence of the “yellow press,” including Joseph Pulitzer’s the \textit{New York World} and William Randolph Hearst’s the \textit{New York Journal}. The inclusion of dialogue and interviews rather than a stylish, solemn tone became conspicuous on both sides of the Atlantic toward the end of the 19th century: readers could enjoy sensational stories with more realistic, detailed descriptions than ever before. Tabloids in the 1920s furthered this trend with the extensive use of candid photography. On “new journalism” in the UK, or “yellow journalism” in the US, see Bingham 2004, Bird 1992, Wiener ed. 1988, and Wiener 2011. Studies included in Sparks and Tulloch, eds. 2000, suggest that this sort of democratization of periodicals can be observed in Europe and North America in general.} As many recent media scholars have pointed out, this was the precursor to the contemporary form of media. The existence of similar
examples outside Japan suggest that the new strategies—colloquialism, visualization, increased human interest content, hosting of massive events, and an emphasis on entertainment and commercialism—that appeared in interwar-period Japanese periodicals could be considered to be an inevitable result of the democratization of print media. As I briefly described elsewhere, while sharing similarities in terms of direction of the shift in editorial and promotional styles, one can also observe differences between the development of democratization of print/reading culture in different areas in terms of, for instance, their use of visuals and their interest in categories such as gender (feminine/masculine) and cultural hierarchy (low/high). Comparative studies of Japanese print/reading culture and those in other areas of the world offer potential for further exploration in order to further understand it geographically as well as historically relative to present-day media.

In order to fully understand the nature of the democratization of print/reading culture in Japan, chronological comparative research would be necessary as well. This is particularly important, considering that precursors to the accessible editorial style such as the koshinbun (small newspaper), nishikie shinbun (colorfully illustrated wood-cut print newspaper) (both in the Meiji era) and kawaraban (wood-cut print news sheet, one of the precursors of the modern newspaper in the Edo period) did exist in Japan before the 20th century. As is already evident from this dissertation, analyzing the development of different kinds of periodicals across genres while considering the emergence and transition of genres and the discursive formation of categories such as gender, relative

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3 Scholars in media studies see these strategies as typical features of the democratization (also known as the appearance of “new journalism” or “tabloidization”) of media in general, phenomena not restricted to “vulgar” media such as so-called “tabloids” and television programs with similar tendencies, but also observable in “serious” periodicals and TV news programs. On tabloidization as a consequence of media development in general, see Hayashi Kaori 2002; Becker 1992; Bird 1992, 2009; Gripsrud 1992; Sparks and Tulloch 2000; Zelizer 2009. As Mindich (1998) aptly pointed out, the emergence and spread of tabloids featuring an oral-oriented style and human stories occurred simultaneously with the differentiation of newspapers into two types—“vulgar” tabloids and “quality” papers employing a more “objective” detached style—that can also be observed in Japan.

4 Maeshima 2014b.

position of editors and readers, cultural hierarchy ("high" and "low"), and the like, would also be requisite in conducting chronologically and/or geographically comparative studies of new journalism or the democratization of print/reading culture in Japan. Such comprehensive studies on print/reading cultures of the past and of different areas of the world would provide us with deeper insights into the situation of our present society, which is ever more closely interconnected with various media whose democratic, intimate façade continues to be cleverly reinforced.

I hope this dissertation will offer a solid foundation for further research on the formation and dissemination of modern discourses in Japan as well as comparative geographical and chronological research of Japanese print/reading culture, which, in turn, will lead to a better understanding of the relationship between democracy and media.
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Fujin kōron (Ladies’ Review; 1916–1944; 1946–)
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Fujin no tomo (Ladies’ Friend; 1906–)
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