

JAPANESE WOMEN'S MAGAZINES
BETWEEN INDOCTRINATION AND PLEASURE,
INTELLECTUAL HISTORY AND POPULAR CULTURE

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Japanese women's magazines have, from the late 19th century, accompanied successive transformations of women's roles, women's status, and women's images. With the establishment of a modern print culture, women's magazines made their debut as a new media form to be reckoned with. Images of women at home, at work, and on the street would soon fill the pages of these magazines — images that conveyed the multiple transformations affecting women's lives. On the one hand, women's magazines contributed to the socialization of women into their modern roles of "good wives, wise mothers" (*ryōsai kenbo*), the philosophy that from 1898 formed the model for prewar women's education in connection with state building. Even today, they continue to present the image of an ideal Japanese femaleness which excludes women from issues of politics and power. On the other hand, because they function as commercial enterprises, the magazines rely on women as readers, active participants, and consumers. Women in their relation to the magazines emerge as marginal or as central to, as behind the scenes or on the stage of their society's dynamics.

Similarly ambiguous interpretations of women and reading emerge when we look at women's magazines outside of Japan. In some European countries as well as in the United States, women's magazines have served as an integral source material in women's history and women's studies for decades. The advent of cultural studies as a legitimate field of research has increased and diversified the approaches taken and the theories applied to women's magazines. Rather than only looking at the official image of women, the small things that make up a woman's everyday are being renegotiated. Feminist researcher of women's magazines Margaret Beetham, reflecting on her own life, describes the shift in attitudes towards women's magazines:

As a clever middle-class girl I was taught that I should despise women's magazines as silly if not pernicious. When I grew up and became a feminist activist and academic, I still had mentors who argued that such reading perpetuated my ideological oppression as a woman (Friedan 1965; Greer 1971). Then in the mid-1980s as popular culture began to be rescued for progressive politics I, like other feminists, began to explore the illicit pleasures of these magazines and our hate-love relationship with their endlessly repeated promises of transformation (Winship 1987). (Beetham 1996: viii).

In Japan, as in Western countries, intellectual and, particularly, feminist criticism of women's mass magazines reaches almost as far back as the history of the magazines themselves (cf. Wöhr and Sato, both in this volume). The underpinning for such criticism was the clash of a modern ideal of enlightenment with the irrationality and barbarism that seemed to shape the reality of modern society. At times however, it also involved nostalgic sentiments with regard to Japanese "traditions," which were viewed to be displaced by a Western modernity. In the 1930s, anarchist and prewar feminist scholar of Japanese women's history Takamura Itsue (1894-1964) exemplified the position of a "cultural pessimist" and fervent nationalist. She denounced consumer culture for its Western "bourgeois" underpinnings, and lamented its baneful impact on women (cf. Germer, in this volume). At approximately the same time, misogynist tirades against women, consumption, and Westernization were being put forward by male authors like Tanizaki Junichirō (1886-1965). Naomi, the female protagonist of Tanizaki's novel *Chijin no ai* (*A Fool's Love*) (1924-25) is charged with transgressing the confines of her gender and exchanging her Japanese identity for a Western one, thus, threatening what was authentically Japanese (cf. Silverberg 1991: 244-246; see also Sato 1993).

In Japan, influential ideas about women and modern urban culture were also formed in relation to discourses on mass or, popular culture. Interest in popular culture arose early in the modern period, and was often an expression of nostalgic sentiment. Popular (or folk) culture and Japanese women both were viewed as retaining a past that was about to be irretrievably lost. Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962) stands out as a prime example of an intellectual whose research on pre-modern folk culture recurrently focussed on women. For only a handful of intellectuals did *taishū bunka*, the newly emerging "mass culture" of the twenties, loom as just a fascinating subject as the cultural remnants of the past. Kon Wajirō's (1888-1973) *kōgengaku* or *moderunorogio* (modernology), that he put forward in the early 1920s, exemplifies this approach. Like Yanagita, Kon perceived women to be at the center of a "low" culture valued for its deviation from the official, or "high" culture of the times. But this time, the counter-world was a modern one, and women with high-heeled shoes, nylon stockings, and bobbed hair represented the epiphany of modernity.

Scholarly interest in the popular culture of the Taishō period (1912-1925) which went into "hibernation" in the late thirties, resurged after World War II along with the quest for evidence of a Japanese modernity untainted by the shadows of fascism and the war (e.g., Minami Hiroshi et al. 1965). What formerly was perceived as a threat to "traditional" Japaneseness became a testimony to a kind of authenticity that went beyond the atrocities of modern Japanese history.

Historical materialism influenced many works on women's history written shortly after the war by male and female scholars. Inoue Kiyoshi's *Nihon joseishi* (*A History of Japanese Women*) published in 1948 resulted in a plethora of narratives that focused on the progress of women's liberation. Implicitly or explicitly, these studies viewed modern consumer culture as an evil, oppressive concomitant of capitalism. Dissent took time in coming, but the first to

raise an objection was the independent women's historian Murakami Nobuhiko (1987). Murakami advocated a positivistic approach to women's history and stressed the need to explore the minutiae of women's daily lives. Murakami has been criticized, not least for the arbitrariness of his value judgements (e.g., Inoue 1987: 189). Nevertheless, his concept of *seikatsushi* ("history of everyday life") inspired new ways of looking at the history of women in Japan (e.g., the collection *Josei seikatsushi*, ed. by Joseishi Sôgô Kenkyûkai, 1990), and their participation in Japanese popular culture up to and after 1945.

Contrary views inherent in Japanese discourses on women, modernity and popular culture reverberate in existing research on Japanese women's mass, or commercial, magazines. Much of this research has been carried out by study groups comprised both of academics and non-academics established in the wake of the second wave of Japanese feminism in the 1970s and 1980s. Most of the research is recognizable by its critical feminist stance, located somewhere in the range of liberal and socialist feminists' perspectives on the media (cf. Zoonen 1996). Scholars like historian Nakajima Kuni described women's magazines published from the Meiji period (1868-1912) onward as perpetuating the premodern, Confucianist "lessons for women" known as *jokun*. These texts advocated, above all else, obedience to men, and posited the female sex as being in need of enlightenment (*keimô*). The history of Japanese women's magazines was conceived as a history of the confirmation and advancement of women's domestic roles (Nakajima 1989: 3-4). From yet a different point of view, prewar women's magazines also have been evaluated as a major force in recruiting women into the war machinery. Analyses centering on nationalist war propaganda found in women's magazines during the 1930s are one example (Watashitachi no Rekishi o Tsuzuru Kai 1987).

With the growth of media studies and feminist media criticism, contemporary Japanese women's magazines became attention getters. Publications put out in the 1970s and 1980s formed the subject of a cross-national survey of women's magazines (Inoue et al. 1989). The primary objective of this study was to show that the apparent mobilization of women's roles that women's magazines helped perpetuate was, in reality, nothing more than a "reorganization" of these roles (ibid.: 4-6). The second objective was to expose the magazines' "cultural imperialism." According to this view, the magazines were controlled by multinational enterprises and imposed Western derived values and beauty standards on all women, regardless of nationality, race, and class (ibid.: 6-10).¹ The charge of "cultural imperialism" strikes a familiar chord.² In addition to reducing women to "dupes" of the magazines, in a way, it reiterates the anti-modernist arguments of an earlier age. Plausible as the notion of "cultural imperialism" may be, it furthers the idea that modernity is, per se, a Western phenomenon. Moreover, it obstructs the perspective on what modernity may have meant, or means in a non-Western, for instance, the Japanese context.

Studies on the history of Japanese women's magazines published in Japan in the 1980s then treated these media as agents of indoctrination and oppression. In this respect, the research of this period resembled older feminist media criticism published in Western languages. A contra-

diction, however, is inherent in these views. Namely, they conceived the general reader of women's magazines as in need of enlightenment by "good feminist texts" (Hermes 1995: 1), while they also criticized the magazines' construction of their readers as in need of enlightenment regarding their domestic roles as, for example, "good wives and wise mothers."

In the 1990s, the attention of those researching Japanese women's magazines shifted to include the audience, that is, women and their lives as they emerged from the magazines' personal advice columns (Saitô 1996), the activities of reading circles (Nagai 1995), and contemporary surveys of working women's reading habits (Nagamine 1997: 157-202). Even more significant is the appearance of new theoretical approaches, exemplified by Kimura Ryôko (1992), who borrows from Stuart Hall in conceptualizing women's magazines as "signifying agents."³ Kimura reconstructs the commercial success of the magazine *Shufu no tomo* ("The Housewife's Companion") as the outcome of its vital role in the reciprocal process of working out a consensus (*gôï*) on the meaning of the new female role of the housewife — a process shared by the magazine and its readers. She, as do other scholars (Maeda 1989: 161, Sato 1994: 142), shows how a sense of belonging to a community of fellow subscribers gradually developed among the readers. According to Kimura, this community took on the important function of a "reference group" for their readers who, as housewives, faced a social isolation unknown in premodern society and among their male contemporaries.

The nineties also brought a number of publications about Japanese women's magazines in Western languages, most of which focused on postwar Japan. Some of these studies put forward, or modified new theoretical approaches. Once again, they questioned the "case for media 'conspiracy'" (Moeran 1995: 135). One author did so as a result of inquiries into the production process (*ibid.*). Another approach was based on the interpretation of the common classification, in the magazines, of personality types as "reformulation(s) of the social topography," and of Japanese women actively using these typologies in their own life plans to "provide social scenarios for those life events that don't work out, or for behaviour that veers from the old norms" (Miller 1997: 156-157). Yet another author referred to the "tension (in) women's perceptions about their own lives and the plurality (of the) magazines' discourses," brought about by the frictions and contradictions of belonging to a "local, moral community" and simultaneously participating "in an elite global culture of consumption" (Rosenberger 1995: 146, with reference to Hall).⁴ The magazines' content has been described as an "interplay between the forces of incorporation and resistance to culturally sanctioned and class-biased ideals of femaleness" (Miller 1998: 31).

While many of these approaches are, like Kimura's study of *Shufu no tomo*, based on theoretical assumptions made with regard to modern societies and modern media, the authors, nevertheless, are concerned with the distinctive features of Japanese women's magazines and Japanese society. One element that has been shown to resurface again and again within the discourses and the imagery of the magazines, is a kind of self-orientalization with regard to Japanese culture and Japanese women. A "native" — "foreign" distinction pervades these dis-

courses and images, distinguishing between “sensual white women” and “healthy Japanese women” (Ochiai 1997), or identifying Japanese products with “high culture” and Western products with “consumer culture” (cf. Skov 1996: 146). Women have been made the “guardians of, and specialists in, Japan’s cultural heritage (Skov and Moeran 1995: 25), but at the same time, women are assessed in reference to the cultural hierarchy hidden behind the “native” — “foreign,” or “local” — “global” dichotomy.

Before introducing our own contributions to the project of rereading Japanese women’s magazines, it is necessary to point out an ambiguity in the rubric “women’s magazine” (in Japanese: *fujin zasshi* or *josei zasshi*). These terms are a cause of confusion with regard to the subjects and approaches of articles naming “women’s magazines” as their topic of study. As reflected in the above overview, most research, especially when it focuses on the postwar period up to the present, is concerned with so-called “commercial,” “advertising” or “mass” magazines. Periodicals directed at women readers, however, existed before the emergence of a mass readership and the establishment of large publishing companies. A historical perspective not only reveals a “striking continuity,” but also “differences in the history of the construction of a new genre directed at the woman reader” (Ballaster et. al 1991: 43). To name a few important differences: Women’s periodicals before the emergence of the mass magazines might be called “elite magazines” since in Japan, as well as in other countries, they addressed a privileged group of literate and fairly affluent women with some leisure time at their disposal. From the point of view of production, advertising only gradually exerted decisive influence on the contents and appearance of the magazines. In fact, a single publisher’s or editor’s concept of the ideal woman tended to dominate a magazine.

The multivalence of the term “women’s magazine” not only evolves from a diachronic, but also from a synchronic perspective. One researcher, who examines the period between 1911 and 1931 in Japan, makes a distinction between “commercial” (*shōgyōteki*) women’s magazines and magazines published by women’s groups (*josei no te ni yoru kikanshi*; Miki 1996). These publications include feminist magazines — “women onlys,” as Andrea Germer calls them (in this volume). Not only the slower penetration of new theories into the study of history, or being on the periphery of the Anglo-Saxon centered scientific community, where Japan and the larger part of Europe are equally located accounts for the above described differences in the approaches to women’s magazines. It is also the diverse nature of the magazines themselves that invites different ways of dealing with them. These include approaches concerned with “intellectual history,” as well as the “history of the intellectual” in modern Japan, of which feminism is also a part.⁵

Early women’s magazines as well as feminist publications have placed themselves, and have been placed somewhere in between the realms of “high” and “low” cultures, testifying to “the complexity of effects and relations circulating through and around culture” (Grossberg, cited from Treat 1996: 6).⁶ The now widely accepted notion of a “popular culture,” however, potentially serves to reinforce the dichotomy of “high” and “low,” of “elite producers” and the

“mass of consumers” (William Kelly, cited from Treat 1996: 6-7). Recent research on Japan, in contrast, often emphasizes the reciprocity of intellectual and popular discourses. A study on the establishment of sexology in prewar Japan (Frühstück 1997), and research regarding so-called spiritual intellectuals (*reiseiteki chishikijin*) in contemporary Japanese society⁷ have pointed to the continuities and interdependencies between science and moral exhortation, between philosophy and religion, between what the popular reader demands and what the intellectual writes. In the same vein, mass women’s magazines have been said to reveal “how the management of Japan’s high cultural heritage has been displaced into the hands of the media” (Moeran 1995: 139).

New theoretical developments pertinent to women’s magazines are still on the horizon. This book, which includes chapters on prewar and postwar women’s magazines, on feminist, religious, and “commercial” publications, intellectual discourses and popular imagery is a part of the empirical groundwork for those developments. At the same time, it directly contributes to ongoing theoretical discussions. Two themes that run through most of the essays are (1) the deconstruction (or historical reconstruction) of the dichotomical concepts of magazines versus readers, and “high” versus “low” cultural forms (2) a rereading, through the help of women’s magazines, of the universalities and particularities of modernity as it evolved in Japan, with its focus on conceptions of gender. This requires the relocation of Japanese women’s magazines in their specific historical setting.

Ulrike Wöhr reconstructs one strand of the Japanese discourse prevalent in the 1920s on women, media, and culture. She points out that these critical discussions by male and female Japanese intellectuals dwelled on a dichotomy of “high,” implicitly male culture versus “low,” explicitly female culture. Wöhr’s analysis reveals that basically two concepts regarding the relationship between the magazines and their readers existed (and often coexisted in the same critic’s argument): one assumed that the magazines were instruments of (capitalist) indoctrination; the other asserted that the readers, mostly women, deserved the blame for the low level of the magazines because of their base desires. Even though the second stance assumed a more emancipatory view of the readers, both constructed women as being in need of enlightenment and, more significantly, in need of protection — from the magazines, or, in the latter case, from themselves. Regarding contemporary attitudes toward modernity, Wöhr shows that readers’ letters to the magazines in the 1920s conceived modern life as degenerate and corrupt, a result of Western influence. On the other hand, positive notions of progress prevailed in intellectual media criticism, and there was no apparent fear of “Westernization.” Also, most intellectual authors were concerned with women’s education and more or less favored women’s emancipation. Their discourses revealed what Joke Hermes (in this volume) calls “the double inscription of woman as hope and threat, and the media as an educational and idealist tool as well as despoiler of the masses.”

Hermes, referring to the modernist media discourse, of which the 1920s criticism of Japanese women’s magazines and their readers is one example, stresses how important it is in

media studies to include the audience's perspective in order to avoid the above-mentioned traps. Hermes draws out the parallels between prewar Japanese and present-day European media criticism and concludes that, "regardless of the particular historical context, there is always only a small number of recurring charges to be laid at readers' doors." The "continual reinscription" in media criticism of "women = femininity = debased, (and) low-culture = commercial media culture" accounts for the impossibility of a positive characterization of femininity in relation to popular culture. These equations, according to Hermes' "postmodern' answer," need to be broken up.

Reinterpretation of the relationship between popular media and their female audience is central to Barbara Sato's discussion of the social history of women's mass magazines in the 1920s. Her analysis demonstrates how new magazines appeared in response to changing audiences, and how the magazines, intentionally or not, were instrumental in creating new images of women. Focusing on confessional articles (*kokuhaku kiji*) contributed by readers, and the sensational coverage in the magazines of the romances and marital difficulties of famous women, Sato suggests that women's mass magazines enabled women to form new self-identities and encouraged them to contemplate change. Her work relates to Kimura's account of *Shufu no tomo's* construction of the "housewife" (1992) as well as to Miller's reading of representations of "bad girls" in present-day Japanese women's magazines (1998). Sato reveals shifts in the target groups as well as in the contents of the magazines. The realities of the Japanese family system placed severe constraints, or challenges on women's lives, that resulted in the readers' interest in topics like love, marriage and family problems. The situation of women in the family and the "social mores that constrained their other female friendships" were an important motive behind the evolving concept of an anonymous community of readers. Yet another window on a world beyond the readers' narrow sphere were "things Western" as presented in the magazines. Sato's analysis implies that this did not necessarily function to "unstitch" Japanese women from their local, moral community, but "stitched" them into a new place within that community,⁸ that is, into the emerging role of the housewife.

Hilaria Gössmann provides a broad perspective of the so-called confessional articles by connecting them to a Japanese tradition of confessional literature informing, up to the present, "high cultural" forms as well as the contents of popular magazines. She shows how women's magazines bring "high" and "low" together, as they continue to publish readers' confessions as well as confessions by professional women writers about their personal lives. Gössmann notes a strong tendency in Japan, even today, to use fictional characters found in literature and the media as role models. This suggests that culture may influence not only the images and themes conveyed in the magazines, but also the ways in which media and their audiences interact.

Another kind of role model is apparent in the images of middle class fatherhood in the 1910s and 1920s which Harald Fuess reconstructs from the magazine *Fujin no tomo* (A Woman's Companion). These images, that emerge from intellectual contributions to *Fujin no*

tomo, reflect the participation of representatives of “high culture” in the “popular” discourses of the women’s magazines. Such narratives may be read as another occurrence of the experts’ advice to women (cf. Ehrenreich and English 1979). However, they may also be seen to be opening up that “hybrid space” in which all participants are acting as co-producers of knowledge (Nowotny, cited from Frühstück 1997: 3-4).⁹ Fuess’ diachronic perspective reveals that in the mid 1910s, fathers presented themselves as their children’s companions and playmates. In the mid 1920s, however, anxieties with regard to their children’s success in school and in later life, dominated their narratives. Fuess attributes these developments to historical changes within society at large, namely in the system of education and in the socioeconomic status of urban middle-class professionals, resulting in the magazine authors’ notion of the modern world “as a highly competitive place.” Perceptions of modernity as reflected in these prewar Japanese constructions of a male gender role invite comparisons with images of the father role in other modern societies, and also with Japanese female role prescriptions of the times as, for instance, *ryōsai kenbo*.

Ishiwata Yoshimi addresses this topic in her chapter on the magazines directed at female believers of a Japanese new religion. Her analysis of the developments in female gender roles shows, somewhat surprisingly, that the prewar religious sect Hitonomichi emphasized women’s duties as wives rather than as mothers. The “mother” only gradually gained importance in the publications of Hitonomichi’s successor PL Kyōdan in the postwar period during the time of high economic growth. Sharon Nolte and Sally Ann Hastings (1991) as well as Kathy Uno (1999) have pointed out, that modern Western conceptions of child-rearing which emphasize the role of the biological mother and deemphasize women’s role in productive labor, exerted only a limited influence in Japan during the Meiji (Nolte, Hastings) and early Taishō (Uno) periods. Ishiwata’s findings also challenge the general notion of the pervasive influence of the *ryōsai kenbo* ideology, suggesting that many authors writing about prewar Japanese women’s history focused too strongly on the analogies in the modernization processes in Japan and elsewhere, rather than looking at their differences. Ishiwata reconstructs the ideal woman as she emerges from the new religious publications. Changing worries and concerns voiced by their readers-believers, which reflect shifts in broader society, prompted the editors (i.e., the religious leaders) to eventually adjust their ideal of the female role. This and the fact that the religious bulletins were modeled on commercial women’s magazines shows that not only vertical (high/low) but also horizontal (secular/religious, in this case) compartmentalizations of culture should be treated with reserve.

Usui Atsuko, in her discussion of women’s magazines published by religious organizations, conceives of these magazines as the site where “women” and their place in society are constructed, rather than as a mere reflection of women’s status within the organization or society. Like Ishiwata, Usui breaks up the simple hierarchy of religious leaders and their believers. She locates ongoing constructions of gender within a broader social discourse that surfaces in the magazines, instead of with some religious authority. Usui also stresses the continuities in

Hitonomichi's and PL Kyōdan's constructions of gender and notes the superficial impact of events in Japanese history like the revision of the Civil Code after 1945. She problematizes the fact that the same ideology of the couple which in prewar Japan had supported the militaristic emperor system, became the basis for world peace in postwar Japan.

Andrea Germer is also concerned with hierarchies. The feminist magazines *Fujin sensen*, 1930-31, and *Onna erosu*, 1973-82, which she analyses, thwart categorizations separating the intellectual from the popular. But at the same time, both magazines reinstate some kind of a hierarchical order. While they featured highly theoretical articles, the editors and authors of these publications also engaged in the construction of an ideal reader — the non-elite woman molded according to their elitist ideas of feminist political correctness. Germer questions the results of the editors' politics that aimed at diminishing the distance between themselves and their readers. Feminist criticism of "malestream" media does not, as also seen in Wöhr's analysis, necessarily overthrow the hierarchy of "high" and "low" culture, nor the identification of women with the "low." Continuity and change is another main theme in Germer's study. She shows that in the prewar magazine *Fujin sensen* a sense of negation prevailed, and women's sexual and personal liberation remained bound to a higher social mission. In *Onna erosu*, however, "more of an experimental air" of finding out about women's sexuality and subjectivity prevailed, mirroring a "wider range of social, legal and economic freedom(s)" for Japanese women in the 1970s. Both magazines shared "rhetorics of autonomy and mutual help," the notion of a "female culture" as a prerequisite for a better society, and the rejection of roles molding women into a homogeneous group that defined them in relation to the family. Germer's analysis also reveals a continuity between *Fujin sensen* and *Onna erosu* in the creation of a feminist tradition that found recourse in the early feminist periodical, *Seitō*, published in the early 1910s.

For Muta Kazue, the recurring reference in *Fujin sensen* and *Onna erosu* to the rather unpolitical *Seitō* points to the tragedy of the feminist movement in Japan, which has been lacking in political power. Placing *Fujin sensen* and *Onna erosu* in the context of the prewar and postwar feminist movements, Muta mentions the correlation between *Fujin sensen*'s criticism of the patriarchal family and the attitudes expressed in contemporary mass women's magazines. On the other hand, she indicates the social isolation of the postwar feminist magazine *Onna erosu*, which, in the words of Germer, created a discursive space utterly "oppositional...to the malestream print-media." Muta shows that on a meta level, however, *Onna erosu* participated in a larger discourse. The contents of this magazine mirror the lack of opportunities in the 1970s for Japanese women to engage in careers in business or politics. The take-off of the women's liberation movement was an antithesis and a reflection of the prevalence of the full-time housewife, which became manifest during the era of high economic growth from the late 1950s to the early 1970s.

Barbara Holthus conducts her content analysis of the commercial women's magazine *Croissant (Kurowassan)* with an eye on the rise and decline of the second wave of Japanese

feminism during the 1970s and 1980s. Holthus' analysis demonstrates what was already suggested by Germer: that the demands of feminism were, to a certain extent, taken up and mirrored in popular women's magazines. It seems difficult, however, to separate this influence from the effects that may have resulted from Japanese publishers' collaboration with European or American publishers of magazines like *Elle*. Holthus traces these effects apparent in the changing representations of sexuality and the body, and throws new light on the relations between images of ethnicity and sexuality and their connections to changes in the magazine's stance on women's liberation. While recognizing certain correlations, Holthus warns against generalizing about the impact of social change on the media. She shows that an interaction between *Croissant* and its readers takes place in a concrete and practical sense. It can be noted in the way in which the aging of the magazine's target group is reflected in the gradual increase in the age of persons depicted in the editorial section as well as in advertisements.

Takeuchi Keiko takes up the theme of sexuality as it is represented in the magazine *Croissant* or *Kurowassan*. She puts forward a broad concept of sexuality in order to show that, although open discussions of this topic in the magazine may have decreased, constructions of female sexuality still form the core of the images of femininity in *Croissant*. Takeuchi's emphasis on the current influence of the magazine among middle-aged women supports Holthus' analysis regarding the age of readers and persons depicted in the magazine.

Finally, let us refer to Margaret Beetham's Epilogue to this volume. Beetham looks at women's magazines from the perspective of a cultural historian, and at Japanese women's magazines from the perspective of an expert on British women's periodicals. "Cultural History," in Beetham's words, "can de-familiarize what we take for granted and challenge us to think differently about the present we inhabit." Indeed, our work on this book, starting with the preparations for the Symposium in Leuven in 1998 where most of the papers published here were first presented, was a continuous encounter with the unfamiliar in the form of approaches differing from our own. Once again, sincere thanks to all our co-authors for joining us in this project and providing contributions from disciplines as diverse as history, sociology, historical sociology, literature, media studies, cultural studies, religious studies, and gender studies.

Lise Skov and Brian Moeran, in their introduction to *Women, Media and Consumption in Japan*, state that they "would have liked to introduce more about feminism" and "the ways in which Japanese feminists have criticized women's media" (1995: 6). But, to their lament, "many Japanese scholars working in this local and political field are concerned more with current Japanese academic debates than with engaging with western scholars through English language publication" (ibid.). Our hope is that this volume which includes contributions from "Japanese" and "Western" scholars, will make up part of this deficit, and initiate further international and intercultural research on women's magazines.

NOTES

- 1 A similar stance is taken by Morohashi 1993: 109-141.
- 2 It is interesting to note that American (Gallagher 1981: 46) as well as Japanese authors (Inoue et. al 1989:8) charging women's magazines with "cultural imperialism" are referring to the same cross-national study of women's magazines conducted and published in Mexico (Santa Cruz and Erazo 1980).
- 3 Kimura quotes Stuart Hall: "The Rediscovery of 'Ideology'," in: *Culture, Society, and the Media*. Ed. by M. Gurevitch et al. London and New York: Methuen, 1982.
- 4 Rosenberger quotes Stuart Hall: "The Local and the Global," in: *Culture, Globalization and the World-System*. Ed. by A. King. Birminghamton: State University of New York, 1991.
- 5 See, for instance, Holthus 1995 on Ishikawa Takeyoshi and Hanamori Yasuji, Wilson 1995 on Fukushima Shirô and *Fujo shinbun*, and Wöhr 1995 and 1997a, on the women of the Shin Shin Fujinkai and their magazine Shin shin fujin ("The New True Woman").
- 6 Treat quotes Lawrence Grossberg: *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Post-modern Culture*. New York and Routledge: 1992.
- 7 See Prohl 1999, Shimazono 1993 and 1996, Wöhr 1997b and 2000.
- 8 Stuart Hall's metaphor, cited from Rosenberger 1995: 146. Refer to note no.4.
- 9 Fühstück quotes Helga Nowotny: "Socially Distributed Knowledge," in: *Public Understanding of Science* 2, 4: 307-319.

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