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## **ORGANIZATION OF DESIRES IN “NOVELS FOR WOMEN”: THE WORLD OF POPULAR NOVELS IN THE 1920S–1930S**

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### **Abstract**

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the mass media made tremendous progress in modern Japan. Women’s magazines took an important part in the organizing process of modern gender ideology and system.

This paper takes serial story in commercial women’s magazine as an object of study and analyzes the contents of popular novels for women. The 28 novels by three popular writers; Kikuchi Kan, Yoshiya Nobuko, Kato Takeo were picked up and analysed. The results of analysis are as follows; 1) there is the common basic structure of story, 2) gender ideology is formed through stirring up some desires (desire for women’s own virginity and innocence, desire for faith and innocence of lovers or husbands, desire for romantic love, desire for happy marriage) in the world of novels.

It is argued that popular novels reflect the public needs of women readers and create the new or reorganized ones by the power of fantasy. The fantasy that those novels produce was constructed around the worth of romantic love and modern family.

Key words: gender; mass media; women’s magazines; popular novels; modern family

### **1. Introduction**

At the beginning of the 20th century, when modernization in Japan was progressing, a book culture for the masses was established against the backdrop of spreading school education. With the rapid expansion of habitual reading of commercial magazines or inexpensive books, those

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items increased their influence on people's behavior and sense of values. The development of mass media for women is considered to have taken an important role in developing the process of the gender system.

In this paper, I aimed to focus on popular serial stories in commercial women's magazines that had a large involvement in structuring the gender system and to reveal what meaning or world was created by these novels. Here, popular novels are regarded as something with functions to reflect the readers' desires or needs, as well as to create or reorganize them.

With regard to the genre of the mass novel during the pre-war period, there is a flow of mass literature studies which is represented by Hotsuki Ozaki (the "Science of Thought" group which included Hotsuki Ozaki, Shunsuke Tsurumi, and Hiroshi Ikeda as its main critics). They mainly cover period novels such as those of Kaizan Nakazato, Jiro Osaragi or Kyoji Shirai, which are called Magemono, and hardly review family novels and popular novels featured in women's magazines (Kimura [2004]). Hotsuki Ozaki, who left a considerable number of works about these novels for the masses, considers only period novels as worthy of being called "mass novels" which fit "literary developments based on popular traditions" (Ozaki [1965: 148]). According to Ozaki's definition, popular novels are not classified into the category of mass novels, making them unworthy of consideration. Ozaki's attitude of neglecting popular novels had prevailed in research of popular literature and subcultures in the past.

Prejudice against popular novels arose during the ranking process of the literature genre in the modern era. Since the end of the Meiji era, the development of secondary education for women encouraged women to gradually increase their desire for reading books (Shigetoshi Nagamine researched the reality of women's reading habits [1997]). As described by Ai Maeda, against the backdrop for increased female readership, mass novels targeted for women and focused on romance or family life emerged in women's magazines in the Taisho era (Maeda [1968 = 1973]). Along with this development, these mass novels were first compared to pure literature, then to mass novels for men, and were ultimately placed at the bottom rank of literary value (Iida [1998]). Modern novels mainly targeted to women which focused on family or romance were called "popular novels" at that time, and after the War, they vanished from the center stage of literary history without being allowed to be referred to as "mass novels" or "mass literature."<sup>2(1)</sup> However, these novels certainly exerted power as a brand of subculture during the period from the 1920s to the 1930s.

Our concepts of women, men, romance, and family were forged not only through a systematized structure controlled by a nation such as school education or laws, but also through

<sup>(1)</sup> Before Ai Maeda published her paper titled "Development of Popular Novels in the Late Taisho Period - Readership of Women's Magazines" (Maeda [1968 = 1973]), which discussed popular novels as well as the social phenomenon of expanding female readership, there were almost no studies of modern novels (popular novels) dealing with family or romance targeted at women, and it is hard to say that serious studies of popular novels have progressed after Ai Maeda. Some exceptions are Kan Kikuchi's "Shinju-fujin," which is a ground-breaking novel among popular novels and also dealt by Ai Maeda, as well as some works by Nobuko Yoshiya, a leading female writer were sometimes discussed. (Kimura [2004])

commercialized products that grew by absorbing people's desires and wishes, which was referred to as subculture. The aim of this paper is to interpret the world of mass novels targeted for women, from the perspective of what desire or wish these popular novels for women reflected during the process of modernization, and how they reorganized these desires as fantasy.

## 2. King, Queen, and Jacks of “Popular Novels” in the 1920s–1930s

“Acclaimed novels by popular writers” or “The best stories of top-rank novelist”: sensational catch phrases flooded the table of contents and the title list in boldface. On each page, eye-catching artworks such as a married women collapsing into tears or a couple staring at each other were illustrated, and an evocative catch phrase -“What will become of her fate!?” drew readers' attentions. Serial stories in women's magazines were incredibly important to affect the sales of magazines.

Hotsuki Ozaki cited Masao Kume, Kan Kikuchi, Nobuko Yoshiya, Murao Nakamura, and Takeo Kato as representative writers of “popular novels” (Ozaki [1986]). However, when investigating the number of novels published in women's magazines or mass magazines like “King,” or in newspapers, the number of stories made into a book form, complete edition, or a film version, it was revealed that Kan Kikuchi and Nobuko Yoshiya had an exceptional level of popularity among these writers. Kikuchi published more than 50 “popular novels” by the start of World War II, and most of them were cinematized. Meanwhile, after publishing her first newspaper novel “Chi-no-hate-made (To the Ends of the Earth)” (Osaka Asahi Newspaper, 1920), Yoshiya shifted her activities from novels for girls to popular novels for adult women, and published over 40 works in newspapers and magazines until she was forced to quit due to the War. Almost all of her long novels were also cinematized. They frequently appeared in pages of roundtable discussions, review articles, or gravure pictures of women's magazines, with the title of “Mr. Kan Kikuchi asked about XXX” or “Miss. Nobuko Yoshiya talks about XXX,” which were indicative of their fame. Kikuchi and Yoshiya often appeared together in women's magazines, so they established themselves as the “king” and “queen” in the world of popular novels for women.

Besides these two authors, the activities of popular writers such as Takeo Kato, Murao Nakamura, Masao Kume, Mikihiko Nagata, Otokichi Mikami, and Itsuma Maki (Fubo Hayashi for period novels) support the flourishing of popular novels. They were constantly engaged in serial stories, published books one after another, and were influential enough to be given a volume for themselves when various types of collections or selections were published.<sup>(2)</sup> Among them, Takeo Kato, Murao Nakamura, and Otokichi Mikami succeeded in publishing “The Collection of Long Stories of Three Writers,” which was 28 volumes in total, from Shinchosha

<sup>(2)</sup> Referred to “Dictionary of Book Title of Complete Library in the Meiji, Taisho, and Show Periods” Taishu-shobo, 1950.

(Shinchosha, 1930). Particularly, Takeo Kato was a prolific writer and published over 90 popular novels during the 1920s to the 1930s, as far my research showed.

Though its prominence faded over time, the flow of popular novels once boasted immense popularity among readership, just like a large river brimming with water. To recreate this large river in this paper, I picked up the works of three writers - Kan Kikuchi, Nobuko Yoshiya, and Takeo Kato. Table 1 is the list of their major modern novels with the subject of romance or family issues, published in newspapers or magazines for the masses between the 1920s to the 1930s.

Kikuchi and Yoshiya were popular novelists who drew an exceptional amount of attention (Kikuchi also had a reputation as an author of pure literature) and their chronology and backgrounds are well known.<sup>(3)</sup> However, Takeo Kato had hardly been analyzed or reviewed so far, despite vigorous activities before the War. Similarly to Kikuchi and Yoshiya, he wrote many popular works and his serial stories in newspapers and magazines were repeatedly commercialized in different forms - books, complete editions, and movies.<sup>(4)</sup>

Takeo Kato, who published a large number of popular novels in newspapers and magazines from the end of the Taisho era to the beginning of the Showa era, was also one of the most popular writers representing that period. Nevertheless, research papers that dealt with him as a target for literary criticism is few in quantity, and insofar as I am aware, only a few papers criticized his works of “peasant literature” that he aspired to in his early days (Yamamoto [1995], Mukubo [1998], etc.). There are no materials that clarify how many works he created in his lifetime. As for his achievements and biography, Masaru Anzai and Tsuto Wada brought them to light, but they concluded that Kato’s peasant novels and local novels are the works that deserve appreciation (Anzai [1972]; Anzai [1979]; Wada [1982])<sup>(5)</sup>.

<sup>(3)</sup> For Kikuchi, referred to “Kan Kikuchi Collection” (total 12 vols, Heibonsha, 1929; total 15 vols, Chuoh-koronsha, 1937; total 24 vols, Takamatsu City Kikuchi Kan Memorial Museum, Bungei-shunjusha, 1993), Kikuchi [1947]; Nagai [1961]; Katayama [1997]; Hidaka [2003] etc. For Yoshiya, referred to “Nobuko Yoshiya Collection” (total 11 vols, Shinchosha; total 12 vols, Asahi Shimbun Company), Itagaki [1979]; Komashaku [1994]; Egusa, Inoue [2001].

<sup>(4)</sup> There is no catalog covering the entire writing activity of Takeo Kato and very few libraries own his works. In both “Chronological Record of Takeo Kato” (self-published, 1972) and “A Man of Nostalgia - Critical Biography of Takeo Kato” (Showa-shoin, 1979) written by Masaru Anzai, or “The Readers of Takeo Kato - Nostalgia and Retrospection” (Publishing Association of Readers of Takeo Kato, 1982) supervised by Tsuto Wada, Kato’s chronological record is listed but focuses mainly on the aspect of a writer for peasant literature and does not cover his tremendous amount of writing activity as a writer of popular novels. At present, I am creating a comprehensive list of Kato’s works based on the relevant materials concerning newspaper novels, books owned by the National Diet Library and Kanagawa Museum of Modern Literature, as well as books that I bought at an antiquarian book market. The list of his works shown below is an abstract, much like that of Kan Kikuchi and Nobuko Yoshiya.

<sup>(5)</sup> Wada said ‘The true worth of Takeo Kato as a writer can be seen in his early works, such as the short stories or essays that describe his hometown, Shiroyama, Kitasagami in Kanagawa Prefecture’ (Wada [1982]: 1), while Anzai talked about his plan, ‘Takeo Kato is almost forgotten today, although he was once one of the most successful writers. I want to reveal the unknown aspects of his personality.’ (Anzai [1979: postscript]) As Anzai says, ‘Even if someone wants to read Kato’s works now, it’s hard to get one’s hands on them because they do not appear in the general market,’ (Anzai [1979: postscript]), it is difficult to find the works of Kato in a library as well as at a bookstore, except for in antiquarian bookstores. Although it is difficult to obtain those works which were published in the prewar era, many of them have been republished during the republishing boom just after the war, so it is possible to collect the works which were republished over time.

Due to the ruin of his family, who had been the village head in the past, Kato abandoned the idea of going on to junior high school and became an elementary school teacher. However, he was not able to give up on his desire to become a novelist, and moved to Tokyo in 1910. Although he wanted to make a living as a novelist of “peasant literature,” his work “Kuon-no-zo (Eternal image),” which he wrote in response to the request of “Fujin-no-tomo,” was met with more-than-expected reputation, and led him to take “new strides to convert himself into a writer of popular novels” (Anzai [1979: 173]). After that, he was pulled back and forth from newspaper to magazine as a popular author to release one modern long story after another, including “Haha (Mother),” (Hochi newspaper, 1923) and “Shinsei (New Birth)” (Shufu-no-tomo, 1924), which turned him into one of the most popular writers of the time. Kato produced a number of works including long romance stories and family stories for newspapers and magazines every year, and eventually, he appeared in a round table discussion in a women’s magazine as a well-known figure. On the other hand, he maintained his supportive attitude towards the flourishing of peasant literature, but most of his actual published works were categorized as popular novels. In later years, he confessed in his essay that he had felt ashamed of the fact that he had no choice but to “convert to a popular novelist,” but the “Theory of the Novel” that he wrote during the same period indicated that he was still actively writing at that time. Kato stated that family novels require the factors of “morality,” “emotion,” and “salvation” (Kato [1933]), and he placed an emphasis on morality by saying: ‘Since popular novels are mental nourishment for the masses in their daily lives, they should not cause degenerate lifestyles or drive an individual towards despair or decadence’ (Kato [1947: 273]). When writing novels that kept female readers in mind, he must have considered what elements of ‘mental nourishment’ were necessary for women as a whole.

There are more than a few “forgotten novelists” who, despite gaining a reputation as a popular writer before the War, were not able to leave their names in literary history. As a result, their works can be found only in antiquarian bookstores. In this paper, I chose Takeo Kato as a representative of “forgotten novelists,” and took representative works by the three novelists of Kikuchi, Yoshiya, and Kato, and reevaluated the charm of popular novels for women through analysis of their major works.

### 3. Narrative Structure of Popular Novels

It was in 1922 that “Kuon-no-zo” was published, which was only two years after Kikuchi’s first popular novel “Shinju-fujin (Mrs. Pearl)” and Yoshiya’s “Chi-no-hate-made,” her first long story for adult women after converting from being a popular writer of novels for girls, came into the world. This novel shifted Kato’s future towards becoming a popular writer of popular novels. For about two decades starting from 1920, these authors paved their way towards popular novels and continued to provide a number of works for female readers until the Pacific War changed

TABLE 1. List of Representative Popular Novels by Kan Kikuchi, Nobuko Yoshiya, and Takeo Kato  
 Focusing on serial novels presented in newspapers or magazines during the 1920s to the 1930s

## &lt;Kan KIKUCHI&gt;

Published in	Title	Media Name	Movie Studio
1920	Shinju-fujin*	Tokyo-nichinichi, Osaka-mainichi Newspaper	Shochiku-Kamata, Nikkatsu-Uzumasa
1921	Doku-no-hana	Fujin-gaho	
1922	Hibana	Tokyo-nichinichi, Osaka-mainichi Newspaper	Shochiku-Kamata
1923	Aratama*	Fujo-kai	
1924	Riku-no-ningyo	Tokyo-nichinichi, Osaka-mainichi Newspaper	Nikkatsu-Daishogun
1925	Junan-ge	Fujo-kai	Nikkatsu-Uzumasa
	Daimi-no-seppun	Tokyo-asahi Newspaper	
1927	Kekkon-nijusō*	Hochi Newspaper	Nikkatsu-Daishogun
	Akai-hakicho	King	Teikoku-kinema
1928	Meiboka*	Fujo-kai	Shochiku-Kamata
	Shin-josei-kagami	Hochi Newspaper	Shochiku-Kamata
1929	Fue-no-shiratama	Asahi Newspaper	Shochiku-Kamata
1930	Chichi-nareba	Fujin Club	Shochiku-Kamata
	Shimai	Fujin Club	Shochiku-Kamata
1931	Shohai	Asahi Newspaper	Shochiku-Kamata
	Mushibameru-haru	Fujin Club	Shochiku-Kamata
1932	Hana-no-Tokyo	Hochi Newspaper	Nikkatsu-Uzumasa
	Otto-aru-hitobito*	Fujin Club	
1933	Kekkon-kaidō*	Yomiuri Newspaper	
	San-katei	Asahi Newspaper	Nikkatsu-Tamagawa
	Meireika*	Fujin Club	
	Muyuge-fujin	Kodan Club	
1934	Teiso-mondo	Tokyo-nichinichi, Osaka-mainichi Newspaper	Irie-pro
1935	Kekkon-no-joken*	Fujin Club	Shochiku-Ofuna
	Machi-no-himegimi	King	Shinko-Tokyo
	Ren-ai-byakudo	Kodan Club	
1936	Kafuku*	Shufu-no-tomo	P. C. L.
1937	Shin-katei-goyomi	Fujin Club	Shochiku-Ofuna
1938	Ren-ai-sanjutsu	Fuji	
	Kekkon-tenkizū*	Shufu-no-tomo	Shochiku-Ofuna
	Josei-no-tatakai*	Fujin Club	Shochiku-Ofuna
	Aiszo-no-sho	King	Shinko-Tokyo
1939	Tsuma-no-tengoku	Fujin Club	
1940	Josei-hongan	Tokyo-nichinichi, Osaka-mainichi Newspaper	Shinko-Tokyo
1941	Utsukushiki-shokuno	Fujin Club	

## &lt;Nobuko YOSHIYA&gt;

Published in	Title	Media	Movie Studio
1920	Chi-no-hate-made	Osaka-asahi Newspaper	
1921	Umi-no-kiwami-made	Tokyo-asahi Newspaper	Shochiku-Kamata
1924	Bara-no-kammuri	Fujin-no-tomo	
1926	Shitsuraku-no-hitobito	Fujin Club	
1927	Sora-no-kanata-e*	Shufu-no-tomo	Shochiku-Kamata Nikkatsu-Tamagawa
1930	Bofuu-no-bara*	Shufu-no-tomo	Shochiku-Kamata
1931	Kanojo-no-michi	Shufu-no-tomo	Nikkatsu-Uzumasa
1933	Riso-no-otto	Hochi Newspaper	Shochiku-Kamata
	Onna-no-yujo*	Fujin Club	Shinko-Tokyo
	Hitotsu-no-teiso*	Shufu-no-tomo	Shochiku-Kamata
1934	Tsuioku-no-bara	Kodan Club	Nikkatsu-Tamagawa
	Aijo-no-kachi	Hochi Newspaper	Shochiku-Kamata

1935	Sokyo Otoko-no-tsugunai* Zoku-onna-no-yujo Onna-no-kaidan Otto-no-teiso*	King Shufu-no-tomo Fujin Club Yomiuri Newspaper Tokyo-nichinichi, Osaka-mainichi Newspaper	Shochiku-Ofuna Shochiku-Ofuna Shinko-Tokyo
1936	Ojosan Haha-no-kyoku Onna-no-kaikyu Shinpi-na-otoko Tsuma-no-baai* Aiyoru-kage	Fujin-koron Fujin Club Yomiuri Newspaper Weekly Asahi Shufu-no-tomo Hinode	P. C. L. P. C. L. Toho-Tokyo Nikkatsu-Tamagawa Shochiku-Ofuna Toho-Tokyo
1937	Katei-nikki	Tokyo-nichinichi, Osaka-mainichi Newspaper	Shochiku-Ofuna, Toho-Tokyo
1938	Onna-no-kyoshitsu Mibojin Hana	Tokyo-nichinichi, Osaka-mainichi Newspaper	Toho-Tokyo
1939	Tsuta Eien-no-otto*	Tokyo-nichinichi, Osaka-mainichi Newspaper	Shochiku-Ofuna
1940		Shufu-no-tomo	Toho-Tokyo
1941		Tokyo-nichinichi, Osaka-mainichi Newspaper	Shochiku-Ofuna
		Sunday Mainichi	Toho-Tokyo
		Shufu-no-tomo	

## &lt;Takeo KATO&gt;

Published in	Title	Media	Movie Studio
1922	Kuon-no-zo*	Fujin-no-tomo	Shochiku-Kamata
1923	Haha	Hochi Newspaper	
1924	Shinsei	Shufu-no-tomo	
	Tama-o-nageutsu*	Tokyo-asahi Newspaper	Shochiku-Kamata
1926	Kanojo-no-teiso	Yomiuri Newspaper	
	Kyoso-kyoku	Fujin-sekai	
	Aizenso	Fujin Club	
1927	Keman	Kodan Club	
	Taimatsu	Kokumin Newspaper	Nikkatsu-Uzumasa
	Kino-no-bara*	Fujin Club	Nippon-kinema
1928	Kyoen	Mainichi Newspaper	Nikkatsu-Uzumasa
	Gin-no-muchi	Kodan Club	
1929	Haru-tokarazu	King	Teikoku-kinema
	Hakko	Hochi Newspaper	
1930	Ginga	Tokyo-nichinichi, Osaka-mainichi Newspaper	
	Hoshi-no-shisha*	Fujin Club	
	Hi-no-tsubasa	Kodan Club	Shinko-kinema
	Ai-no-sensha	Fuji	
1932	Kujaku-sen	Hochi Newspaper	Shochiku-Kamata
	Fumetsu-no-zo	Fujin Club	
	Tokyo-aika	Fuji	
1933	Mittsu-no-shinju	Kodan Club	Nikkatsu-Tamagawa
	Ai-no-bofu	Hinode	
1934	Hanayakana-sensha	Hochi Newspaper	
	Tama-ha-kudakezu	King	
	Aegu-hakucho*	Fujin Club	Shinko-Tokyo
1936	Nemu-no-namiki*	Fujin Club	Shinko-Tokyo
	Yumemiru-tokai	Fuji	
	Yobuko-dori*	King	Shinko-Tokyo
	Ai-no-sanga	Kodan Club	
1937	Hanayakana-sempu	Kodan Club	Shochiku-Ofuna
	Shunrai*	Fujin Club	
1938	Kirameku-seiza*	Hinode	Shinko-Tokyo
1940	Haha-yo-nagekunakare*	Fujin Club	Shinko-Tokyo

Data of "Movie Studio" in Table 1 is mainly based on personally-created Japanese movie database (<http://www.jmdb.ne.jp/index.htm>).

the world. (Table 1)

Focusing on popular serial stories in women's magazines of the three novelists, I aimed to reveal the characteristics of their narrative structure (the works chosen for analysis are marked with a \* in Table 1).

These stories begin with the happy girlhood of a heroine, or in a pure world where the heroine is in love with a hero. In either case that a heroine (or heroines) appears alone, or she (or they) has someone special to her, the important thing is the heroine's physical and mental virginity, purity, innocence, and naiveté. As an exception, in cases where a heroine appears as a 'vamp', like Ruriko of "Shinju-fujin" or Yumiko of "Kino-no-bara (Yesterday Rose)" (Kato, 1927), said heroine's girlhood is depicted retrospectively. The heroine enjoys her "virginity" physically as well as mentally. Even when she is married, she only has a "legitimate" relationship with her husband that was achieved through a marriage of love that was celebrated by those around her, so her way of life as a woman is "innocent." The story begins with an incident that can jeopardize the heroine's virginity and happiness.

A happy heroine faces a variety of ordeals - financial hardship, her father's death, sexual violence, her lover changing heart, a reluctant marriage, and her husband cheating being some of these patterns. Any of these is a calamity that can throw the heroine off of her road to a happy marriage or a safe family life that she had been enjoying as a faithful wife. Through passionate amorous feelings, a conspiracy, or violence from an "immoral" man, heroines in many stories lose their virginity before marriage, and become pregnant. In that case, the story changes from that of a daughter to that of mother.

The main factor in making a story dramatic is an "ordeal," which forces the heroine to separate from her loved one (her husband or children). The heroine does not merely accept the ordeal as her destiny, but fights against it in her own way.

A heroine facing an ordeal has two choices; one is maintaining her pure love, and to do so, there are three methods: (1) keeping her physical chastity, (2) devoting herself to a loved one at the expense of physical chastity, or (3) keeping her mental chastity, albeit losing her physical chastity. The other choice is to seek revenge against a person (mainly a man) who was the cause of the ordeal. Forging a friendship with another woman or receiving conscientious treatment, or receiving help from reformed men or men with mercy support heroines who are struggling to achieve her objective by any means possible.

After various struggles, a heroine eventually faces her "worldly happy ending" - getting together with a loved one or seeing her children again, or a "saintly happy ending" - salvation through death (or becoming a priest).

In the case of a "worldly happy ending," these stories often have endings which should be referred to as the "disadvantage sharing" pattern. The main characters of the story each share a portion of their disadvantages, resulting in everyone enjoying the final reward. Particularly in the stories in which friendship among female characters is emphasized, one can clearly see how

the “disadvantages” throughout the stories are distributed. In contrast to this disadvantage sharing pattern, there is also the “disadvantage intensive” pattern, in which the disadvantages concentrate exclusively on the heroine. This is a pattern typical to the “saintly happy ending,” in which the story ends after the heroine has carried all of her disadvantages alone. The heroine brings about happiness to the people left behind, much like a crucified Christ or a Holy Mother. The heroine herself (is supposed to) achieve salvation through her own death, or by becoming a priest.

### Basic Structure of Story

“Purity/innocence” → “ordeal” → “maintaining pure love” → “worldly happy ending”  
 “seeking revenge” → “saintly happy ending”

Using the concept of a “pearl,” which Kan Kikuchi used as a motif of a woman’s pure love and integrity, to illustrate the two patterns of the happy ending, one can see that the worldly happy ending is an ending in which repeated ordeals cause fine scratch on the surface of an undamaged pearl. However, eventually, the pearl’s warmly rounded surface reflects the soft light. In contrast, the saintly happy ending is an ending in which the heroine protects her pearl at all costs and rejects any scratching, until at last the pearl shatters to pieces and nothing remains but a momentary twinkle of light. The former represents a pearl polished by hardship, or a matured and mellowed heroine, while the latter represents a pearl that no ordeal can damage, or the nobility of the heroine.

The world of these stories is by no means a world comprised only of right and wrong. It cannot be compared as a dichotomous confrontation between the two concepts, in which a heroine is strictly good and all other individuals who hinder the heroine’s happiness are bad. Although there are many scenes that appear as if good characters are confronting bad characters, the villain, in individual scenes, reforms himself or herself later on from the bottom of their heart, or present themselves as good in another scene. Many of these villains only temporarily play a “bad” role in the narrative. In fact, there are very few villains who show no conscience throughout the entire story. Even the heroine will make an “immoral” or “stupid” decision driven by hatred or passion, causing another individual to feel sorrow. To untangle these complicated relationships and lessen other person’s grief, the heroine and all the other main characters worry about what to do or consider which option is right. It is difficult to set standards of right and wrong, or those regarding morality. This worldview in popular novels is what female readers loved.

## 4. Stirring Desires

### - Gender System Set Through Desires -

#### 4.1 *Desire for Self-virginity - Chastity Kept for Pure Love*

An “ordeal” greatly develops a story. What sorts of values makes an ordeal an ordeal? The answer is that these ordeals reflect what a heroine truly desires.

Oftentimes, the ordeal that a heroine faces is concerned with chastity. How these ordeals that befall a heroine are described is full of messages regarding how a woman’s chastity is a vital value.

“Shinju-fujin,” a monumental piece of work in the genre of popular novels, can be said to be a tale of chastity. The title of “Shinju-fujin” expresses the final revealing of the true nature of its heroine, Ruriko, who attempts to protect her chastity physically as well as mentally. Although Ruriko, who is a daughter of a baron, had a lover with whom she made a commitment to, she became the second wife of Shoda, a marine transport millionaire, to save her family from ruin. This results in her becoming a mother to Katsuhiko and Minako, the children of Shoda’s former wife. Ruriko continues to refuse undertaking in a physical relationship with Shoda to get revenge on him, who unfairly obtained her using his financial advantage, as well as to maintain her pure love for her lover, Naoya. After Shoda can no longer bear abstinence and attempts to realize his desire for Ruriko violently, he is killed by Katsuhiko, who adores Ruriko. Now a widow, Ruriko, in a manner completely unlike her old self, opens a salon using Shoda’s financial power and becomes a ‘vamp’ who captivates many men through her appearance and educational refinements. Some of these men even commit suicide over her, and the story finally culminates with her being stabbed to death by one of her admirers. On her deathbed, Ruriko asks her former lover Naoya to look after her daughter-in-law Minako, and reveals that she continued to maintain her pure love for Naoya. This concept of pure love is the ‘pearl’ that Ruriko had kept in her heart the entire time.

Ai Maeda pointed out that there is a large divergence between the first half of the story, in which Ruriko struggles to protect her virginity, and the latter half, in which she lives a freewheeling life as a vamp, and points out that this large gap is a miscalculation in the plot structure of “Shinju-fujin” (Maeda [1973]); however, it can be said that the heroine has a consistent objective, which is to get revenge on men on behalf of women, and as for the impetus for Ruriko’s changing from disobeying to Shoda to becoming a ruthless vamp towards many and unspecified men, this has been abundantly explained by the depiction that Ruriko knows she is suffering from irreparable trauma as a result of Shoda’s death.

Immediately after publication of “Shinju-fujin,” Kikuchi used the motif of a pearl again to represent a woman’s spirit in another work titled “Aratama (New Gem)” (1923) that ran in a woman’s magazine. “Aratama” depicts the tales of three sisters, and variations of Ruriko’s claim can be seen within the narrative. Ruriko declares in the latter part of “Shinju-fujin” that her

vamp-like behavior is to act against the social trend of belittling women. ‘Men can play with women but women cannot do the same with men - I think I’d dedicate my whole life to rebel against such male-oriented morals with all I’ve got’ (Bungei-shunju-shuppan, “Complete Collection of Kan Kikuchi,” 1993 - hereinafter called Kikuchi Collection - Vol. 5 p. 213). The first half of “Shinju-fujin” is similar to conventional family stories such as “Konjiki-yasha (The Golden Demon)” in its tragic morality play and its description of the morality of innate goodness, and some believe that this work gained a reputation from the masses because of its feudal values (Abe [1998]); however, after the successful publication of “Shinju-fujin,” feminist claims declared by Ruriko repeatedly appeared in Kikuchi’s popular works in women’s magazines. Based on this fact, one can consider that awareness for modern women’s rights had been also rising within the society.

Three years later, the issue of virginity, which was depicted in “Shinju-fujin” alongside the formation of modern characteristics of women, appears again in “Aratama” within each episode of the three heroines. In the case of the eldest daughter, Hitomi, who continuously rejects the persistent sexual temptation of her lover while undergoing internal struggles, she has inside of herself a “noble and pure gem,” or a “spiritual gem resembling a pearl that hates all evils, much like a coral gem hates poison” (Kikuchi Collection - Vol. 6 p. 83), whereas the second daughter, Miyako, who loses her virginity by the man who is her elder sister’s lover, sees his attention turning to the third daughter, Ranko, and realizes that ‘a virginal body is transfigured - glorified with an infinite light that only virgins exude. This light is more precious than the belt of Venus.’ Kan Kikuchi depicted her anguish about it cruelly: ‘She writhed in her hell of jealousy and remorse’ (Kikuchi Collection, Vol. 6 p. 147).

Heroines who are unwillingly deprived of such precious virginity let their overflowing grief and anger pour out as individuals with dignity. Sadako of “Tama-o-nageutsu (Throwing Away a Gem)” (Kato 1924) scolds Ryuta loudly for his excuse of committing rape due to long-cherished feelings of love by saying: ‘You are saying you did it because you love me, not hate me? No, no matter what you say, you did it because you hate me,’ and declares: ‘I hate you. I hate you just like you hate me!’ (Takeo Kato, Murao Nakamura, Otokichi Mikami “Collection of Long Stories of Three Writers” Shinchosha 1930 - hereinafter called “Three Writers Collection” - p. 260). While Sadako declares: ‘I’m a weak woman. But my heart will never surrender to such violence, even though my body did,’ she agonizes in a passage that states: ‘I lost my virginity. I’m dishonored! She felt like tearing her own body apart. She thought of herself as not worth living’ (Three Writers Collection, p. 267). Sadako was torn between two forms of logic: firstly, that her physical chastity that had been taken advantage of cannot damage her soul, and secondly, that she has no right to live now that she’d lost her virginity.

Shihoko, the heroine of “Yobuko-dori (Calling Bird)” (Kato, 1936), who was raped by a vicious man despite having a lover named Junichi, agonized in the same way as Sadako did: ‘Loss of virginity - does that have such a significant meaning for a woman’s life? It is just a

physical problem, so to speak, a disaster for Shihoko much in the same vein as being bitten by a rabid dog. It wasn't as if Shihoko didn't ask herself why she felt the need to let this bother her so much. However, pure cloths hate even the smallest spot. If one cares for one's body as if it were a precious gem, even an obscure mark is unbearable. Due to Shihoko's pure nature and her devotion to Junichi, she couldn't forgive herself. All or nothing! Shihoko was a strict idealist of romance.' (Yobuko-dori, p. 69)

More than a few heroines facing the "ordeal" of being deprived of her virginity choose the way of revenge against a man. The theme of revenge against an oppressive man who violates a woman's "pearl," depicted in "Shinju-fujin," was passed down to subsequent works such as "Aratama" (Kikuchi, 1923) whose plot depicts a situation in which, after the death of a father with three daughters, the third daughter Ranko gets revenge on a viscount who toyed with her two elder sisters in exchange for financial support. Other works include "Kekkon-no-joken (Marriage Conditions)" (Kikuchi, 1935) where the heroine marries a man who had raped her, driven by the passion of love, with the intent to get revenge against him, or "Kafuku (Good and Evil)" (Kikuchi, 1936) where, despite having a relationship based on eventual marriage, the heroine's lover marries another woman according to his father's wishes, and the heroine, together with the son who was born to them, visits the newly-wed couple.

Ranko of "Aratama" says: 'I'm determined to get downright revenge on the devil that would ignore a woman's dignity and toy with the feelings of women,' as well as 'I believe I'm the player that has been selected among the women of the world to punish seducers. Thinking of it in this way gives me courage' (Kikuchi Collection. Vol. 6 p. 229). Her determination is identical to that of Ruriko in "Shinju-fujin."

In "Kekkon-no-joken," the heroine Mitsue swears revenge against her lover, Tatsuo, who doubted her virginity without a clear basis, as well as Shinzo, who fulfilled his desires by raping the broken-hearted Mitsue: 'At the moment when she thought that all was over, the blood of revenge began to flood back through all of her blood vessels at a tremendous speed. I'll get revenge against this man, and against Narita; by whatever means, no matter how shameful, he'll pay for this' (Kikuchi Collection Vol. 13 p. 313). 'To make [Shinzo] realize that a physical relationship is not a necessary condition for marriage' (Kikuchi Collection Vol. 13 p. 350), Mitsue makes the bold choice to marry Shinzo. And to Shinzo, who attacks Mitsue's attitude of not opening up to him or allowing him to touch her, she coldly states: 'I do not love you. I was forced to marry you through violence, so you cannot control me freely unless you use violence' (Kikuchi Collection Vol. 13 p. 332).

In the work "Kafuku," after spending a night with a lover who promises her marriage, the heroine Toyomi finds out that the lover intends to jilt her for a more advantageous marriage. She felt disdain about letting him know about the possibility of her pregnancy, and 'the thought that she might beg for support disappeared from her mind with furious anger; she shouts 'Don't touch me! Pull myself together? You need not worry about me. It is my lifelong shame to think that I

ever considered begging you for help for even a moment,’ and ‘you are clever fox. I’m going to look down on you for the rest of my life’ (Kikuchi Collection Vol. 13 p. 564). This scene was reproduced accurately using dialogues from the novel as the climax of the first half of the film which was made in 1937 (directed by Mikio Naruse, Toho). The actress Takako Irie gave an impressive performance as Toyomi in a scene, wherein she, a shy young girl until she realized that she had been betrayed by her lover, shouts ‘Don’t touch me!’ and shakes off his hand with fury in her eyes. After that, when she finds herself pregnant, she is determined to ‘torture his conscience by raising the child by herself.’ Her pledge is similarly ferocious and delivered with torment: ‘Shintaro Minagawa, I’ll put a curse on you. I won’t be the only one to hate you; I’ll raise this new life to hate you along with me. If I ever get the chance, I’ll take revenge on you!’ ‘A man who toys with a woman’s life deserves any punishment. I will swear revenge on him by whatever means’ (Kikuchi Collection Vol. 13 pp. 567–568).

These heroines are descendants of Ruriko of “Shinju-fujin.” Many of them are, at their base, depicted as modest and quiet women. Both Mitsue and Toyomi are not “modern girls,” but the “Yamato-nadeshiko (an ideal Japanese woman)” type of heroines. They are depicted in contrast with female characters with the qualities of assertiveness and having an open mind. These novels show that even though a woman may have a graceful or fragile nature, she will protest vehemently when her purity is sullied. Their protests are depicted positively, so it can be said that such novels develop the enlightening or threatening example that no woman should allow men to deprive them of their chastity. For this reason, cases where women who do not value her virginity are “punished” in some form are presented in these novels as well.

As a result of this, maintaining her own chastity became a strong desire for a woman. The more women regard romance as holy and noble, the more chastity becomes important. This idea is not bound by the traditional sense of female morality. As is pointed out by Kazue Muta, in the modern era, women themselves were involved in the process of enhancing the value of women’s chastity or virginity (Muta [1996]).

For women, pure love is living proof or evidence that they have lived their lives. It can be said that the magnitude of a heroine’s hatred and anger for having been deprived of her chastity is the opposite side of her desire to dedicate something so precious to a loved one. How her virginity is given and to whom is one of the greatest events in a woman’s life. Everyone starts as a virgin, and for women in particular, this chastity is a gem, and there is only one chance to give it. This is the message that these stories send to the reader.

A situation in which virginity, a gem for women, or the pure love which serves as the only home for virginity is neglected, allows women to unleash her anger or mount a counterattack to the relevant men. The trampling of virginity can be used as a good basis/condition for justifying women’s self-assertion and triggering an explosion of potential anger towards men. It was one of the new “rights” given to modern women.

#### 4.2 *Desire for Men's Purity - Criticism of the Sexual Double Standard*

Male characters that appear in novels are not confined to those who trample on women's virginity or their pure love. Men's purity in response to a woman's desire for pure love is also a motif which is essential to popular novels.

Takeo Kato passionately describes the purity of a man who loves his wife deeply, in "Hoshi-no-shisha (Starry Messenger)" (1930) and "Aegu-hakucho (Gasping Swan)" (1934). Setsuya of "Hoshi-no-shisha" grieves for the death of his beloved wife, and after recognizing his love for her sister, Namiko, by seeing his late wife in Namiko, he devotes his modest and self-sacrificing love to her. Although Namiko initially feels that the deeply-grieving Setsuya is "too feminine and foolish," she gradually comes to realize the serious love he has for his wife. When Namiko happens to see Setsuya falling asleep with a photo of his late wife, she is moved by the bond between them: 'His sorrow was as endless and depthless like an ocean, and it seemed to be getting deeper and more intense. She let out a sigh of disgust, but on the other hand, unconsciously, she became overwhelmed by his heavy sorrow. Gradually she became less able to laugh or sneer at him - how strong true love is!' (Three Writers Collection Vol. 8 p. 40) Compared to her first love, who abandoned her despite talking passionately to her about love and making a vow to her, she had this to consider: 'Namiko had to rethink [Setsuya's] sorrow, and wonder if such a form of true love can exist in this world.' (Three Writers Collection Vol. 8 p. 40)

In Nobuko Yoshiya's work, titled "Hitotsu-no-teiso (A chastity)" (1933), a man named Hiroshi appears, who intends to maintain his love for his lover. Forced to marry against his will as a part of a debt to his relative, he struggles with his unforgettable love for his former lover, Kimiko. He dies young due to illness after having a child for the family, and on the eve of his death he desperately asks to be able to join Kimiko in her grave. Though Hiroshi, who sacrifices his pure love to Kimiko for his family, feels sorry for his innocent wife, swears spiritual chastity by saying: 'Kimi, even though I'm married, you are the only one I love from the bottom of my heart. Believe me.' (Shufu-no-tomo, Sep. 1934, p. 258) The "chastity" that Hiroshi keeps up until his death is the same as the "pearl" inside the heart of other heroines.

Kan Kikuchi's "Josei-no-tatakai (Women's War)" (1938) focuses on the character of viscount Akita, who loves the nobleness of the narrative's heroine, Nahomi. When he proposes to her, the viscount gives her his diary to help her get to know him, wherein "adoration, applause, or admiration! These were the sorts of words that were plainly written, a series of earnest words of applause and affection without any sordid lust or amorous eye for Nahomi." (Kikuchi Collection No. 15 p. 104) This perspective of seeing a woman as an object of adoration or applause and not a sexual object is an indispensable factor for men's pure love.

Criticism for the double sexual standard also appears frequently in these novels. For example, Shinnosuke and Ryuzaburo of Yoshiya's "Onna-no-yujo (Friendship Between Women)" (1933), Shinkichi of "Eien-no-otto (Eternal Husband)" (1940), the viscount Nanao of Kato's "Yobukodori," (1936) as well as some other male characters, deny exclusive demands for a woman's

virginity or express definitively that there is no problem if a woman has already lost her virginity before marriage. Viscount Nanao, who chooses to marry the heroine Shihoko with the knowledge that she had her virginity violently taken from her, says to Shihoko: ‘The current Japanese society condemns women too much - it’s almost a relic of feudalism. Even for a minor mistake, punishments towards women are so harsh, whereas they are mild for men. It is unfair, I think.’ (Yobuko-dori, p. 102)

Women also present their desire for men to keep their virginity until marriage, as well as maintain their chastity after marriage. In Yoshiya’s “Sora-no-kanata-e (In the Far End of the Sky),” Hatsuko responds to her lover’s utterance of “you are so naïve; do you really believe I’m still a virgin?” with harsh rejection: “Don’t touch me! How filthy you are” (Yoshiya Collection Vol. 2 pp. 242–243). In Kikuchi’s “Kekkon-Kaido (Marriage Road)” (1933), the heroine Takako does not allow herself or her lover to even kiss another person. “What I’m saying is that I want to keep such ‘things’ (kiss: note by the writer) as you (her best friend Ruiko: note by the writer) call it, for my lifelong companion. And in return, I want the man to do the same for me as well.” (Kikuchi Collection Vol. 11 p. 501)

Aside from these works, Nobuko Yoshiya’s “Otto-no-teiso (Husband’s Chastity)” (1936) was a tremendous hit because it addressed the issue of whether or not a husband’s chastity is even possible - a topic that became the title of the work itself - even despite a woman consistently being expected to be chaste.

In Yoshiya’s works, such as “Otto-no-teiso” or “Bofuu-no-bara ((Rose in a Storm)” (1930), one can clearly observe that Yoshiya attempts to equally treat the chastity of the wife with that of her husband. “Otto-no-teiso” describes a love triangle between a husband, wife and the wife’s best friend. Shinya, the husband, goes through anguish because he falls in love with his wife’s friend, Kayo, while also loving his wife, Kuniko. ‘Ever since getting married, due to his fastidious nature, Shinya has maintained his chastity (a husband’s chastity) without any contact with prostitutes, which is generally rare for men. But tonight, he was - completely defeated - thinking that it would have been excusable if [Kayo] had been a woman paid for one night of sex. In reality, she was a true love, one that had no price. His act seemed to be an egregious betrayal against his wife.’ (Yoshiya Collection Vol. 5 p. 123) Though he betrayed his chastity, as long as he continues to struggle with his sense of sin instead of becoming defiant, Shinya can be considered a loving husband. Upon knowing the deep anger and sorrow of his wife, ‘Shinya apologized in a tearful voice, meekly throwing away his all arrogance, including his honor or pride as a man or his conventional male desire to control or be superior over women.’ (Yoshiya Collection Vol. 5 p. 170) However, to Shinya, who profusely apologizes to her, Kuniko talks about the issue of gender equality of chastity with a pained expression.

‘If - I had an affair with other man and cheated on you like you did, what would you do?’ Kuniko asks him suddenly. ‘Well, that’d mean that you’d committed a adultery,’ Shinya looked at her surprisingly. ‘I know. But more than that, I want to ask you how you would react to it. If

I apologize to you from the bottom of my heart, would you forgive me and live together the way it used to be? And would you take responsibility and get rid of the man?" "... That would depend on the situation at the time, b, but..." Shinya equivocated. 'All right, then. I will try engaging in adultery with your best friend - then you'll see how it depends on the situation!' (Yoshiya Collection Vol. 5 p. 177) Here, the legal system of the time, which only punished women with adultery, doesn't save Shinya. Kuniko tries to face off against Shinya from her personal viewpoint of how a husband loves his wife, irrespective of the legal system.

If a husband insists upon his equal love for his wife and lover, even if he is in deep anguish, his modest wife will not usually accept his apology. Kuniko of "Otto-no-teiso" expresses her sincere feelings by saying that she 'cannot stand this humiliating life any longer, not even for another hour, to have to depend on a husband who no longer loves me just for support as a wife only in name!' (Yoshiya Collection Vol. 5 p. 155). Similarly, Yumiko of "Kekkon-tenkizu (Marriage Weather Chart)" (1938) thinks deeply about the following: 'Sharing the heart of husband with other woman! - it is unimaginable for, Yumiko who was strong-willed despite being quiet. She could not accept such a life. If she couldn't own all of her husband, she would prefer giving up on him.' (Kikuchi Collection Vol. 14 p. 544)

'Look! Brothels, entertainment houses, and tea-houses - there are many kinds of institutions in our society where men can toy with women publicly. Their existence is permitted by the nation and authorized legally. Men proclaiming themselves to be educators or thinkers are sitting and doing nothing idly despite living in a world like this, and just keeps preaching to women. Be a woman of virtue! Keep your chastity! Don't play with men! I consider this to be selfishness on the part of men.' ("Shinju-fujin" Kikuchi Collection Vol. 5 p. 213)

It was in 1920 when Ruriko of "Shinju-fujin" became an educated and proud salon owner, after enduring her ordeals. This was when she began to fight back against the "double sexual standard" that was soft on men but hard on women, by assuming the role of a 'witch.' "Otto-no-teiso" and "Kekkon-tenkizu," mentioned earlier, were published in 1936 and 1938, respectively. In the popular novels of the 1930s, ordinary middle-class wives living in urban areas began to voice their objections to the double sexual standard, instead of these 'witches'.

#### *4.3 Desire for a Sweet Married Life - Combination of Gender Equality at Home and the Consumption Lifestyle*

A marital life in which male chauvinism or autocratic behavior by a husband is tolerated was repeatedly criticized in the popular novels in women's magazines, wherein "bad husbands" and "good husbands" were depicted contrastingly.

The following can be cited as conditions for "bad husbands": autocratic behavior, indecency, sexually explicit desires, insulting a female friend of his wife, being dirty or careless with money, providing no help with the housework, misbehaving, providing no help with child-rearing, being vain, using violence, etc. Yoshiya's works are a treasure trove of descriptions of "bad husbands,"

and there are almost too many of them to mention: some examples are Toyozo (husband of Ayano) of “Onna-no-yujo,” Kenji (husband of Mioko) of “Bofuu-no-barai,” Shunkichi (husband of Michiyo) of “Tsuma-no-baai (In Case of a Wife)” (1937), Shigeru of “Otoko-no-tsugunai (When a Man Expiates)” (1935) or the deceased husband of Kayo of “Otto-no-teiso.”

On the other hand, “good husbands,” who are on the opposite end of the spectrum from the “bad husbands,” must be a man who is kind, caring, and respects women’s personality, maintains his chastity, loves his children, prioritizes his family, has a rich variety of hobbies and intellect, and to top it off, is good-looking. These traits are reflected in Morihiko (husband of Fujiko) of “Bofuu-no-barai,” Ryoichi (friend of Michiyo’s husband) of “Tsuma-no-baai,” Shinya of “Otto-no-teiso” and Akira (husband of Reiko’s elder sister) of “Kuon-no-zo.” Bad husbands and good husbands appear in front of heroines as comparable characters who illustrate an easy-to-grasp example of a good marriage and a bad marriage.

A man having equally serious desires for pure love as the woman leads to a longing for equal partnership in marital life. An image of a husband who considers his wife an equal partner - that is the sort of husband in a modern family who is sought after in articles of women’s magazines, shaped by dramatic stories and detailed descriptions within a novel.

The representative work which focuses on a husband who regards his wife as an equal partner would be Kan Kikuchi’s “Otto-aru-hitobito (Married Women)” (1933). This work describes, in detail, Tameo’s struggle to ensure marital love with his wife Tomiko, who is one of the heroines. Tameo’s changing attitudes reflect the desired image of a husband.

Tomiko is frustrated by her husband’s boorish and unkind behavior in their newlywed life. Though theirs was an arranged marriage, Tameo comes to love Tomiko after their marriage, and realizes her frustrations with him and tries to change his words and attitudes from rude and arrogant to respectful and polite. At first, when he found himself being dissatisfied by something, he was easy to anger and become violent, such as giving Tomiko a light jab in the shoulder. However, after Tomiko expresses her anger, Tameo comes to hear her side of the story and shows a more generous attitude. He presents her with a gift as a token of love, and shares time with his wife, such as walking at nightfall or swimming at a summer resort. Additionally, he comes to express praise and affection for his wife using his words.

A crucial change in Tameo is depicted in a scene wherein he is watching the blinking lights of fireflies flying inside a mosquito net while he is face-to-face with Tomiko. He says to her, ‘I was so arrogant when we got married.’ But now, ‘My mind is full of thoughts about how I can make you happy’ (Kikuchi Collection Vol. 11 p. 235). The true value of “Risou-no-otto (Ideal Husband)” is an exhibition of the husband’s generous attitude towards respecting his wife’s decision without getting upset, when she professed that she was wavering between her husband and her premarital lover. Tameo accepts his wife’s shocking profession with good grace, saying ‘I want to keep you by my side, even if I have to resort to violence. But I won’t do that. I’ll set you free,’ and eventually, he wins Tomiko’s love. (Kikuchi Collection Vol. 11 p. 238). A wife

being in love with a man other than her husband was a completely unforgivable crime during those days, where only “married women” were accused of the crime of adultery. However, an “ideal husband” in these popular novels disdains the act of blaming his wife alone. He also feels responsible for his inadequacy as a husband which motivated his wife to have an affair. “Otto-banzai (Husband Forever)” is the title of the last chapter of this novel.

Life with an “ideal husband,” who respects and cares for his wife, is a lifestyle characterized by cultural richness and affluent consumption. The setting behind popular novels that describe a happy family is mostly an urban area, full of the symbols of glamorous urban life, such as the Ginza parlor, the Imperial Hotel, foreign movies, dance halls, chocolate, coffee, Western-style clothes, or high-heeled shoes. A wife of a salary worker or business person plays her role as a housewife by managing domestic budgets and assumes responsibility for the family’s consumption to modernize and enriching their clothing, food, and housing. Furthermore, she diligently attempts to keep herself clean and neat in accordance with her husband’s economic power. The husband goes to a theater or a restaurant together with his beautiful wife to share leisure time.

These novels depict “a sweet marital life” of the modern family, wherein the concept of gender roles - “men work outside and women stay home to do the housework and child-rearing” is heavily rooted. This “sweet marital life” is created in the world of the novel through the combination of a husband who respects his wife as an equal partner, and the family’s affluent life of consumption. A happy marital life is based on the husband’s economic power, but that is not sufficient to guarantee an enviable rich life; it requires a new relationship structure in a family, which is “equal” division of labor between the husband and wife, as well as the establishment of the wife’s sovereignty in housework. This directs the family’s economic power towards couple’s pleasure as well as wife’s own desire for consumption. Conversely, it can be said that various kinds of products and consumption cultures are necessary to realize this new relationship. As industrialization of the society progressed, housewives of the modern family came to occupy an important place as a consumer of products and leisure that increased with every passing year.

Becoming a couple who married for romantic love and can enjoy a “sweet life” that includes a rich consumption lifestyle without losing respect and love for each other even after marriage - this is the perfect image of “happiness” for women, or, in other words, the culmination of women’s desires.

## 5. Conclusion

Women’s magazines in the 1920s and 30s devoted many pages of each issue to five to eight serial stories with colorful illustrations. Women’s magazines not only provided a place to present a printed novel, but also served as advertising for mixed media such as dramatized or cinematized

novels, as well as a source of information regarding celebrities who were models for the novels. Furthermore, these magazines positioned popular writers as cultural figures and frequently introduced them in round-table talk articles or in articles pertaining to worldly matters as advisors, so the readers of women's magazines could enjoy the world of novels from several perspectives. Giichi Tokura, a journalist of *Jitsugyo no Nihon Sha*, pointed out in 1931 that focusing on introducing popular novels was one of the dominant factors that women's magazines penetrated into society from the Taisho period to the early Showa period, and claimed that 'There are many cases where the circulation figures depend on whether a novel of a popular writer is published in the magazine.' (Tokura [1931: 260])

It can be also seen from the readers' comment column that the lineup of the serial stories was one of the more important factors in determining the sales of a magazine.

'How amazing! Novels of this year are all good ones. Take "Bofuu-no-barai," "Ako-no-gishitachi (The Loyal Retainers of the Ako Clan)," and "Kagami-o-nugute (Wiping the Mirror)," for example - I was touched beyond words.' (1931, reader's comment in *Shufu-no-tomo*) or 'How wonderful "Hoshi-no-shisha," "Ko (Child)," and "Nageki-no-miyako (City in Grief)" are! Every time, I marvel about the quality that only Fujin Club can deliver.' (1930, reader's comment of Fujin Club)

The writers of popular novels were those who were sensitive to the feelings of female readers. The desire of a heroine is the same as that of a reader. Female readers "read" a story and see herself in its heroine. Fantasy in a novel indicates a life that was supposed to be somewhere in the reader's past, as well as a life that is supposed to be somewhere in the future. These stories provide not only an "escape from reality" to forget the monotony of daily life, but also a "replacement for reality" to add more meaning to the monotony of daily life. Both of these factors are ardent desires in readers, and the "enthusiasm" within these desires was expressed through circulation figures or readers' comments, which provided motivation for media and writers to create the fantasy that women were seeking for.

The images of romantic love and a sweet home life that are depicted in popular novels as something beautiful, wonderful, or valuable, absorb the desires of readers while stimulating them. Then, where does this stimulated desire go? Heroines or heroes of the novels do not always get everything that they want. Consequently, it becomes necessary to quell these desires towards achieving heterosexual romance which is suggested to readers as something that holds the noblest and most sensual charm. This can be accomplished by sublimating these desires through the presentation of an alternative desire or introducing someone's death in the story, or even by depicting a complementary effect through other information (such as critical or practical articles) in the same magazine. This point will be discussed in a different paper.

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