

**“Ruin of the Nation by Coeds”:
Women in Higher Education in the High-Growth Period in Japan**
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Abstract:

Radical reforms enacted by the American Occupation government (1945-1952) in Japan – under an ambitious program to “democratize” Japanese society from above – included the end of a government ban on coeducation above the primary level that had been in place since 1876. The presence of young women in formerly homosocial institutions of higher education became the source of several debates in the early 1960s and onward, especially as female students engaged in student activism and seemed to manifest both the potential for true political purity and the potential for disruptive democratic excess.

I examine the terms of these debates, through which public intellectuals struggled to define the ideal Japanese democratic subject that was supposed to supersede the imperial subject. I argue that in the high-growth era in Japan, gender difference became important in social and political discourse at the precise moment that other differences with potential for conflict – i.e. class and ethnicity – were elided in favor of a myth of a classless, homogenous nation of Japanese citizen-subjects. “Women” became the key particularity and the symbol for a host of anxieties about massification and democratization in higher education, even as new economic imperatives drove its expansion. What can the history of integrating women into higher education in postwar Japan tell us about the challenges posed by the promise of radical democracy and the demands of a rapidly changing industrial society? What might that mean for conceptualizing the tensions between a universal versus a particular image of the democratic subject?

Introduction:

Japanese intellectual culture of the late 1940s, following the destruction and defeat of wartime militarism, obsessed over how to affirm the individual in terms of an active subjecthood. A citizenry equipped with strong egos that could protest the injustices of authority seemed to be the best guarantee of maintaining democracy.¹ An unfinished debate, this central philosophical discussion of “subjectivity” (*shutaisei*) from 1946 to 1948 nevertheless marked the concerns of postwar intellectuals as they tried to

¹ Kirsten, Rikki. *Democracy in Postwar Japan: Maruyama Masao and the search for autonomy*. London: Routledge, 1996. P. 91.

understand how imperial subjects could become citizens.² That no conclusions were reached would be lamented in the late 1960s, especially as the kind of modernist civic transformation envisioned by progressive postwar intellectuals was mobilized “coopted” to defend the status quo rather than offer challenges to the powers that be.³ But the radical potential of this idea of civic subjectivity was perhaps always limited by its blindness to the already gendered and ethnic nature of its ostensible universal subject.

The universal subject of postwar democracy was male. Although the public sphere was opened up to women via the vote and access to formerly all-male educational institutions, the particularity of women as a democratic subject was subsumed under discussions of a universal subjectivity. Women, given the vote and granted the right to coeducation beyond primary school with Occupation-instituted reforms, and seen as a previously oppressed social group whose active citizenship would create a real democracy,⁴ were nevertheless implicitly excluded from a universal definition of a citizen. Progressive intellectuals who rallied around a new democratic subjectivity and sought to examine the development of this through the collection and analysis of data and a new, modernist social science were interested in the idea of women’s inclusion in society, and yet sociological studies often excluded them.⁵ Influenced by American sociologists, founders of the 1955 of the Social Stratification and Social Mobility (SSM) Survey attempted to collect data on the changes in class Japan was undergoing as economic growth embraced the country. They determined class mobility by tracing the changed social statuses of sons versus fathers. Until the mid-1980s, part of their sociological definition of the “citizen” who was or was not making class gains was that he was male.⁶

By the late 1960s, about ninety percent of respondents to the annual Survey on the People’s Life-Style conducted by the Prime Minister’s Office in Japan determined

² Barshay, Andrew E. “Postwar Social and Political Thought, 1945-90.” *Modern Japanese Thought*. Ed., Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998. P. 289.

³ Barshay, 300.

⁴ Barshay, 313.

⁵ Barshay, 303.

⁶ SSM Survey reports from 1955 to 1985 are available here: <http://www.sal.tohoku.ac.jp/~tsigeto/ssm/e.html#85>. Rosemary Crompton notes a similar narrowly male definition of social actors trend in the British case in “Women’s Employment and the Middle Class.” *Social Change and the Middle Classes*. Ed. Tim Butler and Mike Savage. 1995

themselves to be in the middle, upper-middle, or lower-middle socio-economic strata.⁷ William Kelly has traced how, with a self-identified “middle strata” that made up ninety percent of the population by the late 1960s, class remained a salient category of analysis only to intellectuals. While academics in sociology and economics used the language of social class to analyze dynamics within Japanese society, less people within that society felt social class to be linked to objective differentials. They were more inclined to identify with a “mainstream” ideal of the “typical” Japanese household.⁸ What this also meant was that in postwar Japanese society, a strong trend emerged from the high-growth period, and within the crucible of American Cold War policy, that has insisted upon Japanese ethnic distinctness from the rest of Asia, to subsume difference in terms of class and ethnicity into “sanitized mono-ethnic nationalism.”⁹ A vision of an ethnically and increasingly economically homogenous society still allowed for – in fact, it insisted upon – difference between “mainstream” male and female roles.¹⁰ In the high-growth era in Japan, gender difference became important in social and political discourse at the precise moment that other differences with potential for conflict – i.e. class and ethnicity – were elided in favor of a myth of a classless, homogenous nation of Japanese citizen-subjects. “Women” became the key particularity and the symbol for a host of anxieties about massification and democratization in higher education, even as new economic imperatives drove its expansion. The defining of these roles became central to various debates that circulated in the mass media in the 1960s in Japan. Affixing the social meaning of the female college student – the “coed” – was key to these debates.

⁷ Kelly, William. “At the Limits of New Middle Class Japan: Beyond ‘mainstream consciousness’.” *Social Contracts Under Stress*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002. Pp. 232-254, 235. Kelly articulates discursive and institutional processes that delinked “mainstream consciousness” from the socioeconomic situation of an actual middle-income strata. He sees “complementary gender role dichotomies” as a “key ideological tenet of the ‘mainstream’” as constructed in the high-growth period, and as a foundation for the social contract in postwar Japan. See also Ôsawa Mari’s “Twelve Million Fulltime Housewives: The gender consequences of Japan’s postwar contract” in the same volume. Also: Uno Kathleen, “The Death of ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother?’” *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993. 293-322.

⁸ Kelly, P. 234. Similar to trees falling in the forest, the question of if a class exists without its own self-recognition as a collective is a persistent issue for Marxists and non-Marxist social sciences alike. Similarly, how do disjunctions between personal and sociological categories of “woman” (*fujin, onna, josei*) create and undermine collective identification (and then maybe political claims) as a social group?

⁹ Kelly, p. 237.

¹⁰ Kelly, p. 239. He refers to Anne Allison’s *Prohibited and Permitted Desires* (1996) and Walter D. Edwards’ *Modern Japan Through Its Weddings* (1989).

In this chapter, I examine the debates surrounding female students to draw out the challenges posed by radical democracy. In my previous chapter, I discussed the death of the female student, Kanba Michiko, in the mass demonstrations of 1960. Her “maiden sacrifice” confirmed a mythology of the female student as the expression of postwar democracy’s political purity and fragility, but the end of the protests ushered in an era of political quietude that would not be broken in a significant way until the massive campus unrest of the late 1960s. However, even in the “quiet” early 1960s, negotiations on the nature of postwar democracy, the role of women’s education, and the role of women in society became – if anything – even more pronounced. In the background of these debates is the specter of the “household,” a space away from the public sphere that also demanded a certain kind of education to create new experts in domestic management. How, after the first glow of democratic optimism dimmed, did tensions between female students as the manifestation of new democratic access and the demands of female education as a particularistic inflection needed to preserve a space of retreat from public institutions in the early 1960s demonstrate the tensions between a universal and a particular democratic subject, and how does this history also set us up for the radical demands of the student movement as it positioned itself in philosophical opposition to a liberal and progressive view of citizen subjectivity?

Women’s education in postwar Japan

The integration of women into formerly all-male educational institutions is an example of how radical reforms on paper meet with both optimism and resistance in practice. The changes enacted by the American Occupation government (1945-1952) – under an ambitious program to “democratize” Japanese society from above – included the end of a government ban on coeducation above the primary level that had been in place since 1876.¹¹ Although there had been an indigenous movement for women’s suffrage in Japan from before the war, with the war’s end, women gained the vote with the revision of the Election Law in December 1945.¹² Furthermore, the 1947 Constitution, drafted by

¹¹ “Chapter XII: The Education of Women.” In *Education in Japan: A Source Book*. Ed. Beauchamp, Edward R. and Richard Rubinger. New York: Garland Publishing, 1989. Pp. 221-227. P. 223.

¹² Pharr, 227.

the occupying American forces and approved by the Japanese government, prohibited discrimination based on gender. Article 14 of the new constitution declared: “All people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic, or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin.” Article 24 defined marriage as a relationship “based on the mutual consent of both sexes” and one to “be maintained through mutual co-operation with the equal rights of husband and wife as a basis.”¹³ Thus, at least in the language of the law, the individual rights of women were affirmed both in the public sphere and also within the home. Still, as women who benefitted from these reforms were well aware, implementing these ideals would be a struggle. Kume Ai, the first woman lawyer admitted to the bar in Japan, noted in 1946 that, “Equality on the face of the law does not always mean equality in actuality.” She felt that implementing equality, however, still required “hard fighting.”¹⁴

In terms of equality in higher education, the numbers of women who extended their schooling expanded in the postwar, but with limited gains for total access to an education equal to men's. In 1955, the percentage of young women pursuing education beyond the compulsory nine years of elementary schooling was a little less than half. Twenty years later, in 1975, it would be 93% – slightly more even than the percentage of young men to do so.¹⁵ In a period of twenty years extending a young woman's time in school became an expected element of her upbringing. Even so, most women who pursued a higher degree did so through junior colleges rather than four-year universities. Junior colleges were first developed in postwar Japan as another American education reform meant to democratize higher education.¹⁶ In 1950, not quite forty percent of junior college students were female (38.9%), but by the mid-1950s, they made up half of the

¹³ Pharr, Susan. “The Politics of Women's Rights.” In *Democratizing Japan: The Allied Occupation*. Ed. Robert E. Ward and Sakamoto Yoshikazu. University of Hawaii Press, 1987. Pp. 221-252. P. 224. There is a complex history of how Japanese citizens have related to this “democracy from above” instituted in the Occupation period. See: John Dower. *Embracing Defeat*.

¹⁴ Pharr, 221.

¹⁵ “Chapter XII: The Education of Women.” In *Education in Japan: A Source Book*. Ed. Beauchamp, Edward R. and Richard Rubinger. New York: Garland Publishing, 1989. Pp. 221-227. P. 226. The rate for young women in 1955 is 47%, for young men in 1975 is 91%.

¹⁶ *Education in Japan – A Source Book*. 1989. P. 123. Junior colleges were “imported from the United States during the Occupation.”

student body.¹⁷ This trend continued, and it was in the 1960s that junior colleges definitively became female spaces of education. By 1975, 86.2% of the students at junior colleges were young women.¹⁸ In the case of these institutions of democratization, democratization equaled feminization. The number of female students at universities remained much more modest. The largest increase was between 1950 and 1955 (from 7.7% of the student population in 1950 to 12.4% in 1955). Throughout the 1960s, however, the percentage of female university students remained under a fifth of the total.¹⁹

Still, the presence of women in formerly all-male spaces of learning was a major and visible transformation in access to higher education. Debates about female students fixed the signs of mainstream sexual difference that were threatened by this shift. The end of the ban on coeducation meant brought with it the challenge of how young men and women, plunged into an environment in which they were ostensibly political and intellectual equals, were to interact with each other in ways that preserved their socio-sexual difference. In the pages of mainstream periodicals, the discourse of experts attempted to fix the proper social relations between the sexes. An example can be found in the May 1959 pages of the widely circulated conservative newspaper, the *Yomiuri shimbun*. In the section targeting women, alongside seasonal fashion advice, exercises to be performed between domestic chores, and a column offering advice to a married woman feeling guilty about a past abortion, an article advised on the “rules” for sociability between male and female students. Although male and female students of Tokyo University and Tokyo Women's University were interviewed for the article, the ultimate analysis of the situation was offered by the expert opinion of critic Hori

¹⁷ 54% in 1955. From Lifelong Learning Policy Bureau, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. “25-11 Share of Female Teachers, Pupils and Students by Kind of School (1950-2005)”

¹⁸ Already in 1960, almost 70% of the junior college student population was female (67.5%). In the same period, junior colleges increased the numbers of female instructors they employed, although at a much more gradual rate. Still, the percentage of increase of female faculty at junior colleges was greatest in the period 1950-1955. There was very little change between 1965-1990, and the percentage of female instructors hovered at a little under 40 percent. From Lifelong Learning Policy Bureau, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

“25-11 Share of Female Teachers, Pupils and Students by Kind of School (1950-2005)”

¹⁹ The percentage of female students at universities in 1970s was 18%. It still only hit 21.2% five years later, in 1975. From Lifelong Learning Policy Bureau, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

“25-11 Share of Female Teachers, Pupils and Students by Kind of School (1950-2005)”

Hidehiko, an alumnus of Tokyo Imperial University and author of many advice manuals for women.

In a pattern we will see repeated in other mass media investigations into social issues, the voice of the usually male expert emerges prominently and confirms the authority of the article and the publication at the same time that the publication affirms the position of the "expert." It is possible to catch the voices of the less powerful (albeit more intimately effected) young women. The author quotes three female juniors at Tokyo Women's University who remarked that they'd like to see more activities that had deeper content than hiking excursions and dance parties, such as research groups in which they could “deepen our understanding together, and be bright (*akarui*) and healthy (*genki*).”²⁰ The expert Hori disagreed with them. He felt that the current forms of interacting between male and female students were fine, and that “there's no need [for male and female students] to debate philosophy.” For him, the purpose of allowing young adults of different genders to socialize was linked to the assumed heterosexual attraction between them, although he stresses that they require the “emotional maturity” to “control” themselves. His comment suggests an anxiety that the intellectual participation of young women might degrade the quality of education for young men, a theme that would re-emerge again as the student population expanded and diversified during the 1960s. For Hori, the male expert of an older generation, the realm of the student was still ideally a homosocial male one. Implying that the position of the female student was supplementary and particular in contrast to the primary position of the male student, Hori speaks in the gendered terms echoed in article after article, book after book about education in the period. In Japanese, the term for a general student is *gakusei*, but it refers to male students. The term used for female students was *joshigakusei*: literally, "girl student." I translate this term as the now outmoded English term "coed" to convey the various implications of secondary status conferred by the term *joshigakusei* in the context of debates on postwar coeducation.

Before turning to how the mass media related to women's education historically and in the period under question, I'd like to introduce a young woman's interpretation of

²⁰ “Danjo gakusei kôsai no ruuru.” *Yomiuri shimbun*. May 26, 1959. P. 7.

what might constitute as equality between men and women in a postwar democracy, and what might prohibit reformulating relations between the sexes. The article is by Kanba Michiko, the young female student activist whose death in the mass protests of 1960 provoked such a strong public reaction. My first chapter explores how she was transformed into a mythical maiden sacrifice for Japan's new democracy; here I present her analysis of the social position of women in postwar Japan, which she published in the Tokyo University Education Department newspaper in 1958.²¹

Unlike the anxious articles of mainstream publications that fret about social changes, Kanba starts from the question of why inequality between men and women (*danjofubyôdô*) persisted, even with equality guaranteed by the constitution and the law.²² Her premise is shaped by her own position as a female student; in her posthumously published journals and correspondence she does not question the imperative toward male-female equality in postwar education and society, nor her own position as a student at Japan's most elite and certainly male-dominated Tokyo University. She does not question that there *ought* to be equality, but she does note inequalities, particularly in employment, persist. For Kanba, a leftist student activist, the answer is partly located in the lack of collective action among women, and partly located in the structures of capitalism. She notes that in her experience women who succeed in education and employment face obstacles as if they were individual issues, rather than coming together to address social problems facing women. As far as deeper structural obstacles to equality go, Kanba rejects the common claim that it is lingering “feudal elements” that obstruct women’s access to equal full employment. She instead locates the economic inequality of women in the modern structure of capitalism itself: “Namely, the basic origin of women’s difficulties with employment and their low wages is not in the feudal nature of employers’ heads. Even if feudalism remains in their hearts, the heads of

²¹ On how her voice was propelled into the Japanese public sphere at large with her untimely and violent death as a “maiden” and a political “sacrifice” in June 1960, see Chapter One.

²² Kanba Michiko. “Fujin mondai no kongen-teki kaimei wo” (For the basic of clarification of women’s issues: Toward a society that can realize equality.) In *Hito shirezu hohoeman: Kanba Michiko ikô shû*. Tokyo: San’ichi shinsho, 1960. Pp. 179-183. p. 181.

industrialists surely have a modern structure – the tireless pursuit of personal profit.”²³ In this modern capitalist system, she notes that the measure of human beings is based on how productive they can be as workers, and this necessarily puts women at a disadvantage because of their potential to bear children and need to withdraw from production when they do the work of reproduction. Kanba declares that without offering social services such as childcare and communal eating facilities, without “liberation from the odd jobs of the household (*katei*)” – although not necessarily liberation from the household itself (rather, this “liberation from the odd jobs” could create a “warmer household”) – real equality between men and women – as workers – was not possible.²⁴ However, Kanba also questions whether this real equality could occur within the structure of a capitalist economy. She closes her article noting that: “If competing enterprises also employ women, along with equality becoming a reality, I think that [the fact] that unemployed males would increase would invite a basic drawback for all capitalists – a crisis of existence.”²⁵

Kanba’s analysis reflects here her engagement with leftist thought that both attempts to trace social issues to their structural roots and tries to organize resistance to these problems in a collective rather than individual way. In particular, she exposes the tension between the political promise of equality in a democracy and the actual unevenness required to perpetuate capitalist production.²⁶ The article also shows the limits of Kanba’s individual perspective. For example, even a budding Marxist like

²³ Kanba Michiko. “Fujin mondai no kongen-teki kaimei wo” (For the basic of clarification of women’s issues: Toward a society that can realize equality.) In *Hito shirezu hohoeman: Kanba Michiko ikô shû*. Tokyo: San’ichi shinsho, 1960. Pp. 179-183. p. 181-2.

²⁴ Kanba Michiko. “Fujin mondai no kongen-teki kaimei wo” (For the basic of clarification of women’s issues: Toward a society that can realize equality.) In *Hito shirezu hohoeman: Kanba Michiko ikô shû*. Tokyo: San’ichi shinsho, 1960. Pp. 179-183. p. 182.

²⁵ Kanba Michiko. “Fujin mondai no kongen-teki kaimei wo” (For the basic of clarification of women’s issues: Toward a society that can realize equality.) In *Hito shirezu hohoeman: Kanba Michiko ikô shû*. Tokyo: San’ichi shinsho, 1960. Pp. 179-183. p. 183. This point was not lost on Japanese unions, either. See Christopher Gerteis on how unions in Japan in the 1950s marginalized women to a support role to guarantee “bread-winning” wages for male union members. See, too, Andrew Gordon on “bright new life” policies undertaken by industry. For the theoretical argument that both mass unemployment and the impossibility of the full employment of women are two of the absolute limits of capitalism, see Istvan Mészáros in *Beyond Capital*.

²⁶ What’s the status of Schumpeter’s theories on elite rule supplanting radical democracy (outlined in 1942) and C. Wright Mills’ discussion of elite rule in the U.S. (1950s)? Is this an interesting angle to follow or a tangential rabbit hole?

Kanba seems to assume that men and women in Japan are all of one class. In her analysis, the classes of workers are flattened and are reduced to a neat binary of two genders: men and women. Her analysis on how to produce equality between men and women as workers assumes a de-historicized workplace as well. Variations among class, region, ethnicity, and profession are all flattened, leaving only two broad categories of civic subjectivity: men and women. The *katei* – the home – also emerges as an ideal removed from the historical processes that created it, and as an unchallenged space of humanism in postwar Japanese society. The *katei* plays an important role in popular and political debates on how to preserve a space safe from the increasingly rationalized society of the high-growth era; its modern history is also intertwined with that of women's education.

The *Katei* and the education of women

The creation and maintenance of a domestic space that supported national industrial efforts guided the formation of formal women's education in Japan's prewar period. The modern household – the *katei* – was a concept that accompanied industrialization in Japan, and – like the factory – the *katei* required an expert to manage it. The term *katei* itself was a Japanese neologism that came to supplant the English term “home” as a marker of modern domestic space, which was feminized. For example, *katei kyôiku* – home education – indicated the learning children did at home, implicitly with their mother.²⁷ So in the case of the *katei*, the ideal managing expert was a woman. This defined a particular realm of knowledge that was feminized.²⁸ State interest in educating women was driven by ambitious policy goals, such as the early twentieth century initiative of “reforming everyday life” (*seikatsu kaizen*), geared toward facilitating social

²⁷ Sand, p. 25.

²⁸ Private, often missionary-founded colleges for women were the primary sites of prewar higher education for women. Many of these were founded by Americans. “Chapter IX: Higher Education.” from *Education in Japan: A Source Book*. Ed. Beauchamp, Edward R. and Richard Rubinger. New York: Garland Publishing, 1989. Pp. 138-182. P. 142. The complex translating of America’s Protestant inflected traditions regarding women and their proper domestic roles and education into the Japanese context raises important questions about the seeming neutrality of terms such as “modern education” or the “modern family.” **Tocco raises this point**, and so does the work of Yuko Yokotsuka Kimura, who discusses how the American “cult of domesticity” interacted with different ideas about female labor in Meiji Japan.

changes assigning gender-specific roles to support rapid industrial changes.²⁹ According to state policy, women’s participation in the task of strengthening the nation was as good wives and wise mothers. In this spirit, the first government college for women was established in Fukuoka in 1922.³⁰ Rather than learning from other generations of women within a family, a woman's expertise as a wife and mother was now informed by whatever formal education she may have undergone. In addition to a formal education, or as a substitute for those less fortunate, publications targeting women offered informal instruction.³¹ These two forms of education for women – the institutional and the mass-market vernacular – overlapped.

The spread of mass publications for women was an aspect of informal education that grew alongside increased education for women and continued in the postwar. Debates in the prewar mass media, structured by the assumption of access to "expert opinion" by mass publications, defined what constituted a "good wife, wise mother." The mode through which these women were trained was formally in nascent home economics courses at women’s schools, and informal training on the science of rationalized daily living and household consumption was offered by the proliferation of magazines marketed to women, sometimes even specifically to housewives – *shufu*.³² The

²⁹ Sand, Jordan. *House and Home in Modern Japan: Architecture, Domestic Space and Bourgeois Culture 1880-1930*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003. P. 17. See, too Sheldon Garon on this. The term *seikatsu* – lifestyle – was another keyword in the prewar milieu of rapidly expanding “capitalist production and leisure-time consumption.” Silverberg, Miriam. *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006. It resonated in postwar debates about industrial growth and concomitant changes in the way people worked, lived, and related to consumer goods. *Seikatsu* also became a contested territory in the postwar debates about the relationship between the workplace and the home. See Gordon, Andrew. “Managing the Japanese Household: The New Life Movement in Postwar Japan.” In *Gendering Modern Japanese History*. Ed. Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005. Pp. 423-460. Gordon focuses on corporate efforts to fix gender roles (male workers and female housewives) in the 1950s in Japan. He also touches upon the 1939 Campaign to Renovate Daily Life (*Seikatsu sasshin undô*), started by the Welfare Ministry. P. 426. *Seikatsu* is a term with many contested meanings – it can be identified as the site of resistance to ideology, as in postwar educational experiments that encourage children to focus on their “experience” of “daily life.” But it can also be the site in which historically formulated roles and situations become naturalized, for example the roles of the breadwinning worker husband and the household (*katei*) managing housewife.

³⁰ “Chapter IX: Higher Education.” from *Education in Japan: A Source Book*. Ed. Beauchamp, Edward R. and Richard Rubinger. New York: Garland Publishing, 1989. Pp. 138-182. P. 142.

³¹ Sand. p. 13.

³² On the process through which home economics and an ideology of domestic rationalization entered women’s education in modern Japan, see Sand, Chapter 2: “The Housewife’s Laboratory.” On... see Silverberg, Chapter TK.

magazines often represented a standard for what a modern woman ought to be, and smuggled into that definition of a modern, literate female subjectivity was an aspirational middle-class lifestyle ideal.³³ That they identified and targeted a discrete demographic category of women (in this period, often the term *fujin*, something akin to “lady”) also functioned to define “women” as a sociological category with shared interests. The expanding influence of modern print culture can be seen in the numbers. Already by the early 1900s over 180 magazines were produced for a range of sub-sets of reader-consumers. By 1932, over eleven thousand periodicals were registered with the state.³⁴ Readership for publications devoted to women claimed circulations of hundreds of thousands.³⁵ Several scholars of interwar modernity and mass society have noted the “gendering of consumption in the early 1920s” in Japan, which linked transformations in

³³ That women’s magazines were also consciously consumed out of a desire toward a kind of informal education on what a woman ought to be is demonstrated by the quote used in Sato, p. 100, from a reader’s letter published in the February 1920 issue of *Fujokai* (Women’s Sphere): “Although this reader described herself as ‘someone without much formal education,’ she stressed that ‘reading in general, and more specifically, women’s magazines have altered my life.’” Sato argues that the expansion of mass women’s magazines in the 1920s constituted a “reading revolution” (p. 121), that “necessitated expanded literacy, more free time, extra spending money, and innovative techniques for mass printing.” It was a revolution that disgusted many radical socialist feminist would-be revolutionaries; Yamakawa Kikue bemoaned the eagerness with which women workers bought and read *Fujin kurabu* and *Shufu no tomo*, entranced more with talk of love and marriage than with talk of social activism. (p. 121) Also: remember that the rapid industrialization of Japan built upon the backs of young women even as the “image” of an ideal “shufu” filled the public imagination. See Patricia Tsurumi, *Factory Girls*.

³⁴ Silverberg. P. 23-24.

³⁵ Sato, Barbara. “Commodifying and Engendering Morality: Self-Cultivation and the Construction of the ‘Ideal Woman’ in 1920s Mass Women’s Magazines.” In *Gendering Modern Japanese History*. Ed. Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005. Pp. 99-130. P. 99. Sato notes that the circulation figures of Japanese publishing companies at the time were unreliable, but that the reported monthly circulation of *Shufu no tomo* (Housewife’s Friend) in 1931, for example, was 600,000. As Michiko Suzuki points out, young women were a separate market demographic: “Although many fads and trends for young women developed within higher girls’ schools, magazines and stories targeted at girls in this age range reached a wider audience in terms of class and geography...The first girls’ magazine, *Shôjokai* (Girls’ Realm), was published in 1902. By 1914 journalist Matsuzaki Tenmin could list at least four magazines with “shôjo” in the title.” (Suzuki, Michiko. P. 32) (- resources: *Kôtô jogakkô kenkyûkai*, ed. *Kôtô jogakkô kenkyû: Seidoteki enkaku to setsuritsu katei* (Ôzorasha, 1994), shiryôhen 25-32. In the 1940s (Check exact years) Horkheimer and Adorno wrote of the power of the culture industry in the West to drive home difference in marketing demographics while ultimately both the culture industry and politics become unitary: “The relentless unity of the culture industry bears witness to the emergent unity of politics. Sharp distinctions like those between A and B films, or between short stories published in magazines in different price segments, do not so much reflect real differences as assist in the classification, organization, and identification of consumers. Something is provided for everyone so that no one can escape; differences are hammered home and propagated.” Horkheimer, Max and Theodor Adorno. “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception.” in *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*. Trans. Edmund Jephcott. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002. Pp. 94-136. Org. 1940s. p. 96-97.

daily life in the *katei* with the transformations in the ideal role of the female managers of that *katei*.³⁶ It is important to note, then, that whatever prescriptive roles mass journals adopted, they were also constrained by the demands of their reader-consumers. Although authors and experts controlled the means of expression, their subscribers maintained a margin of power through their pocketbooks and occasionally a letter to the editor.

Attempts in policy and in print to bind women to the *katei* were responses to deeply disruptive social changes that included the potential for women to overstep a narrow domestic role.³⁷ Even if women's education focused on creating "good wives, wise mothers," offering spaces where women could be educated together and take on the social identity of students opened up the possibility of these women taking on the social identity of the activist student. The social necessity for mass literacy and education always produced an uncontrollable excess: once people can read, they can read anything. As the most famous social scientist in postwar Japan, Maruyama Masao, noted in 1962 reflecting on the intersection between mass culture and student culture in the 1920s in Japan, two concerns faced the parents of college students: the first was that their children would fall prey to the hedonistic culture of the culture of the dancehalls and the cafes (“the *moga* [modern girl] and *mobo* [modern boy] craze”), the second was that “their children might become infected with ‘dangerous thought’ [i.e., radical thought].”³⁸ The leftist student movement, which in the prewar period was tightly bound to the Japan

³⁶ Harootunian, Harry. *Overcome By Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000. It is important to note that the term “consumption” as used by contemporary academics is a generalized metaphor that may mask as many social processes as it illuminates. See David Graeber on this: “The Very Idea of Consumption: Desire, Phantasms, and the Aesthetics of Destruction from Medieval Times to the Present.” In *Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion, and Desire*. AK Press, 2007. Pp. 57-84.

³⁷ Harootunian, p. 17: “In Japan during the 1920s and early 1930s, the true other of modernity was not so much the worker but woman.” As Harootunian notes, this was simultaneous to the “gendering of consumption” that was connected to making women rational household managers, and yet contained a potentially dangerous excess: once these women could learn to read household management books, what else could they read? For more on this titillating and terrifying image of the woman in public spaces see Silverberg, Chapter One: “Modern Girl as Militant (Movement on the Streets).” More resonances with this interwar perception of a threat gendered female and a postwar one will be drawn out in my Chapter Three.

³⁸ Maruyama Masao. “Patterns of Individuation and the Case of Japan: A Conceptual Scheme.” In *Changing Japanese Attitudes Toward Modernization*. Ed. Marius B. Jansen. Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1965. P. 489-531. P. 519. As Maruyama elaborates on page 520-1: “Along with the *moga* and *mobo*, there were also the ‘Marx-boys’ and ‘Engels-girls,’ terms of derision directed against the flippant pretensions displayed by those youths who considered Marxism fashionable... [However] those youths were not so much the direct offspring of the ‘subversive’ types in the late Meiji as the transformed figures of the *mahon seinen* (exemplary youths) of the Japanese Empire.”

Communist Party (JCP) and was centered at male-only educational institutions, mobilized some female students as well.³⁹ Young women were organized by *shaken* (society study groups), similarly to students at other institutions, and students from Tokyo Women’s University (*Tokyo joshi daigaku*) were in charge of a radical women’s *gakuren* (student union?), which was formed in 1927.⁴⁰ In the influential *Shinjinkai*, the JCP-aligned student society formed at Tokyo University, there was a nascent awareness of the economic issues specific to women in capitalist society. It often manifested itself, however, in how the young male leftists related to women romantically.⁴¹ As romantic partners, young women from affluent households were often ideal “housekeepers” (*hausukeepaa*) for radical leaders.⁴² Alternately, young male radicals would go into the people and “save” a woman from a more humble class background. Awareness of the particular disadvantaged situation of women didn’t necessarily mean that women were full members in the movement. This sidelining of women activists continued in the postwar student movement to varying degrees, which I discuss in depth in other chapters.⁴³

It is not surprising in this historical context that also imbedded in the postwar definition of the female student was the expectation that a young woman was preparing to become the manager of a *katei*. Kanba Michiko, in her university article on the social obstacles to equality between men and women was not incorrect in noting that Japanese industry and society persisted in gender-particular roles for the sexes that prevented employment equality. She noted that the housework that constituted the gendered work of the *katei* may need restructuring, but she clung to the idea of a “warm” humane *katei*

³⁹ Indeed, as discussed in Chapter One, the leftist student movement was generally bound to the JCP until the break away of the Bund in the late 1950s. Smith, Henry D. *Japan’s First Student Radicals*. Harvard University Press, 1972.

⁴⁰ Smith, Henry D. *Japan’s First Student Radicals*. Harvard University Press, 1972. P. 115, 117. The arrest of the young women involved in this *gakuren* caused something of a “public sensation.” Smith, p. 184. There was also a women’s movement attached to the socialist movement (Sekirankai, the “Red Wave Society”), Smith, p. 84.

⁴¹ Smith, Henry D. *Japan’s First Student Radicals*. Harvard University Press, 1972. P. 183-4. Henry D. Smith notes a “minor stain of feminism” on that movement.

⁴² Smith, Henry D. *Japan’s First Student Radicals*. Harvard University Press, 1972. P. 184. See, too the US-Japan Women’s Journal article on Oe.

⁴³ Of course, female students were perfectly capable of organizing themselves as political agents. The “protracted dispute” waged by the students at Tokyo Women’s College of Dentistry in late 1930 demonstrated the political potential of young female students. Smith, 217.

without reflecting upon the historical origins of the *katei* as a particularistic space away from the public sphere that defined women as particular, while men operated as the universal subjects of the public sphere. The challenge for women in entering higher education as equals to men was the pervasive idea that they would not follow through and participate in the public sphere after graduation. Also, the issue of social equality did not include how the role of the manager of the *katei* might be expanded to equally include men. Formal institutions of education were not the only places in which the role of education was defined; similar to prewar social trends, the mass media was also a key arena in which the roles of education and of women were demarcated.

Ruinination of the Nation by Coeds

Similar to the prewar period, although in an ever more pervasive and massified form, the mass media operated as a kind of informal mode to educate not just women, but the Japanese “public” at large. Cultural debates circulated in the print media. These periodicals – in particular the growing number of weekly publications – expressed heterogenous opinions directed at a variety of audiences, and yet the overall effect created a cohesive sense of a Japanese nation knit together through a single language and an increasingly hegemonic middlestream ideal of the basic Japanese household, obsessed by the same events and debates, even as they read about them in different periodicals targeting an increasingly nuanced taxonomy of reader-consumers. News articles simultaneously presented a constant sense of minor crises and causes for anxiety about the state of Japanese society and also flattened daily life into genres of news articles. While they hinted with each faddish “debate” new sources of anxiety for society, they did not allow for deeper analyses of the structures that maintained society. In the 1960s, with the passing of a class-based political subjectivity in a time when a general citizen subjectivity – increasingly assumed to be middle class – rose, the potential for class struggle seemed to pass. But as the threat of class warfare receded in the “mainstreamed”

period of high-speed economic growth, that menace was in some ways displaced onto the potential in Japanese society for a battle between the sexes.⁴⁴

Resistance to the integration of female students in the formerly all-male spaces of Japanese universities became a sensational theme in the tabloid press in 1962, and the framing of this resistance as a concern for diminished quality of higher education expressed concerns about the democratizing expansion of higher education, although women become the figures used to discuss this. One debate was sparked by Waseda University professor Teruoka Yasutaka’s article in the March 1962 issue of *Fujin kôron*, in which he outlined his view of coeducation at the university level under the title “Ruinination of the Nation by Coeds” (*joshigakusei bôkokuron*).⁴⁵ Through this overstated case against female students, Teruoka set himself up as a pundit against expanded education for young women in the humanities. Ever alert for a polemic, the tabloid publication *Shukan shinchô* consulted him as an expert when it ran an article in the same month (March 1962) on “student beauties,” using the case of a Waseda University student who recently won an Air France beauty contest as a timely event that allowed them to ponder the more general character of coeds.

Teruoka's take on the uselessness of teaching Japanese literature to young women – less diplomatically stated in *Shukan shinchô* than in the “lady”-targeting *Fujin kôron* – is such: “The male students, if they listen to the lecture will apply themselves to society in some way in the future. However the girls (*onna no ko*) will, at best, go to bed with a guy and recall, ‘Oh, Teruoka said this thing...’ When I think that my lectures are just material for these girls’ (*onnatachi*) pillow talk it makes me really angry and I can’t get

⁴⁴ As Harootunian notes of the ideological attempts to fix gender distinctions in the 1930s and early 1930s in Japan: “The surfacing of sharp gender distinctions and the claims associated with them constituted, along with the recognition of class divisions constantly kept alive by the left, a threat to order of such magnitude that it became an unstated spur to the production of cultural theory that sought to uphold received practices of reproduction (both cultural and biological) that were made to appear gender neutral.” P. 17. In this time, then, the ideological effort was to “present a view of national life that was whole, unblemished by division and harmonious, where, as Yanagita proposed, there was only the ‘ordinary and abiding folk,’ *jômin*.” P. 18. The postwar myths of ethnic and class homogeneity in Japan resonate with this interwar ideological effort.

⁴⁵ Hirakawa Hiroko. “Maiden Martyr for ‘New Japan’: The 1960 Ampo and the Rhetoric of the Other Michiko.” In *U.S.-Japan Women’s Journal*. No. 23, 2002. Pp. 92-109. P. 106.

passionate about my lecture.”⁴⁶ He can only imagine women using literary knowledge in an intimate space very far away from the public sphere. He goes so far as to declare that young men are sacrifices (*gisei*) made in the drive to educate these young women, and he recommends quotas limiting the number of women admitted to humanities departments: “For the sake of Japanese culture, if it’s possible I’d like to stop at 2,500 [female students] and admit men (*otoko*), I even feel so strongly about it.”⁴⁷ For this professor of the humanities, the only correct transmitters of Japanese culture are male. At a time in which the humanities were de-emphasized in favor of the industry-supporting sciences, Teruoka defines the threat to Japanese cultures not as an economic preference for studies with industrial applications, but instead as the admission of too many women to literature departments.

The article, ostensibly about an aesthetically and academically talented young woman, goes on to allow various male professors and even anonymous male students to deride many young women as too superficial. A literature professor from one university clarified that there were two categories of female students: the “ultra-dry (*chô-dorai*) faction” and the “ultra-feigned-naivety (*chô-kamatoto*) faction.”⁴⁸ Female students are classified as those who compete intellectually with men and lack charm (ultra-dry), or as those who seek to charm men, and are therefore not honest about their thoughts and their intelligence (ultra-feigned-naivety).

When the professor elaborates on his discomfort in interacting with these young women, he reveals (something about how they are able to force a man in a position of authority into feeling shy. Their main “crime” seems to be that they are too outspoken and brazen). As he explains: “When I lecture on Saikaku, I have to touch upon *wakashu* [the younger lover, sometimes a male prostitute, in the male-male sexual relationships that color the racy tales of Ihara Saikaku, a 17th century Japanese writer]. A female

⁴⁶ “The Beautiful Classmate in Waseda’s Literature Department: How the Student Chosen to be Miss Air France Studies.” *Shûkan shinchô*. March 5, 1962. Pp. 88-92. P. 91.

⁴⁷ “The Beautiful Classmate in Waseda’s Literature Department: How the Student Chosen to be Miss Air France Studies.” *Shûkan shinchô*. March 5, 1962. Pp. 88-92. P. 92. Interestingly, when modern schools for women were first founded in early Meiji, the teachers of such “humanities” courses as Classical Japanese, kanbun, and calligraphy were often women, while male teachers “were usually in charge of the ‘new’ knowledge: Western-style mathematics and science.” Tocco. P. 52.

⁴⁸ “The Beautiful Classmate in Waseda’s Literature Department: How the Student Chosen to be Miss Air France Studies.” *Shûkan shinchô*. March 5, 1962. Pp. 88-92. P. 91.

student will stand up and ask questions like “What kind of things does a *wakashu* do?” Their false naivety (*kamatoto*) is this extreme. There’s always one or two brazen kids (*yatsu*) like that who ask such questions. Of the ultra-dry faction, there was once one who came late to class and nonchalantly seated herself in the very front row and pulled tissue from her bag saying ‘*Sensei*, I have my period today so I’m late.’ She didn’t need to go so far as to pull out tissues and show me.”⁴⁹ They force him to elaborate on male-male love, and confront him with their bodies.

These examples can show, in spite of the intention of the professor describing them, that the fault of the young women was not a lack of intelligence, but a lack of what he perceived as tact. He felt his authority challenged by their aggressive attitudes. The concern here, similar to that of the articles in the ladies’ pages of the general newspapers, was how to properly integrate young women into the society of the university and set middle-class standards for female conduct. Brazenness alone does not constitute a real political subjectivity, however. And voices among young female students also criticized the actions of young women who did not (seem fully human / socially responsible.)

In interviews with actual women, the categories collapse. It is hard to find a real-life example of the imaginary categories of the “false naïve” or the “dry” female student. A July 23, 1962 interview in *Shukan shinchô* with a female undergraduate brought up this issue. The discussion was with junior Tsuruya Eiko, for a feature series called “My Words” (*Watashi no kotoba*). She had just worked as a student part-timer in the House of Councillors election. After she voiced her opinion on the latest House of Councillors (*sangi'in*) election, and her disappointment in the overwhelming victory of the female LDP candidate Fujihara Aki. “Hearing ‘woman’ (*onna*) turned into a selling point (*uru mono*), it really gets me angry. When I think that this is the actual condition of politics, I get annoyed with myself for being so engrossed during the elections. It feels like no matter what expectations I have of politics, nothing can be helped.”⁵⁰ The interviewer goes on to mention: “Since the issue of women came up, what do you think of the theory of ‘Ruinination of the Nation by Co-Eds’?” The debate was so well-circulated that it could

⁴⁹ “The Beautiful Classmate in Waseda’s Literature Department: How the Student Chosen to be Miss Air France Studies.” *Shûkan shinchô*. March 5, 1962. Pp. 88-92. P. 91.

⁵⁰ “Watashi no kotoba.” Interview with Tsuruya Eiko, *Shukan shinchô*. July 23, 1962. P. 11.

be dropped into conversation and into a short print article without explication. Tsuruya replies that, “It might be strange coming from me (who is also a woman, *onna*), but I think I can agree with it. In my class, women make up one third but there are a lot of them who seem to want to make school into a fashion show... (but) there are also the drudges (*gariben*) in black skirts with white shirts... Me? Hmmm, I’m neither fashionable nor a drudge, I’m a Doshikai (the party she helped campaign in the election) I guess.”⁵¹

Although the tabloids generally limit young women's voices in articles on the subject of young women, leaning instead upon anecdotes and the opinions of “experts” (overwhelmingly older men), it is possible to spot glimmers of how young women perceived their own relationships with their education and their interpretation of themselves as political subjects even in articles in which expert voices dismiss their words and actions. An example is the coverage in the September 1962 issue of the *Shukan shinchô* on a female student “barricade” at Jissen Girls’ School.⁵² The students were rallying around three popular teachers dismissed in part because of their involvement with union activities at the high school. The event that attracted the attention of the media was one in which a group of female students had physically challenged the part-time male student workers (who attended a different school) hired part-time to man the gates of the school, and thereby forced the way open for the dismissed teachers to attend the first day of the new semester. Two of these popular teachers had been fired for their involvement in an altercation related to a labor dispute with the principle. Earlier, in July of that year, one third of the student body had protested their arrest for the confrontation.⁵³ The school officials interviewed for the article – taking a position not unusual for the various “experts” interviewed to interpret that actions of those, such as young women, with less access to a public voice – were sarcastic about the young women’s support for their teachers. One claimed that the teachers were either too easy on

⁵¹ “Watashi no kotoba.” Interview with Tsuruya Eiko, *Shukan shinchô*. July 23, 1962. P. 11.

⁵² “In the female student barricade: What three teachers at Jissen Girl’s School taught.” *Shukan shinchô*, September 24, 1962. Pp. 30-35.

⁵³ The article claims 1,200 of the 3,600 protested on July 22. “In the female student barricade: What three teachers at Jissen Girl’s School taught.” *Shukan shinchô*, September 24, 1962. Pp. 30-35. P. 32.

the students, or were handsome. The article also includes gossip, un-attributed “quotes” from girl students themselves, related in speech easily recognizable as female.⁵⁴

However, the young women organized in such a way that revealed their awareness of democratic procedures and a desire to legitimize their actions with such procedures. They held a meeting in the wake of the teachers’ dismissals and voted, 159 to 24, that until the legal proceedings against the teachers find the teachers guilty, they wanted them re-installed at the school. Stating that they believed their teachers’ words over the school authorities, they declared that they wanted a decision by the court before they would consider their teachers guilty.⁵⁵

They knew what educational style they preferred. One young woman interviewed said she supported the dismissed teachers because she preferred teachers who “don’t treat education like this absolute thing that must be forced onto students, but who try to draw out freedom (*jiyû*) from within students.”⁵⁶ Another bemoaned the fact that education in her experience has been from beginning to end “modesty (*shisso*), reliability (*kenjitsu*), and ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother’ (*ryôsai kenbo*)” – referring to the prewar and wartime slogan for the ideal product of formal and informal education for women. She qualifies her critique by saying that these things are fine, but also that “they’ve become formalities, and I feel like they are out of character for the times.”⁵⁷ Although often cast as (empty vessels??), young women’s words reflected an awareness how their education was structured to form them as women, specifically, and how they operated under the assumption that democratic forms of political action were the proper ones to express their own will and agency.

Reflecting how pressing the issue of women’s political and social position in the postwar period came to be in popular debates, the February 1963 special issue of the highbrow publication *Shisô no kagaku* devoted to the theme of “the life of women” (*onna no isshô*). Particularly indicative of the heterogeneity of opinions on the theme was a

⁵⁴ e.g. “Nante ittatte, Nagajima-sensei ga ninki aru wa ne.”

⁵⁵ “In the female student barricade: What three teachers at Jissen Girl’s School taught.” *Shukan shinchô*, September 24, 1962. Pp. 30-35. P. 33.

⁵⁶ “In the female student barricade: What three teachers at Jissen Girl’s School taught.” *Shukan shinchô*, September 24, 1962. Pp. 30-35. P. 33.

⁵⁷ “In the female student barricade: What three teachers at Jissen Girl’s School taught.” *Shukan shinchô*, September 24, 1962. Pp. 30-35. P. 33-34.

roundtable discussion on “the situation of women.” The four participants – two male and two female – articulated their various positions, although the basic questions they asked reflected the larger social concerns of the time. Exploring how the discussion proceeded reveals the terms with which female citizenship and public participation could be discussed at the time.

The conversation opens with introducing the various “women debates / theories” (*josei-ron*) at large in contemporary discourse, of which “Ruinination of the Nation by Coeds” was only one. Although many of these “debates” were more satirical than serious, they illustrated the prominence of public negotiations of women's place in society in the early 1960s in Japan. That the constitutional imperative for equality between the sexes is challenged by the latest of these theories, the “womankind theory” (*yorui-ron*) put out by a male television personality. His premise is that, as paraphrased in the roundtable: “women are not humans, but are somewhere between monkeys and a step below humankind (men).”⁵⁸ More so than even the “Ruinination of the Nation by Coeds” theory, this provocative conjecture was consciously tongue-in-cheek, but other views advanced on the proper role for women in society were more interested in practical application.

Most of these “theories / debates” focused on how to integrate women's labor into contemporary Japanese society. Others summarized in the discussion include the “Business Girl Retirement Age Theory,” attributed to Kamisaka Fuyuko, a female nonfiction writer whose works in the 1960s included several books of advice and guidance for “BGs”, or “business girls.”⁵⁹ The “theory” held that women needed to quit work after three years and become wives if they were not intent on pursuing a lifelong career. Two others treated the issue of wives' labor specifically: the “Useless Wife Theory” (*tsuma muyô ron*), attributed to ecologist and ethnologist Umesao Tadao, maintained that with the advance in household technologies such as electric rice cookers, wives were no longer necessary; the “Wife Labor Theory” (*shufu rôdô ron*) of Isono Fujiko, which one roundtable participant felt had been misunderstood when it was first published in the same journal in February 1961. People had interpreted it, against Isono's

⁵⁸ “The Situation of Women. (Onna no Jôtai).” *Shisô no kagaku*. February 1963, pp. 16-23. P. 16.

⁵⁹ Check also 『岩波国語辞典』, but “BG” was replaced by “OL” (office lady) in the early 1960s – NHK banned it in 1963? This because of the idiomatic use of the phrase to refer to prostitutes in the (U.S. only?)

intentions, as an argument to keep women tied to the *katei*. All in all, a discussant notes, these “theories” on women – some created by women – rate women pretty lowly.⁶⁰

They also all link the role of women to how they ought to divide their labor between the *katei* and the workplace, and assume that the labor of the *katei* is a wife's role. The kind of equality advocated in Article 24 of the postwar Constitution, that marriage is to “be maintained through mutual co-operation with the equal rights of husband and wife as a basis,” opens up popular debate about how much women and wives should work outside the home, but does not necessarily open up discussion about men working in the home.⁶¹

Although the worth of the labor of women and wives is recognized as an issue, the *katei* retains in this conversation a romantic ideal similar to that reflected in Kanba Michiko's piece on obstacles to male-female equality. The two women participants of the roundtable were of the generation of women who witnessed the opening of various opportunities to women with the end of the war, and both are professionals. However, when they note that women who attain positions of power within companies often remain single, they describe that as a sad way of life. One noted, “If you have a *katei*, you have flexibility (*yoyû*). It means that you have a place where you can create your self (*jibun*) so you can have emotional stability. That means you don't have to overstretch yourself competing with men in the workplace. *She laughs.*”⁶² In the context of women “going out into society,” these women, like Kanba Michiko, were more likely to decry the tying of women to the *katei* than the existence of the *katei* itself. Even so, the definition of what emerges as the organizing factor of the *katei* is the central role of the wife and mother. This central role in the *katei* cannot be performed by men. For example, while one of the women recognizes that while women can decide for themselves if they want to work or become a wife and mother, “no matter how much a man wants to decide he can't become a wife and a mother.” For her this is the origin of social sexual difference: “It's at this moment, that I think the distinction [between men and women] emerges for the first

⁶⁰ “The Situation of Women. (Onna no Jôtai).” *Shisô no kagaku*. February 1963, pp. 16-23. P. 17.

⁶¹ Pharr, Susan. “The Politics of Women's Rights.” In *Democratizing Japan: The Allied Occupation*. Ed. Robert E. Ward and Sakamoto Yoshikazu. University of Hawaii Press, 1987. Pp. 221-252. P. 224.

⁶² “The Situation of Women. (Onna no Jôtai).” *Shisô no kagaku*. February 1963, pp. 16-23. P. 18.

time.”⁶³ Nevertheless, in this instance, difference is located in the limited repertoire available to men. The postwar definition of what constitutes a proper masculine role is limited by marking the labor of the *katei* as exclusively female, even when the gendering of that role is implicit.

It is important to note that one an economic level the debate of whether women should have the right to work outside the home or not was often a theoretical one. The financial demands of maintaining a *katei* meant that many wives and mothers had to work to supplement their husband’s wages. There is an assumption that being a full-time “wife and mother” is an option for most women. In fact, in 1960, over half of Japanese women were part of the labor force (54.5%), while only 29.8% were full-time housekeepers. Ten years later, in 1970, the numbers of women in the labor force were down over 5% (to 49.4%), and housekeepers had increased about 4% (33.8%). (Those in school increased from 6.4% in 1960 to 8% in 1970.)⁶⁴ While many working women were in part-time or temporary positions, they were still a significant segment of society.

However, although the role of the household manager was often vague and elided, the great social import of the *katei* as a basic building block – and a source of humanity – in postwar society was a shared assumption. In the following section, I will explore conservative and nationalistic government-sponsored documents on the importance of the *katei* in developing the “ideal person,” but a more radical interpretation was advanced in the roundtable. One participant refers to the special issue on romantic love published by the same journal (*Shisô no kagaku*) in November 1959. He quotes a couple who saw their commitment to the ideal of equality between spouses in very politicized terms: “We expect this new marriage between a man and a woman to be a plus in our anti-imperial independence.”⁶⁵ In this case, romantic love between a couple was proposed as a strategy to counter imperial ideology.⁶⁶ To strengthen the horizontal binds between husband and

⁶³ “The Situation of Women. (Onna no Jôtai).” *Shisô no kagaku*. February 1963, pp. 16-23. P. 19.

⁶⁴ *Women and Education in Japan*. Social Education Bureau, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Tokyo, 1980. P.

⁶⁵ “The Situation of Women. (Onna no Jôtai).” *Shisô no kagaku*. February 1963, pp. 16-23. P. 17.

⁶⁶ Here would be a good place to mention the implications of the crown prince marrying a “commoner” who was president of her *jichikai* at university, and had considered going to graduate school. They met on the tennis courts of Karuizawa, a place symbolic of postwar leisure. This was the other Michiko of the early 1960s.

wife was thought to undermine hierarchical “feudal remnants” that prevented real democracy from taking root in Japanese households, and therefore in the nation. The 1959 marriage of the Crown Prince Akihito to a “commoner” (albeit wealthy) young woman he met on the tennis courts of the resort town of Karuizawa set the tenor for the nation’s tabloids on the ideal form of the postwar family. Their meeting – through social activities rather than through royal arrangement – and the bride’s status as a college-educated coed suggested a modern turn to marriages based on love and a meeting of equals; her immediate adoption of the role of the domestic, *katei*-managing wife set up an ideal of Japanese womanhood.⁶⁷

The most conservative and eldest member of the panel, Nagai Michio (b. 1923), a male public intellectual who wrote on education and would go on to become Minister of Education in 1974, weighed in that because of the clear female role in the household, it is the male role that is more ambiguous and fraught in postwar Japanese society:

The issue is if it’s possible to reconfigure the family as the base (*kyoten*) of social activities (*shakaiteki katsudô*). Childbirth, childcare, education, the reproduction of both the bodies (*nikutai*) and also spirits (*seishin*) of spouses as well as other family members. Thinking of it this way, the recognition of a housewife (*shufu*) completely changes. Today’s men do social activities (*shakai katsudô*), but in reality they are often just one part of the social mechanism. On that point, most housewives (*shufu*) are the same as being anti-social (*han-shakaiteki*). It’s not just the women (*onna*) in the household (*katei*) who are cut off from society. In actuality, it’s also men who go out into society (*shakai ni deteiru*) who are cut often off from society from within society. To reconfigure the household (*katei*) as the base for social activities (*shakai katsudô*) we need to make not just women, but also men and the household (*katei*) part of the [social] foundation (*yoridokoro*), and take an approach to the long-term construction of society. If, in this context, today’s women have that kind of leadership is a particularly important issue, isn’t it?⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Also named Michiko, Princess Michiko and Kanba Michiko were the two iconic female students who embodied both the political quietude of Japanese institutions and the political unrest of mass protest the early 1960s in Japan. See also: Jan Bardsley. “Fashioning the People’s Princess: Women’s Magazines, Shôda Michiko, and the Royal Wedding of 1959.” *U.S.-Japan Women’s Journal*. No. 23, 2002, pp. 57-91; Hiroko Hirakawa. “Maiden Martyr for ‘New Japan’: The 1960 Ampo and the Rhetoric of the Other Michiko.” *U.S.-Japan Women’s Journal*. No. 23, 2002, pp. 92-109.

⁶⁸ “The Situation of Women. (Onna no Jôtai).” *Shisô no kagaku*. February 1963, pp. 16-23. P. 22.

The prominence of the *katei* justifies the prominence of the issue of women as a source of debate in the early 1960s, as the dust kicked up by 1960’s mass demonstrations in the name of preserving postwar democracy settled and a generation brought up under the banner of radical democracy negotiates the limits of the term “equality.” Nagai’s quote above reveals the kind of anxieties the government-sponsored document introduced in the following section will address, that democracy ushers in mass society and alienates male workers, who then need more than ever the haven of the household. A female participant ends the conversation emphasizing the need for democratic relations between husbands and wives in the wake of the destruction of the patriarch-centered family.⁶⁹

She notes that this democratic ideal has not yet come into being; whether this democratic equality within the nuclear family could come into being when each member was contributing in their particular gender role was left unexamined. That the particular role of the woman in postwar society was bound to the social role of the *katei* is reflected in how this roundtable discussion in a prominent intellectual journal on the “situation of women” became a discussion on the “situation of the *katei*,” revealing the often synonymous nature of the term “woman” and household.

The Ideal Person / The Ideal Woman

While some professors and male experts bemoaned the numbers of young women overwhelming humanities departments and thereby threatening to “ruin” Japanese culture, the social role of middle-class women – and the education needed to produce these women – was seen as the preservation of modern industrial society’s humanity. And not only to intellectuals gathered for a roundtable discussion, but also for the Ministry of Education in the period. The Ministry of Education’s continuing efforts to address the education of women was framed by “considering the necessity of improving women’s

⁶⁹ “The Situation of Women. (Onna no Jôtai).” *Shisô no kagaku*. February 1963, pp. 16-23. P. 23. This resonates with earlier, prewar feminist debates about the role of romantic love in women’s liberation... or at least in their cultural and political subjectivity. Perhaps this is where I can introduce the article on women at Todai and the *Saredo warera ga hibi* stuff: school as a time of equality. It is after schooling ends that the challenge of the *katei* arises with urgency for young women – and defines them socially as women.

qualities as citizens and their important role as educator at home,” thereby particularizing domestic labor as female.⁷⁰

In one of the most publicized reports created by the Ministry of Education’s Central Educational Commission of Inquiry,⁷¹ although gender particularities are elided to present a vision of a universal “ideal person,” the gendered implications are strong. The 1965 “The Image of the Ideal Person” (*Kitai sareru ningenzô*) included the ideal role of the *katei* in the creation of this ideal person.⁷² The ideological driving force of the report is a specific statist interpretation of “democracy;” the ultimate goal for the ideal human is defined as being happy (*kôfuku*), and this human happiness is declared as dependent on stable economic and political conditions.⁷³ The proper political conditions envisioned in this report were a perpetuation of the status quo and it states that those who interpret democracy as “class struggle” cannot prevail or “the essence of democracy will be destroyed.”⁷⁴ While arguing for efforts to strengthen the national economy, it also warned against mass culture (*taishû bunka*).⁷⁵ Instead, what is emphasized is work ethic

⁷⁰ Educational Developments in 1965-66. Ministry of Education Japan. Report Presented at the XXVIIIth International Conference on Public Education, Geneva, July, 1966. P. 24. As far as the role of women as educators outside the home, in the schools, their position as hired labor was still marked by potential motherhood. While their “status and conditions” were declared “fundamentally equal to men’s.” It was also qualified by the provisions granted to women teachers “as the bearers of children”: six weeks maternity leave, breaks to nurse an infant, and menstruation leave. Educational Developments in 1965-66. Ministry of Education Japan. Report Presented at the XXVIIIth International Conference on Public Education, Geneva, July, 1966. P. 24. P. 6.

⁷¹ 中央教育審議会

⁷² Nagai Michio, the advocate of gender distinction in the *Shisô no kagaku* roundtable analyzed above modeled the title of his book *Ishoku no ningenzô* (The Image of the Odd Person) on this report as presented by the government in spring 1965. For Nagai, his ideal is that Japan should have more eccentric people (for Nagai, “person” seems equivalent to “men”), and he holds up the British model of innovation by oddballs following their own unique interests and inspirations. Nagai Michio. *Ishoku no ningenzô*. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1965.

⁷³ “*Kitai sareru ningenzô*” in Anpo to Kôdo seichô: dokyumento showashi 7. Ed. Yamada . Tokyo: Heibosha, (YEAR!!!). pp. 209-216. P. 210.

⁷⁴ “The Image of the Ideal Japanese (*Kitai Sareru Ningenzo*)”

December 15, 1966. (Source: Ministry of Education, Central Council for Education, “Report: Concerning the Expansion and Consolidation of Upper Secondary Education.” Tokyo, 1966) Translated by James Vardaman. Pp. 164-167. P. 165. In this translation, “human” (*ningen*) is translated as “Japanese,” and sections such as that on “As People in the Household” (*kateijin toshite*) as “The Ideal Japanese as a Family Man.” While my translation is less felicitous, it’s important to distinguish when the original terms used actually make gestures to a more universal concept of “human” rather than the terms like “Japanese” and “Family Man” that already carry particular meanings. It was drafted by (who? I have in my notes that Matsushita Konosuke of Matsushita Electric – National and Panasonic Brands one of the writers).

⁷⁵ “Today’s mass culture (*taishû bunka*) inclines towards consumption, passive reception (*kyôju*), and imitation, and lacking in production and accumulation (*chikuseki*) and independence (*dokusô*).” From

and devotion to family and nation, both of which require resignation to one’s socially assigned role rather than an aspirational ideal of future democratic equality.

The report is organized into three sections: “As People in the Household” (*katei*), “As People in Society” (society), and “As Japanese” (the nation) in sequence, implying that they are units nestled within each other. The ideal person is rooted in a household that operates within society, and the nation links the fortunes of that society to the world. In this sense, it echoes the voices that declare that democracy begins at home, but its vision of the *katei* is one not of romantic love that democratizes marriage, but of carefully preserving an organized space of familial love that will cultivate a more general love of the nation. As the report states: “The household is a component of society and the nation (*kokka*), and is its foundation. If the household is in disarray, it follows that society and the nation will also be in disarray.” The ideal household is declared a clean “place of rest,” where workers can retire from “today’s hectic social life (*shakai seikatsu*).” Again, the dangers of mass society are invoked: “In mass society (*taishû shakai*) and mass culture (*taishû bunka*), the household is where one can find oneself and recover (*kaifuku*) one’s humanity.”⁷⁶ What is not clarified is *who* makes the household this kind of place. While defined as a “place of rest” it is implicitly female labor that prepares this place, and keeps it clean. To protect against political confrontation and contestation, the report avoids discussions of class and ethnicity (only defining the Japanese as one race, *minzoku*) and emphasizes the need to organize society around production. It also elaborates a demand for people who honor social norms (*shakai kihan*) and social order (*shakai chitsujo*).⁷⁷ In this document, “society” equals “the workplace,” rather than more idealistic or political interpretations of a public sphere. “Society” in the report was the place of work and production of wealth, and not the place of negotiating ideas. Nor is it the place of leisure and consumer culture. The spaces of the home and the nation were places of love that protected the ideal person’s humanity, provided that love was “correct.” Strangely for a

“Kitai sareru ningenzô” in Anpo to Kôdo seichô: dokyumento showashi 7. Ed. Yamada . Tokyo: Heibosha, (YEAR!!!). pp. 209-216.

⁷⁶ This assumes that the household is outside of mass society and the consumer culture upon which it was increasingly based, even at the very moment when what was defining the “typical” household was access (or idealized access) to modern household goods (“the three treasures”).

⁷⁷ “Kitai sareru ningenzô” in Anpo to Kôdo seichô: dokyumento showashi 7. Ed. Yamada . Tokyo: Heibosha, (YEAR!!!). pp. 209-216. P. 213. P. 214.

Ministry of Education document, there are few clues to how education should function to cultivate these ideal people, although the informal education space of the *katei* emerges as a key. The “healthy” cultivation of love in the *katei* may prepare citizens for the “healthy” love of the Japanese nation. The unnamed but nevertheless invoked cultivator and manager of this love was the “Good Wife, Wise Mother;” the use of these specific terms in prewar women’s patriotic education may have made the words unnamable, tainted as they were by Japan’s militarist history.⁷⁸ In postwar Japan, overtures were made to the general demand of an ideal, equal, universal subjectivity. But the particular role of women in postwar society was smuggled in via the *katei*.

That the household equaled the realm of women in popular discourse was seen also in a 1966 article in the special edition of *Shisô no kagaku* that dealt with university reform. Written by Maruyama Kunio, the younger and more radical brother of liberal intellectual giant Maruyama Masao, he revisits the “Ruin of the Nation by Coeds” debate that recent radical student protests and university crises had overshadowed.⁷⁹ He notes that in the recent issues facing universities, the “Ruin of the Nation by Coeds” debate has fallen “into the shade.” He confronts the university administrators and professors who blame young women on ruining university departments, pointing out that it was they who set the standards for admission, and young women are simply getting better at meeting those standards. Maruyama goes on to offer a tongue-in-cheek critique of the “bride grooming course (*hanayome kôsu*)” of home economics (*kaseika*), proposing instead [ironically] the establishment of “home studies” (*kateigaku*) as an academic department. Addressing the ahistoricity with which the household is often treated in popular discourse, as we have seen, he notes: “Of course for *katei* studies to be established as a discipline, it would have to include raising questions, from the processes that formed the *katei* to what the *katei* is today at this point in time.” He goes on to describe how he would organize his hypothetical “home department” (*katei gakubu*),

⁷⁸ The committee that created this report included former Kyoto School of Philosophy members Koyama Iwao and Kosaka Masa’aki. As Harry Harootunian noted: “And all of the pithy moral injunctions come right out of the 1930s, all that complaints about mass culture, pleasures etc. Its aim is to restore social relationships as they had been before the democratizing contagion spread.” Private correspondence. July 20, 2012.

⁷⁹ Maruyama Kunio. “Joshi gakusei taisaku shikan” (Female Student Counter-Measure Draft Plan). *Shisô no kagaku*. April 1966, pp. 79-82.

including which public intellectuals he would hire and insisting that it – like other higher education departments – would be coeducational. “Since men and women would study together (*danjo kyôgaku*), it would be sure to be seething with controversies between students. Within them probably some ‘new Noras’ [like in Ibsen’s drama] would arise who reject modern home life – reject the one-husband one-wife system and leave the home on their own.” He notes that conferences of home studies scholars would meet and focus on issues of relations between men and women and advance them and clarify them scientifically.

In spite of his playful tone, he ends by wondering why there hasn’t been a serious counter-attack to the “Ruin of the Nation by Coeds” argument from within the ranks of female students themselves. “Something that remains mysterious to me is that, since the ‘Ruin of the Nation by Coeds Debate’ emerged, and in the context of a trend toward criticizing female university students that strengthens every year, why hasn’t a serious counter-attack appeared from among female students to criticize it? I’ve read many fragments of emotional counter-arguments, and also heard them from many female students: ‘The ruination of the nation debate’ expresses thought that slights women (*josei*),’ ‘If this is a country (*kuni*) that will be ruined by women (*josei*) occupying (*senryô*) the universities, then it doesn’t matter if it is ruined.’ Female students are not mute.”⁸⁰ While young educated women dismiss such “debates” as too silly to counter in an organized way, Maruyama thinks that the young women need to assert themselves, or they “half affirm their critics.”

Voices of these women, although not mute, often remained unheard, salvageable only by picking out their scattered quotes among the strongly worded “theories” of experts. As young women, their voices were often ignored unless they aligned their civic subjectivities with those made available to them in the public sphere – as potential wives and mothers or as radical students. The former was a particular subjectivity that gained them entry to the public sphere via their role in the *katei*; the latter, as we shall see, had its own universal and masculinist logic both distinct from liberal universalism and often quite violent.

⁸⁰ Maruyama Kunio. “Joshi gakusei taisaku shikan” (Female Student Counter-Measure Draft Plan). *Shisô no kagaku*. April 1966, pp. 79-82. P. 82.