Introduction

In the first three decades of the twentieth century, the development of the Chinese publishing industry benefited tremendously from the active circulation of textual and visual materials around the globe. These materials included large quantities of photos, books, newspapers, and magazines from all countries, which constituted a veritable “global database” of world print culture. This database offered inspiration for cultural brokers in China, namely publishers, editors, writers, artists, and translators, to create (trans-)culturally inspired products. Magazines preserve particularly rich evidence of this editorial practice of promoting an early “globalization.” This chapter focuses on one such magazine, Linglong – Linloon Magazine (1931–1937), and uses integrated and situated readings to explore the following questions: How did local cultural brokers consciously select certain images, series, or discourses from a global setting, and how did they use these materials to address local issues of body, femininity, and gender relations? If a journal was gendered, how did the selection reinforce the gendered nature of the publication? Did the

* An early version of this paper was presented at the conference “Gender & Transcultural Production: Chinese Women’s Journals in their Global Context, 1900–2000,” May 13–15, 2011, SOAS, London. I am thankful for the invaluable comments by Professors Nathalie Cooke, Barbara Mittler, Joan Judge, Michel Hockx and two anonymous reviewers. I am also grateful to Matthias Arnold, Annika Joest, and Li Yu-Chieh, who have been closely working with me on Linglong – Linloon Magazine in the database “Chinese Women’s Magazines.” Some materials regarding the background of Linloon Magazine and Sheying huabao have been included in one of my Chinese articles, “Cong Sheying huabao dao Linglong.”

1 The concept of “cultural brokers” is drawn from Rudolf G. Wagner; see his “The Role of the Foreign Community”; “Joining the Global Imaginaire.” For earlier scholarship see Hagedorn, “A Friend to Go between Them” and Richter, “Cultural Brokers.”

2 The Chinese word linglong literally means “small, cute and smart,” “exquisite,” “petite,” and the magazine is also referred to in English as Petite. It describes the important features of Linloon Magazine. On the one hand, the actual magazine was pocket-sized, and it was designed to be easy to carry around; on the other hand, the title Linglong personalized the magazine and made it emotionally more accessible to its readers. For a detailed discussion of the possible meanings of the title Linloon, please refer to the introduction to Linloon Magazine in the WoMag database Website: http://kjc-sv013.kjc.uni-heidelberg.de/frauenzeitschriften/public/linglong/characteristics.php?magazin_id=3.
selection and interpretation contribute to the manipulation of a gendered voice? And what can we learn from our findings about whether Linloon Magazine as a “women’s magazine” was in fact written in a “genuine” female voice?3

As early as a decade ago, Leo Ou-fan Lee had already recognized the value of Linloon Magazine as integral to the collective pursuit of modernity in the metropolis of Shanghai.4 Since the digitization of Linloon Magazine conducted by Columbia University, scholars have benefited from accessibility to the journal and have examined Linloon Magazine from multiple perspectives.5 Barbara Mittler explored the discourse of “new (wo)men” as well as gender relations in the journal. She pointed out that the journal was “polyphonic, sometimes internally contradictory” and suggested the need for future research on the individuals and institutions behind the journal in order to understand its internal contradictions and multiple voices better.6 In another study on Linloon Magazine, she further complicated the question by investigating the construction and function of particular (non-)gendered genres in Linloon Magazine and other women’s magazines.7 More recently, Gary Wang has explored the journal’s editorial group, and thus is able to offer a new understanding of the representational tensions in the construction of heteronormative marriage in Linloon Magazine.8 Hsiao-pei Yen, Yunxiang Gao and, most recently, Louise Edwards have further examined Linloon Magazine in studies on its discourse of beauty and morality in relation to larger calls of nationalism and feminism.9

While all of these essays grapple in some way or other with the question of the “female voice” in Linloon Magazine, the question of who the editors were and whether it was thus a women’s magazine just in name, remains somewhat unresolved. At the same time, nobody appears to have read Linloon Magazine against either other Chinese periodicals by the same publisher, or other non-Chinese magazines circulating at the time.

This study takes up precisely these two questions and thus goes beyond conventional readings of the journal. The first of two sections introduces the background of the main editors and discusses the extent to which Linloon Magazine was a “women’s magazine” (ideally designed for women, read by women, and perhaps also edited by women) and whether its gendered voice

3 On the complexity of the “women’s voice” in women’s magazines, see Beetham, A Magazine of Her Own?
4 Lee, Shanghai Modern, 86–88. See also Li Keqiang, “Linglong zazhi.”
5 See “Linglong Women’s Magazine.”
6 Mittler, “In Spite of Gentility.”
7 Mittler, Portrait of a Trope, chapter 1.
8 Gary Wang, “Making ‘Opposite-Sex Love.’” Gary Wang’s article is based on his MA thesis. A few other MA theses on Linloon Magazine have been produced in the last few years, both in Taiwan and in mainland China, such as Kong Lingzhi, Cong Linglong zazhi kan.
and prominent style of “attacking men” (xiang nanzi jingong) was determined by its “female editorship.” I argue that in the first two years (1931–1933), Linloon Magazine was first and foremost a commercial product targeting both men and women, and that the gendered voice was only eventually created by male editors. The second section focuses on the circulation of nudes, as a particular type of visual material published in Linloon Magazine, and uses an integrated approach to explore the editorial practice of addressing different readerships with the same visual materials. I will argue, first, that the entire discourse of body representations and gender relations in Linloon Magazine had a transcultural dimension, which reflected the editors’ efforts to “promote globalization.” Second, I will contend that visual and textual materials are not gendered per se, and they both can be used by more or less gender-specific magazines. At the same time, however, the materials can contribute to or reinforce the shaping of a gendered voice through editorial practice.

I Gender Matters on the Editorial Board – Lin Zecang and Chen Zhenling

Existing scholarship has offered very little information on the background of the members of Linloon Magazine’s editorial board. Consequently, the journal has been viewed as a finished product, isolated from the dynamic process of production. An investigation of the agents behind the magazine can, however, help us understand why and how Linloon Magazine was created. In fact, only a few figures remained central to the editorial group, although many editors joined the team for short periods. Lin Zecang (1903–1961, male, founder, chief editor) and Chen Zhenling (allegedly female, copy editor, later responsible for the column Women/Funü) were key figures on the editing team.10 In the following section, I first introduce Lin Zecang’s educational background and social networks and show his skill as a cultural broker. I then problematize the understanding of Linloon Magazine as a “women’s magazine” by identifying the puzzling “female editor” Chen Zhenling and examining the journal’s targeted readers.

10 A number of well-educated and talented young graduates supported Lin’s achievements in publishing and photography as contributors or editors. Many of them were Lin’s relatives, who received elite education and were exposed to “Western” culture. For example, Lin Zemin (d. 1938, male, editor of photography) and Lin Zeren (?–?, male, editor of the column Common Knowledge/Changshi) were Lin Zecang’s younger brothers; Gao Weixiang (b. 1906, male, contributor) was his cousin. Other editors were Zhou Shixun (male, editor of the column Entertainment/Yule), Huang Shiyong, Ye Qianyu (1907–1995, male, editor responsible for Fine Arts/Meishu), Liang Xinxi (b. 1908, female, copy editor from 1932), Cao Lengbing, Zong Weigeng, and Liang Yongfu.
Born and raised in a prominent Christian family from Gutian, Fujian Province, *Linloon Magazine*’s founder Lin Zecang received his Bachelor of Commerce from Kwang Hua University (*Guanghua Daxue*) in Shanghai in 1926.¹¹ He seems to have been fully bilingual and able to read original English-language materials fluently. Skilled at combining knowledge and practice, culture and market, Lin’s extremely well-developed instinct for new products and potential markets was clearly shown in his later publishing and editorial enterprises. He was representative of a group of cultural brokers in 1920s and 1930s Shanghai who were interested in introducing Western culture for both educational and commercial purposes.

As early as January 1922, when he was still at the university, Lin founded the San Ho Company (Sanhe gongsi). Later in 1925, he established the China Photographic Society (Zhongguo sheying xuehui) in Shanghai.¹² The society greatly contributed to the early development of Chinese photography and established important links to international photographic organizations, including the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain and the French Photographic Society.¹³ These connections explained the source of “foreign” images in *Linloon Magazine*, which I will discuss later in this essay. Unlike the China Photographic Society, the San Ho Company was not labeled as a cultural institution, but as a commercial body to deal with “all trades.”¹⁴ It extended its business to publishing in 1925, and founded *Sheying huabao – Pictorial Weekly* (1925–1937, hereafter SYHB) in the name of the Chinese Photographic Society that same year. The pictorial positioned itself as part of entertainment tabloid (*xiaobao*) culture in Shanghai, although it reserved space for discussions of photographic technology. From that time on, Lin made great efforts to build up his publishing empire. He founded a series of illustrated newspapers and magazines in addition to *Pictorial Weekly: Changshi – Common Knowledge* (1928–1931), *Linloon Magazine* (1931–1937), Diansheng (the abbreviation for two periodicals: Diansheng ribao – Movie Radio News, 1932–1933; Diansheng zhoukan – Movie Tone: The National Movie

¹¹ Lin first went to study at St John’s University in 1921 and then Kwanghua University after the May Thirtieth Movement in 1925. St John’s University enjoyed great fame for its high-quality education, its English-speaking environment, and its high tuition. It was one of the most prestigious (church) universities in Shanghai, or anywhere in China at that time. See Xiong Yuezhi and Zhou Wu, *Sheng Yuehandaxueshi*.

¹² At the beginning the English name was “China Camera Club.” It was changed to “China Photographic Society” in 1926. See Lin Zecang, “Sanhe gongsi.”

¹³ Lin Zemin, “Canguan Yingguo huangjia sheying xuehui.”

¹⁴ As Lin commented in 1937, three kinds of products were regularly sold by the company from the very beginning: table tennis equipment, photos of movie stars, and photographic devices. See Lin Zecang, “Sanhe gongsi,” 80. Of the three, “photos of movie stars” were possible sources of images used for reproduction in *Linloon Magazine*. 

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*Liying Sun*
Editors and Nudes in *Linloon Magazine* and Its Global Context 61

Weekly, 1934–1941), *Jinghua zhounkan* – *Essence Weekly* (1940s), *Zhongwai yingxun* – *Chinese and Foreign Movie News* (1940s), and others.\(^\text{15}\) It is notable that *Pictorial Weekly* had existed for almost six years when *Linloon Magazine* was established. The two periodicals coexisted until August 1937. Bearing a “pre-history” and viewed as a “little sister,” *Linloon Magazine* was not a stand-alone cultural carrier, but part of a commercial and cultural publishing system.\(^\text{16}\) In the system, *Pictorial Weekly* was *Linloon Magazine*’s “parallel text.” It offers rich historical materials for decoding the editorial strategy practiced in *Linloon Magazine*. Whereas *Linloon Magazine* holds a privileged position in terms of preservation, digitization, and accessibility, *Pictorial Weekly* has not received sufficient scholarly attention. I will therefore juxtapose these two journals in this essay through integrated and also situated readings.

**Chen Zhenling:** “She” in Question

In addition to the male editors, two women’s names appeared in *Linloon Magazine*’s colophons. One is Liang Xinxi, who was first a contributor to *Linloon Magazine*, and then became the official copy editor from issue 77 on (December 7, 1932). About a year later, she married Lin Zecang and acted as editor of *Diansheng ribao*, a tabloid focused on gossip surrounding Hollywood and Chinese movie stars.\(^\text{17}\) The other woman’s name was “Chen Zhenling,” or more often “Ms. Chen Zhenling” – “Chen Zhenling nüshi.”\(^\text{18}\)

\(^\text{15}\) *Changshi* issue no. 13 is dated Feb. 1, 1928. Since the newspaper was published every three days, it was perhaps founded at the beginning of January 1928. The newspaper existed for four years, and later was incorporated into *Linloon Magazine* as a column; see *Linglong* 1.4 (1931): 126. Lin Zecang’s name usually did not appear in *Movie Radio News* as editor, but as founder (*chuanghanzhe*). The publisher was given as San Ho Company. There is no known scholarship on the relation between *Movie Radio News* and other publications founded by San Ho, to my knowledge. The information on *Chinese and Foreign Movie News* and *Essence Weekly* appears in Zhu Junzhou, *Shanghaitushuguan*. However, the information is not easy to find, because the Chinese name of the San Ho Company contains a typo, and no editor’s name is listed.


\(^\text{17}\) See *Linloon Magazine* 1.30 (1931): 1138. Lin and Liang were married in 1932; see *Linglong* 2.70 (1932): 953. Most scholarship so far has assumed that Liang Xinxi was male.

\(^\text{18}\) Both Gary Wang and I myself have individually tried to identify Chen Zhenling over the past years. Except for a few books of the *Linglong Series* (*Linglong congshu*), we discovered very little about Chen’s further publications. Nor did we find any photos. As Gary Wang points out, *Linloon Magazine* published a huge number of photos of female authors and readers, and it is unlikely that Chen’s photo would not have been published if she was a real person. Moreover, in a group photo of editors employed by the San Ho Company in 1937, no female editors can be clearly identified. See “Sanhe gongsi shiwu zhou jinian quanti zhiyuan sheying.” Judging from the hairstyle and the outfit, such as long jackets and suits, most people should be male, but the sex of the person in the first row in the left corner, for example, remains unclear. However, even...
“Chen Zhenling nüshi” was also the name of the “editor-in-chief” of *Funü ribao* (“Women’s Daily”), a supplement to *Movie Radio News* around 1932.19 The column *Zhenling xinxiang* (“Zhenling’s Mailbox”) was concurrently published in *Funü ribao* and in *Linloon Magazine* over the course of its print run. Even after *Linloon Magazine* ceased publication in 1937, Zhenling’s Mailbox continued to appear in *Movie Radio News* until at least 1940. The only biographical information that we can find about Ms. Chen Zhenling, however, is a frequently quoted statement published in the first issue of *Linloon Magazine*. According to this statement, getting out of school, Chen had immediately started to work as editor for *Linloon Magazine*. She “wishes to be the mouthpiece (literally the ‘throat and tongue’)” for her female compatriots.”20

Chen Zhenling was the only name to appear in every single issue of *Linloon Magazine* throughout its seven years of publication. But who was Chen Zhenling? Gary Wang creatively conjectures that Chen Zhenling might not actually have been a real person, but the pseudonym for one, or even a whole group of (male) editors: why else would the name “Zhenling” (preciously elegant) tally so perfectly with the journal’s self-fashioning remarks? This becomes even more plausible as “Chen” if pronounced in Shanghai dialect actually sounds like “cheng” – meaning “to become.” Accordingly, Chen Zhenling could mean “becoming preciously elegant” – an aim the readers of *Linloon Magazine* were expected to aspire to – and their editor, Chen Zhenling, appeared thus as the perfect model for them.21

Let me carry Wang’s attempt to decipher Chen’s name by examining its contemporary and local pronunciation even further: What if Chen Zhenling was one of Lin Zecang’s female pseudonyms? In contemporary Romanization, his name Lin Zecang was transcribed as “Tse Tsang Ling” (T. T. Ling). Read in reversed order (“Tsang Tse Ling”) and in Shanghai dialect this actually becomes “Chen Zhenling.” What is more, the “cang” in his name is a homonym with “cang” meaning “to hide”; the name could also be read as “hiding (cang) genuine Ling.”22

Before female editor Liang Xinxi officially joined the editing team in December 1932, the editorial board was exclusively male, then. It is possible that Liang Xinxi continued the work under the name of Chen Zhenling after December 1932. But it is also possible that “Chen Zhenling nüshi” continued to be used if the person was female, it should be Liang Xinxi, as she was the editor-in-chief of *Diansheng* at the time.

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19 *Women’s Daily* is preserved in very poor condition together with *Movie Radio News*. As part of *Movie Radio News* 545 (Nov. 10, 1933), *Women’s Daily* was marked as Issue 301. Further research is necessary.

20 *Linglong* 1.1 (1931): 5. The rhetoric “throat and tongue” was recurrently used in later advertisements for the journal, and presented one of the foci of the journal’s self-representation.


22 For more detailed information see my PhD dissertation “Body Un/Dis-Covered.”
as a composite of Lin Zecang and other male editors who used Chen’s byline to “attack men,” as a successful marketing strategy aimed at convincing readers that Linloon Magazine was indeed the “one and only mouthpiece for women.”

Linloon Magazine: A Magazine of Her Own?

Linloon Magazine targeted female readers, and, edited by a “Ms.” Chen Zhenling, has been taken as a source for discussing an “alternative,” a “women’s voice” on such issues as gender relations, bodies and femininity in relation to modernity and nationalism. However, Linloon Magazine was not strictly a “women’s magazine” – certainly not in its first two years (March 1931–beginning of 1933). The journal was not exclusively designed for, edited by, or read by women. Rather, it was a new product created by the San Ho Company to stimulate the market. This can be seen when self-definitions in Linloon Magazine and its “parallel text,” Pictorial Weekly, are compared. Linloon Magazine was initially designed in March 1931 to be a lifestyle and leisure magazine aimed at both educated female and young male readers, although female readers were emphasized. As stated in its publishing goal from its very first issue, Linloon Magazine was conceived as an exquisite combination of addressing the “women question” and offering “sophisticated entertainment.” In August 1931, Pictorial Weekly, the “parallel text” to Linloon Magazine, proclaimed that it was “especially welcomed by women, but even more admired by young people [of both sexes].” Similarly, Linloon Magazine did not forget its male readers. It even launched a short advertisement from September 2, 1931 to January 1, 1932, that addressed this male reader: “Brother Ying, if you want to have a perfect love life, a happy family, and find a job successfully, you should read ‘Linloon Magazine’ regularly.” In addition, both the Chinese and English titles of Linloon Magazine constantly changed from 1931 to 1933, alternately including and excluding the term funü (literally: women) or “ladies.”

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23 It is one of the slogans repeatedly advertised; see, for instance, Linglong 1.5 (1931): 147.
24 See, for instance, Gao, “Nationalist and Feminist Discourses,” 548.
25 The publishing goal was “to promote women’s ‘elegant and beautiful’ lives, and encourage ‘sophisticated entertainment’ in society.” See, for example, Linglong 1.1 (1931): 13.
28 The Chinese title of the journal included funü (women) for the first time in vol. 3, no. 96 (May 24, 1933), and it continued to be used sporadically until the Chinese title was finally stabilized from vol. 3, no. 107 (Aug. 23, 1933). The English title of the journal was first “Linloon Magazine” from vol. 1, no. 1 (March 18, 1931) to no. 25 (Sept. 2, 1931); then it was changed to “Ladies’ Magazine” from vol. 1, no. 26 (Sept. 9, 1931) to no. 29 (Sept. 30, 1931). Then vol. 1, no. 30 (Oct. 10, 1931) changed to “Lin Loon Magazine” again, exactly when the advertisement targeted male readers. This situation continued until vol. 2, no. 62 (Aug. 10, 1932), and vol. 2, no. 63
Only between September 1932 and August 1933 did Lin Zecang begin to focus on female readers in *Linloon Magazine*, whereas *Pictorial Weekly* targeted male readers – and this was advertised aggressively. Thereafter, as a result of marketing and interaction between editors and readers, *Linloon Magazine* became a more gendered magazine that clearly targeted female readers. It is difficult to find hard evidence to explain why the publishing strategy was unstable at the time, but most likely Lin Zecang was trying to maximize readership and profits. It seems that once Lin knew that *Linloon Magazine*’s female readership was stable, he began to divide its readership by suggesting that *Pictorial Weekly* was for men, while *Linloon Magazine* was for women. When the editors of *Pictorial Weekly* realized in August 1931 that, although the journal targeted young people of both sexes, its major readership was female, it tried to direct female readers to purchase *Linloon Magazine*. An advertisement in January 1932 stated, “If men read *Pictorial Weekly*, [then their] happiness is incomparable; if women read *Linloon Magazine*, [then their] worries disappear.” Also, in January 1932, *Pictorial Weekly* published an announcement in *Linloon Magazine*, entitled “Speak Up against Unfairness towards Men.” It says that although it was fairly “reasonable” for *Linloon Magazine* to “attack men,” the magazine ridiculed men so much that “male readers were unsatisfied.” *Pictorial Weekly* would, therefore, start a new column called “Speak Up against the Unfairness.” Even more radically, Lin later openly advocated a style of “attacking,” which purposefully encouraged the two pictorials to compete with each other, claiming that *Linloon Magazine* was “to discuss women’s issues, promote elegant and beautiful lives, and attack men,” whereas SYHB was designed to “attack women.” These examples clearly reflect Lin’s marketing strategies, and explain why *Linloon Magazine* shows a prevalent tendency of “misandria” (while keeping up some misogynist attacks as well), as Mittler pointed out.

Both in *Pictorial Weekly* and in *Linloon Magazine*, advertisements reveal elements of “attack” against both sexes. For example, one advertisement in *Pictorial Weekly* claims on the one hand to “attack women,” while on the other, it states that the journal is “most welcomed by young people and women.”


31 *Linglong* 1.46 (originally misprinted as 45) (Jan. 27, 1932): 1873.
32 *Linglong* 1.48 (April 27, 1932), 1941.
33 See advertisement in SYHB 7.352 (1932): 308. The advertisement claims to “attack women” on the one hand, but also claims to be enjoyed by women and youngsters on the other. I analyze it later in this chapter.
34 Mittler, “In Spite of Gentility.”
as well as “deeply favored by fashionable women, and greatly admired by fashionable young men.”35 I would argue that simultaneously attacking and welcoming (wo)men was precisely one of the editorial strategies that Lin successfully used. Satire becomes an “editing style” that could potentially draw both male and female attention.

In the first two years of its publishing history, then, Linloon Magazine was not exclusively designed for women, nor was it edited by women, or only read by women. This was so in spite of its misandric rhetoric, in spite of its being personalized as a female “little sister” of other magazines, in spite of its female voice (albeit by male and female editors) and in spite of the fact that as a “gendered” journal, it focused on femininity and gender relations.36 Yet women did become the journal’s most important and openly targeted readers after 1933. The choice of particular visuals and their framing on the pages of Linloon Magazine, to be discussed in the second part of this chapter, may illustrate how Linloon Magazine eventually did become “a magazine of her own” – by and through editorial agency.

II   The Circulation of Nudes: Reading Linloon Magazine against Pictorial Weekly

Both Linloon Magazine and Pictorial Weekly used visual materials, and indeed, visuality was essential to their market success. Depictions of nudes, and especially nude photographs, were important elements in shaping both Linloon Magazine and Pictorial Weekly as modern and artistically sophisticated journals.37 What is the function of nudes in Linloon Magazine and how is it different from that of those found in other periodicals, such as Pictorial Weekly, however? To what extent would the difference in representation of the nudes in the two journals, if any, reflect a different implied readership? This section compares how nudes were displayed in the two periodicals through an integrated reading.

Female Nudes: Healthy or Scandalous?

An identical image published in both journals gives us a good basis to compare. Figure 2.1 is a stand-alone nude photograph published in Linloon Magazine,

36 Similar examples of how male editors manipulated the “female voice” and female authorship can be found in Victorian magazines; see Beetham, A Magazine of Her Own? 188.
37 In this chapter, “nude” or “nudes” will be used merely as a technical term to refer to images of (1) totally unclothed bodies; (2) upper bodies unclothed; (3) bodies scantily clad with transparent materials. The theoretical debate over “nudity” and “nakedness,” which is not directly relevant to the situation in China at the time, is dealt with in my PhD dissertation.
depicting the upper body of a female nude. The darkness of her hair and background is contrasted with the lightness of her body. It is presented as an artwork with specific aesthetics; yet the caption relates the nude to notions of “health and beauty” (jianmei). It says, “Women in our country are always satirized for being either healthy without beauty, or beautiful without health. The picture above is a healthy and beautiful woman. Who, then, can say that women cannot have healthy and beautiful physiques?” The caption thus attempts to draw the readers’ attention to the discourse of jianmei rather than the aesthetic values of the nude, although readers might have “resisted” this suggested reading.

Yet this image was not necessarily bound to the jianmei discourse. Half a year later, it was used in Pictorial Weekly (Figure 2.2). After describing the woman’s “graceful posture and medium stature,” the caption explains, “Li Li, a dancing girl from Peking, used to be an actress in the Peking Qingtian Film Company. She has moved to Shanghai now, and is one of the famous dancing girls in Shanghai. This is a photo of her in the semi-nude.” Instead of commenting on her physique, the explanation concentrates on her profession as a movie actress and famous dancing girl, and offers ambiguous associations between

38 Cf. Gao, “Nationalist and Feminist Discourses.”
her semi-nude photograph and her profession. More sensationally, a long story entitled “Sixty thousand yuan for a dancing girl; Li Li’s whole lovelorn story” occupies the entire front page next to her picture. It recounts one of Li Li’s scandalous affairs, and explains why she had the semi-nude photo taken:

At first, Li Li was renowned in the circle of dancing girls in Peking. She had broad social contacts, and did not care much about social conventions. Therefore, she didn’t reject the invitation to take nude photos of her. She came to Shanghai after the 9·18 Incident, and met Zhu Lide, employee at the post office, at the old Carlton Dance Hall...41

Unlike the caption in Linloon Magazine, the story emphasizes not Li’s beautiful physique but her carefree attitude about social conventions, which allowed her to have the photo taken. The photo serves to illustrate this social gossip, full of sex and crime. To avoid the combination of the semi-nude image and the related scandal around her not being considered “sophisticated” enough, he added an “Editor’s Note,” questioning “how those lechers and married men would think about it?”42 His question functions as a warning, which prevents the report from being entirely scandalous. As analyzed in the first section of this chapter, Pictorial Weekly had begun to focus more on male readers from

41 SYHB 8.367 (originally misprinted as 366) (1932): 49. 42 Ibid.
January 1932. Li’s nude photo was obviously used to attract this readership’s “male gaze,” to bring men “incomparable happiness (kuaile wubi).” An identical nude image was thus used as an instructive figure for an implied, mostly female audience in *Linloon Magazine*, while it was interpreted as an ambiguous illustration to a report on sex and scandals prepared especially for the male palate and gaze in *Pictorial Weekly*. In fact, circulating identical or similar photographs – not necessarily nudes – between *Linloon Magazine* and *Pictorial Weekly* was a common phenomenon (see Figure 2.3). Generally speaking, *Pictorial Weekly* connected these images to social activities or current affairs, or used them to satirize women, while *Linloon Magazine* deliberately related these images to fashion, health and beauty and used them as part of their instructive advice, or sometimes as a way of “attacking men.” The phenomenon suggests that images are not intrinsically gendered, and that the same images can be used and read differently in different journals. Editors would use captions and stories to frame and interpret one and the same image differently in different journals, guiding implied male/female readers to diverse – sometimes even opposite – ways of seeing. I call this the power of “editorial agency.”

Male Nudes: Good Example for Physical Training?

The style of “attacking men” in *Linloon Magazine*, as we might predict, could easily be taken as reflecting the female voice: a style created by and for women, and thus published in a women’s magazine. Yet “attacking men” was not a unique attribute of *Linloon Magazine*, nor was it necessarily voiced by and for women. Figure 2.4, for instance, is one of three male nudes (out of forty-five standalone nudes) published in *Linloon Magazine* between 1931 and 1934. It represents an aesthetics of strength and masculinity, or “cuirasse esthétique” as art historians would put it. The caption reads, “It is most important for men to train their bodies, [thus] not only can [their] spirit be delighted, but also [they] can dispel illness and live longer. This image clearly shows the fully developed muscles of a physically healthy man. Who knows how many men from our country have such a physique?” The last sentence disparages the physiques of Chinese men, well known in contemporary discourse on the “sick man of Asia,” while referring to the discourse of “health and beauty.” In the context

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43 See Sanjiaojia, “Li Li pai luoti zhao.” According to gossip, Li Li’s semi-nude photo was taken by Chu Baoheng, a professional photographer who allegedly had an affair with her.
44 See Sun, “Body Un/Dis-Covered.”
45 The image is counted as a “nude” in spite of the briefs worn by the man. Few photographs of male nudes were published in pictorials from the 1910s to the early 1930s. The majority either posed in briefs or exposed only their upper bodies. See Sun, “Body Un/Dis-Covered.”
46 *Linglong* 1.17 (1931): 606.
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Fig. 2.3 Examples of photographs circulated between *Linloon Magazine* and *Pictorial Weekly*

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. IP address: 54.70.40.11, on 15 Jul 2021 at 22:50:28, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.10179781108304085.005
Fig. 2.4 A male nude in *Linloon Magazine*, 1:17 (1931), 606

of *Linloon Magazine*’s “attacking” style, the critique can be understood as a female satire of men.

The colophon of the seventeenth issue shows, however, that a man, Zhou Shixun, was the editor of the “Entertainment” section, in which Figure 2.4 appears. He therefore should have been responsible for the editorial decision. Even if he was aided by other editors, only Lin Zecang and Lin Zemin’s names were listed on the colophon; both of them were male. The only supposedly female name, Chen Zhenlin, was not even listed as an editor on the colophon, but on the page of the “Woman” section. The voice of *Linloon Magazine* was therefore again controlled by male editors.

Was *Linloon Magazine* the only magazine that satirized men or male nudes, in order to evoke a sympathetic response from female readers? The male nude in Figure 2.5, which was published in SYHB, is similar to the nude in Figure 2.4. The image was included in the column “Photography Studies” (*Sheying yanjiu lan*) in *Pictorial Weekly* in 1930, more than one year before the publication of Figure 2.4 in *Linloon Magazine*. Typically edited by Lin Zecang (sometimes by Lin Zemin), the section was a fixed space for both (male) professional and amateur photographers to exchange information on photo-chemistry, exposure settings, photographic masterpieces, and the activities of
the China Photographic Society. The fact that the male nude was included in this section indicates the editors’ appreciation of its artistic value. The caption of the image is almost the same as the caption of Figure 2.4. Comparing these two captions, we can see that the caption of Figure 2.4 in *Linloon Magazine* was based on the one in *Pictorial Weekly* (Figure 2.5) published a year before: the disparaging sentence is identical. The only difference is that one sentence that is absent in *Pictorial Weekly* has been added in *Linloon Magazine*: “not only can [their] spirit be delighted, but also [they] can dispel illness and live longer.” The additional sentence in *Linloon Magazine* emphasizes how men can benefit from physical training. This is in accord with our observation of Li Li’s semi-nude and its presentation in *Linloon Magazine*: Here, the images would stress the ideology of beauty and health rather than eroticism. In this case, however, the image was gendered by a female voice in a gendered journal.

*The Global Context*

The (mostly Western) nudes in *Linloon Magazine* were part of the global circulation of visual materials between periodicals, reproducible photographs,

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47 The complete caption of Figure 2.5 is, “It is most important for men to train their bodies. This image clearly shows the fully developed muscles of a physically healthy man. Who knows how many men from our country can have such a physique?” SYHB 5.250 (1930): 399.
and photographic albums. In the pre-\textit{Linloon Magazine} era, Lin Zecang was already aware of the circulation of nude images, and had established his taste, criterion, and channels for selecting and publishing nudes.\footnote{For detailed information on Lin’s attitude toward nudes as well as the sources of nude photographs selected for publication in \textit{Linloon Magazine} and SYHB, see Sun, “Body Un/Dis-Covered.”} He announced that he would not publish images of Chinese nude models from the very beginning of \textit{Pictorial Weekly} in 1925. Yet he never rejected Western nudes, especially “world photographic masterpieces” of nudes, which he often published in the column “Photography Studies.” Before 1931, all the nudes he selected for publication were not “full nudes” in his understanding. To Lin, “a full nude photo” would mean a completely exposed (usually female) nude who posed very close to the camera. In the summer of 1930, after his publishing enterprise suffered from the global economic crisis, he started to “reform \textit{Pictorial Weekly}.” His new policies included focusing more on women-related content, and publishing more images that displayed “healthy female physical beauty.”\footnote{SYHB 5.248 (1930): 377.} His San Ho Company started to openly advertise its desire to trade artistic nude photos, imported from the West. Not long after he introduced these new policies, \textit{Linloon Magazine} was founded. Therefore, \textit{Linloon Magazine} was very likely a consequence of the economic crisis, and it was created to increase his market-oriented publishing business. The integration of nudes, thus, could neither be isolated from the journal’s commercial purposes, nor from its global context.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the publication of popular journals was a huge business not only in China, but also in Europe and North America. Large numbers of foreign magazines were imported into China, but very little is known about them. In many cases, we must assume the nudes in \textit{Linloon Magazine} were reproduced from reprints of photos, photographic journals and fan magazines from around the world; the satirical images in \textit{Linloon Magazine} were reproduced from French or American journals, although sometimes we lack sufficient evidence to identify precisely from which journals, or how the editors acquired them. What we do know is that foreign bookstores such as Kelly and Walsh in Shanghai, for example, provided readers with periodicals such as \textit{The Illustrated London News}, \textit{Punch}, \textit{The New Yorker} and \textit{Vanity Fair}.\footnote{Huang Haitao [Calvin H. T. Wong], “Biefa yanghang kao,” 232.} Importing magazines might also have been good business for companies. In an advertisement in \textit{Linloon Magazine}, the Dahua Magazine Company (Dahua Zazhi Gongsi) claims, “our company transported more than two thousand kinds of novels, magazines and newspapers from Britain, America, Germany and France.”\footnote{Linglong 1.30 (1931): 1130.} In addition to direct sales, the company also offered subscriptions to any foreign magazine.\footnote{Linglong 1.30 (1931): 1130.}
Lin Zecang understood that foreign magazines were an extremely rich source for his publishing enterprise. He was also aware that a number of his well-educated readers were interested in these magazines. In an Editor’s Note in 1929, he encouraged readers to “translate the essence of magazines from all over the world, and then send them to us together with the original copy. [Readers] could also send the original copies and copperplate pictures.”

It would not be surprising if certain readers thus became contributors to Pictorial Weekly and collected miscellaneous materials for the journal. Linloon Magazine continued the tradition, and aimed at “collecting the essence of various magazines in the world.”

Conclusion

This chapter has examined gender issues and the use of nudes in Linloon Magazine. It appears that the birth of Linloon Magazine was more a commercial event than an effort to create a purely “feminized space.” This means that in studying gendered journals, we should consider the role of male editors, or male “editorial agency,” more carefully. A particular style of “attacking men” in Linloon Magazine was not necessarily adopted because Linloon Magazine was a “women’s magazine,” nor was it purposefully done by “female editors.” On the contrary, in many cases, it was male editors who manipulated the female voice for commercial purposes; the gendered target of a journal could be as much of a construction as the gender of women or men is. After examining the circulation of nudes in Linloon Magazine and Pictorial Weekly, I further found that images are not intrinsically gendered, but rather gendered through editorial framing. Editors selected and interpreted the same materials in different ways for variable implied audiences, in shaping the styles of their journals. In Pictorial Weekly, female images were often connected to social activities, to current affairs, or sometimes to satirizing women, while in Linloon Magazine, female images were deliberately associated with fashion, health and beauty (jianmei), instructive advice, or sometimes “attacking men.” Generally speaking, nudes in Linloon Magazine often emphasized the ideology of beauty and health rather than eroticism. All of these findings complicate the question of what can or must be called a “women’s magazine” or a “gendered journal”; to what extent is our assessment of these publications affected by our assumptions of the gender of the editors? Finally, this chapter asserts the value of engaging in carefully integrated and situated investigations in our study of these multifaceted texts.