

THOMAS LAMARRE

Cine-Photography
as Racial Technology

Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's Close-up
on the New/Oriental
Woman's Face

Like many European commentators in the interwar period, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō became fascinated with moving pictures and their impact on everyday life. Yet, while he shared with such contemporaries as Béla Balázs, Jean Epstein, Walter Benjamin, and Siegfried Kracauer an interest in how cinematic experience collapsed perceptual distance and brought images unbearably close to viewers, Tanizaki saw this cinematic “shock to the body” in terms of the ugliness of the Japanese face and a gap between Japan and the West. In 1934, for instance, when he recalled his past enthusiasm for moving pictures, some fifteen to twenty years previously, he remarked, “As I looked at [Onoe] Matsunosuke’s pictures,¹ Japanese drama and faces seemed thoroughly hideous to me. . . . At that time, nothing delighted me more than going to see Western films at the Imperial theater or Odeon theater, and I felt that the discrepancy between Matsunosuke’s films and Western ones was precisely the discrepancy between Japan and the West.”²

In other words, for personal as well as historical reasons, Tanizaki found it impossible to think of the experience of moving pictures in isolation from geopolitical concerns that were less obvious to European commentators. Of particular importance was the sense of a quasi-colonial discrepancy between the West and Japan.³ He expressed these concerns in terms of an experience of the ugliness of the Japanese face in close-up, or “large shot” (*oo-utsushi*), as he also styled it, which, as I discuss below, is more a problem of photography than of cinematography. In fact, in 1933 Tanizaki would also comment, “One need only compare American,

French and German films to see how greatly nuances of shading and coloration can vary in motion pictures. In the photographic image itself, there somehow emerge differences in national character. If this is true even when identical equipment, chemicals, and film are used, how much better our own photographic technology might have suited our complexion, our facial features, our climate, our land."⁴ As this passage indicates, Tanizaki continued to see motion pictures in terms of the problems posed by the photographic image.

The problem of photographing the Japanese face looms so large in Tanizaki's film work that his enthusiasm for moving pictures between 1915 and 1925 can be read almost entirely in terms of an attempt to produce photographically a sublime experience of the Japanese face. He became so entranced with film that, after writing a series of film stories and essays prior to 1920, he left his career as a novelist to devote his energies fully to cinema. In two years he made four films with Kurihara Thomas (Kisaburō): *Amateur Club* (*Amachua Kurabu*, 1920), *The Sands of Katsushika* (*Katsushika sunago* 1920), *The Night of the Doll Festival* (*Hinamatsuri no yoru*, 1921), and *The Lust of the White Serpent* (*Jasei no in*, 1921). None of these films survives today. There remain only Tanizaki's screenplays and promotional stills.⁵ Tanizaki ended his career in film in 1921 and returned to writing novels and plays. Yet two of his major novels center on moving pictures, one of which (*Nikukai*, 1923) tells a story about two filmmakers in Yokohama in the early 1920s, drawing directly on his experiences in film production with Kurihara; subsequent to his work in film production, cinematic experience and the photographic image remained central to his fiction. Yet after 1922, Tanizaki did not return to filmmaking. In a brief essay from that year, he remarks, "When one sees the face of a young, beautiful Western woman in a moving picture in close-up, one often gets a sublime feeling. For some reason or another this does not work with Japanese actresses."⁶ In sum, if one takes his word for it, the history of Tanizaki's film work can be read as a failed attempt to redeem the Japanese face cine-photographically.

What is striking is how the discrepancy between Japan and the West is reinscribed in an experience of the Japanese face. Tanizaki's obsession points to a racial experience at the heart of the cinematic experience, and thus calls attention to a set of geopolitical concerns, specifically imperial and colonial relations. Of course, Tanizaki's fuss over rectifying the ugliness of the Japanese man can be read into a general history of Japanese consciousness of racial inferiority, which is often said to begin in earn-

est, or at least to gain greater visibility, with Natsume Sōseki's comments in "Letters from London" (and elsewhere), where he spies his reflection in a shop window and describes himself and the Japanese abjectly: "We are country-bred hicks, wild nincompoop monkeys, dwarf, earth-colored bizarre people."⁷ Still, it is crucial to note how cinematic production displaces and transforms this racial consciousness in Tanizaki, quite literally magnifying it.

I here use the terms *magnification*, *enlargement*, *large shot*, and *close-up* as synonymous because Tanizaki himself, like many other commentators, uses them synonymously. Bringing the camera closer to a face (or the face closer to a camera) differs technically from changing the focal length of the lens, but for Tanizaki, as for Benjamin and Balázs, it was the general experience of a loss of perceptual distance between the viewer and the magnified face that counted.

In any event, lest one leap to the conclusion that Tanizaki's problem with the Japanese face in close-up is exclusively a matter of the disempowering ascendancy of the West over the non-West made manifest in a sense of racial inferiority, I would add that this photographic magnification marks a moment and site of power. While the photographic image appears as a site of Japanese subjection to the West in the form of racial experience, suffice it to say that Tanizaki also sees in moving pictures a way to seize their technical force, thus to redeem the Japanese face and, by extension, to rival the Western nations photographically and cinematically. This is a moment of techno-aesthetic rivalry.⁸ In this respect, the photographic image, in the form of the cinematic close-up, implies a site of national and imperial rivalry in which Japan's national empire is not merely a (failed) imitation of Western national empires, but a rival formation. It is telling in this respect that Tanizaki frequently conflates the Japanese face and the "Oriental" face, and his film work often evokes Japan's colonies.

Tanizaki's film work implies a moment that is doubly colonial, concerned both with sustaining the nation's own colonies and warding off colonization by Western (increasingly American) markets, much as Kristin Ross suggests in the context of 1950s France.⁹ The difference is that Japan, unlike 1950s France, was not so much concerned with retaining as expanding colonies and transforming relations to colonies in cultural and economic terms.¹⁰ The photographic image was ultimately for Tanizaki an expression of this doubly colonial situation because it at once marked Japaneseness (as inferior) and promised to elevate and redeem it

(as rival). It is a subjective technology in the sense of a subjection that serves simultaneously to subject and to “subjectify,” that is, to confer a kind of subject status.

What is more, that Tanizaki’s doubly colonial “race trouble” translated into a technical fuss over close-ups of Japanese actresses recalls Paul Gilroy’s comment that “gender is the modality in which race is lived.”¹¹ Yet here too I would like to add that, while this translation between gender trouble and race trouble can be read in terms of the power of men over women (patriarchy) and the use of native women to secure and patrol national boundaries, Tanizaki’s film work points to a more complex (because doubly colonial) situation. Particularly important is his use of the close-up to juxtapose the New Woman and the Oriental Woman, to produce a hybrid figure in which modernity and tradition, the foreign and the native, appear to coincide and coexist. This is surely because the figure of the New Woman, especially as mediated in photographic images in the early decades of the twentieth century, also entailed a kind of subjective technology that promised to “subjectify” women, to transform the subjected (women) into a subject position (the so-called self-aware woman).

In sum, the cine-photographic image entailed translation between race trouble and gender trouble, pointing to a subjective technology related to a doubly colonial situation. Understanding this power of the photographic image, which is predicated on its radical and practically irreducible foreignness, demands a closer look at (1) transformations in moving pictures from 1915 to 1925, (2) transformations of the New Woman in relation to the emerging film journals that circulated photos of starlets, and (3) the subjective technology implicit in the cine-photographic image, especially in the close-up, double exposure, and overlap dissolve. If Tanizaki’s personal obsessions appear as much symptomatic of Japan’s doubly colonial situation, as a critical response to it, it is because the structures of fantasy operative in his film work constitute a formation of desire in which the personal and the political are inseparable.

CINE-PHOTOGRAPHY

When film historians delineate the periods or stages of Japanese cinema, the Pure Film Movement (*jun'eigageki undō*) that gathered momentum from about 1915 typically signals the beginning of film as art in its own right. The pivotal year is 1917 or 1918. Iijima Tadashi, for instance, titles

the first section of his history “From the Initial Importation to 1918: Before Film Art.”¹² In his history, Tanaka Jun’ichirō chooses the year 1917 as the moment of an “awakening to film art” from a “period of extravagance.”¹³ At this time there is also a major shift in terminology, from “moving pictures” (*katsudō shashin*) to “cinema” (*eiga*), which provides one way to get a handle on the complex transformations in film production, reception, and expression. While moving pictures is a reasonable translation for *katsudō shashin*, because *shashin* refers to photography rather than drawing or painting, *katsudō shashin* might as well be rendered “moving photographs,” “motion photography,” or even “action photography.” In this context, because Tanizaki’s interest lay primarily in the photographic, I will use yet another term, “cine-photography,” which nicely captures the photographic emphasis in Tanizaki’s imagination of moving pictures.

Tanaka writes that, from the Meiji period into the early Taishō period, there was no social consensus to see moving pictures as art or culture; they were seen as *misemono*, sideshow attractions or spectacle.¹⁴ It was a time when foreign imports were rare, and newspapers and journals rarely addressed moving pictures as an independent issue.¹⁵ Only in the second decade of the twentieth century does one see the gradual emergence of a sense of film as a distinctive form of entertainment, largely through the debates generated around the Pure Film Movement.

Most histories of cinema discuss this shift in terms of a transformation in film form or style, stressing how pure film reformers, deeply influenced by changes in European and American cinema, strove to eliminate or alter certain practices then standard in the Japanese film industry.¹⁶ The reformers criticized Japanese films as overly static and theatrical and sought to redefine cinematic style by introducing long, medium, and close shots, in conjunction with more analytic styles of editing. They also favored new styles of acting, characterized as less theatrical and more realistic. They thus favored actresses in women’s roles rather than *oyama*, or female impersonators, which was a convention of Japanese theater that had been extended to film. Reformers argued for the elimination of *benshi* or *katsuben*, live commentators who supplied dialogue, narrative explanations, and comic banter at screenings, in favor of intertitles.¹⁷ Finally, they insisted on a detailed screenplay.

As the pure film reformers’ attack on theatricality indicates, they saw *katsudō shashin* more as photographed action than as movies. They especially wanted to get away from using the movie camera merely to photograph staged actions, as was common practice at the time; many moving

pictures, or “moving photographs,” consisted of a play performed before a stationary camera. Unfortunately, since few films remain from this era, it is difficult to assess their evaluation of film form, but clearly, the pure film reformers’ rejection of theater-based films and their emphasis on moving the camera, editing, and naturalistic styles of action were calculated as a break with the “photographed action” implicit in *katsudō shashin*. In this respect, the promotion of *junsui eiga*, or “pure cinema,” constituted a shift from a sort of action photography to cinematography.

In addition, if this shift can also be said to mark the emergence of cinema as a form of entertainment distinctive from others, it is because the elimination of *benshi* and the insistence on a screenplay (to be written prior to filming) also afforded an exclusive focus on the diegetical space of the screen. Simply put, everything that was needed to understand and consume the film drama occurred within the film and on the screen. Not only did film drama thus become an autonomous form of expression, but viewers at different locations were now, in theory, seeing the same production. Consequently, even as pure film reformers placed the emphasis on the autonomy of film as art, such transformations also made their “pure film drama” (*junsui eigageki*) subject to greater standardization and regulation, industrially and socially.

At this transitional moment in the history of cinema, Tanizaki threw himself into the Pure Film Movement at a fairly early stage, writing an essay for the reform of moving pictures in Japan for the literary journal *Shinshōsetsu* (New Novel) entitled “The Present and Future of Moving Pictures” (“*Katsudō shashin no genzai to shōrai*,” 1917). Therein he argues against current moving picture practices, especially the use of theater conventions: “Of the actors, stage directors, and managers who film the movies characteristic of Japan today, I would first request one thing: not to copy theater for no good reason.” This is because of the tendency to “use a long, shallow, two-tiered stage, and convey the story at length in a single location.”¹⁸ In effect, Tanizaki is arguing against the stasis characteristic of photographed action, in which a stationary camera records staged actions.

Significantly, however, while he recommends movement of the camera, techniques of editing, and the use of long, medium, and close shots, he has precious little to say concretely about how to use them. In his account of cinematic techniques that should break with the static camera, what comes to the fore is a fascination with the enlargement or close-up. “When one isolates a portion of a certain scene and enlarges the

image, that is, when one is able to present details, how incredibly much this heightens the effect of the performance and aids with transitions,” he writes. “In this sense, film is far closer to painting than is theatrical performance.”¹⁹ For him it is above all the close-up that manifests the power of moving pictures.

Two aspects of Tanizaki’s imagination of moving pictures are important here. First, for all his dislike of the stasis and staginess of moving photographs, he doesn’t resolutely break with photography in favor of cinematography. This is echoed in his use of the term *katsudō shashin* rather than *eiga*, or “cinema,” a term then emerging but not yet widespread. Tanizaki is still in the space of moving photographs, or more precisely, in between the old moving pictures and the new cinema, in the realm of cine-photography, where new cinematic techniques allow more for heightened photographic effects than for cinematography. When he introduces movement, it is largely in the guise of closing in on things, making them appear larger than life on the screen, especially the human face and body. It is not surprising that he likens moving pictures to the plastic arts. Here the analogy is to painting, but more often he sees cinema as akin to sculpture, seal carving, and doll making.²⁰ In other words, it is as if the motion inherent in moving pictures allowed for a dimensional, almost 3-D, larger-than-life production of human figures.

Second, while Tanizaki champions the reality effects afforded by moving photographs, this is not an indexical reality. Moving pictures for him do not afford a relation to the real that somehow captures a moment in time that would thus allow for a historical relation, or a cinematic realism in the manner of, say, Bazin.²¹ Rather than generating a record of something out there, moving pictures bring something to life; they produce something larger and livelier than life. In brief, for Tanizaki, the introduction of greater motion into moving photographs enables the production of realer-than-real figures, a kind of simulation that promises to surpass indexical or referential relations to reality. Walter Benjamin also lingered on the photographic effects of cinema to highlight how it brought things closer to viewers, stressing the almost surgical quality of cine-photographic perception (which ultimately tended to destroy perceptual distance altogether, resulting in an image that struck viewers). In contrast, although Tanizaki too sees a destruction of perceptual distance in cine-photography, he delights in its capacity for detailed exploration of surfaces, which enables the production of simulacra. Yet, as is so often the case, the production of simulacra remains nevertheless compro-

mised by some reality, constrained by some materiality. For Tanizaki, that reality arrives in the form of an experience of the ugliness of the Japanese face. In response to this harsh reality (a perceived reality, an experience of racialization), his fascination with cine-photographic simulation entails a bid to elevate and redeem the Japanese face. In the same essay, for instance, he writes:

The human face, no matter how unsightly the face may be, is such that, when one stares intently at it, one feels that somehow, somewhere, it conceals a kind of sacred, exalted, eternal beauty. When I gaze on faces in “enlargement” within moving pictures, I feel this quite profoundly.²² Every aspect of the person’s face and body, aspects that would ordinarily be overlooked, is perceived so keenly and urgently that it exerts a fascination difficult to put into words. This is not simply because film images are made larger than actual objects but probably also because they lack the sound and color of actual objects.²³

While he writes here of the human face in general, the key to his fascination with the close-up lies in his interest in imparting a sacred and eternal beauty to any face, however unsightly. As his remarks about how hideous he found the face of Onoe Matsunosuke attest, Tanizaki turned to Western films and then to the Pure Film Movement in an attempt to move beyond that Japanese ugliness. A film story published the following year, “The Tumor with a Human Face” (“Jinmenso,” 1918), makes clearer what is at stake for Tanizaki in the cinematic techniques associated with pure film.

“The Tumor with a Human Face” tells the story of a moving picture starring a famous Japanese actress recently returned from Hollywood to Tokyo. The actress hears a rumor of this movie showing in rather odd theaters in and around Tokyo, yet, when her friends explain the story to her, she has absolutely no recollection of having made such a film. Tanizaki takes this opportunity to describe the film (titled in English *The Tumor with a Human Face*), drawing on his favorite films, such crime and adventure serials as *Zigomar*, *The Broken Coin*, and *The Exploits of Elaine* (all cited in his essay “The Present and Future of Moving Pictures”), as well as such proto-horror, proto-expressionist films as *The Golem* and *The Student of Prague* (both cited in the story). The film in his story entails a vengeful destruction of Western romances of the Orient, typified by *Madame Butterfly*. In an evocation of *Madame Butterfly*, the story opens with a Japanese courtesan in Nagasaki pining for the return of her

beloved American sailor (usually referred to simply as “the white man”). Tanizaki’s courtesan, however, journeys to America, where she eventually kills her lover and enslaves any number of white men. If one of the aims of the Pure Film Movement was to correct or counter the Western images of the Orient that culminated in such films as Griffith’s *Broken Blossoms* (1919), Tanizaki does so with a vengeance, creating a ruthless and vengeful Japanese woman, a poison lady, who seems bent on the total destruction of the “beautiful” relation between Western men and Japanese women. Appropriately, the Japanese title of the film is said to be *Vengeance*.

What is disturbing, however, is that this vengeance is exacted on the Japanese woman as well. To flee Japan together, the white man and the courtesan used the services of a hideous flute-playing beggar, who, in exchange for his aid, asked to spend a night with the courtesan, with whom he had fallen in love. The white man agrees, but the courtesan, repulsed by the ugliness of the beggar, tricks him out of the promised night. In response, the beggar puts a curse on her: he returns in the form of a tumor that sprouts from her knee, and it is the tumor, bearing his hideous face, that spurs the woman to violence. Although the courtesan takes pains to hide the tumor and succeeds in marrying a rich marquis, in the end, incessantly tortured by the tumor with a human face, she plunges a dagger in her chest. In sum, it is the Japanese man who exacts vengeance, cursing the body of the Japanese woman in order to destroy the romance of the white man and Japanese woman. Significantly, his monstrous power derives from his ugliness, and it is the close-up that enacts his power.

The mystery surrounding the origins and effects of *The Tumor with a Human Face* makes clear that the ugliness of the Japanese man is a racial ugliness. As it turns out, the film has terrible effects on viewers: when men screen it alone in the dark, they lose their senses, fall ill, and sometimes die. The deadly effects derive from the terror experienced when the film shows the face of the ugly beggar in close-up. Oddly, however, despite the amazing performance of the actor playing the beggar, no one knows who he is or where he comes from (and likewise with the film), even though all the other players are identifiable. One character speculates, “The man’s appearance is downright tumorous, with a round corpulent face and glaring eyes, so dark that you can’t say whether he’s Japanese or a native of the South Seas.”²⁴ In brief, it is racialization that haunts this tale of cine-photographic effects, the possibility that the Japanese man might appear indistinguishable from other men of color.

example, women could visually absorb, firsthand, everyday practices different from their own.”³¹

A journal such as *Katsudō no sekai* appears at a point of transition, a transition from the self-aware woman to the modern woman, at which cine-photographic images of women proved central to redefining women’s roles. This variation on the New Woman might be thought of as the “woman of motion (pictures)” or the “woman of action” (*katsudō no onna*), whose representation was closely tied to the emergence of a new culture of moving photographs promoted in film journals. The rapid transformation of *Katsudō no sekai* into a film journal speaks to the connection between moving pictures and the attempt to imagine the active woman.

The tension underlying the journal’s endorsement of active roles for women is most evident in the juxtaposition of photographs of starlets with statements like those of Yamawaki promoting the New Woman. In fact, the visual impact of the journal lies in the wealth of photographs of actresses (and some actors), mostly in the form of studio portraits, usually of head and bust but sometimes of lounging or reclining figures and occasionally of women playing sports. Such photos constituted a new way of looking at women, but it is less obvious how such images relate to the call for women who can replace their male counterparts in the workplace, as Yamawaki suggested. While the photos surely appealed to male consumers who wished to ogle sexy young women, the problem of these photographs is not simply one of objectification, of making women into inert and passive objects for the male gaze. There is also the power of the image, and the cine-photographs present women who appear somehow full of power or potential, but powerful in the way that a fetish is powerful, as a restless and dynamic figure that demands constant attention. As fetishes, such images ask to be taken out of general circulation and cultivated within a personal space of fantasy, while at the same they derive power from expanded circulation. This is the paradox of the imaging of the new “woman of motion”: the image elicits an affective response that would remove it from circulation even as it necessitates circulation. In the circulation of such photographs of starlets, one can see the emergence of a subjective technology for the production of “women of motion,” which increases their range of action and circulation (imparting a sense of agency) while subjecting them to social (masculine) affection that circumscribes their movements.

This subjective technology implicit in the “woman of/in motion” echoes that subjective technology that Tanizaki detected in the cine-photographic close-up, which at once marked and promised to redeem racialized subjects. Likewise, photos of starlets at once liberated and circumscribed female subjects. Naturally, this happened in images of both women and men, but cine-photographs tended to refine their mixture of activation and mobilization in relation to women in particular. It is not surprising, then, that Tanizaki gravitated toward the world of starlets and screen sirens and in his film work channeled his energies into producing images of the new Japanese woman of action in action. While this interest in screen sirens was a personal obsession and fantasy for Tanizaki, it is important to recall again, via Gilroy, that gender is the modality in which race is lived. In other words, Tanizaki’s libidinal investment in the cinematic woman of motion (especially the bathing beauty or screen siren) cannot be separated from race trouble. What is interesting in this context is how race is lived *cine-photographically* in gender.

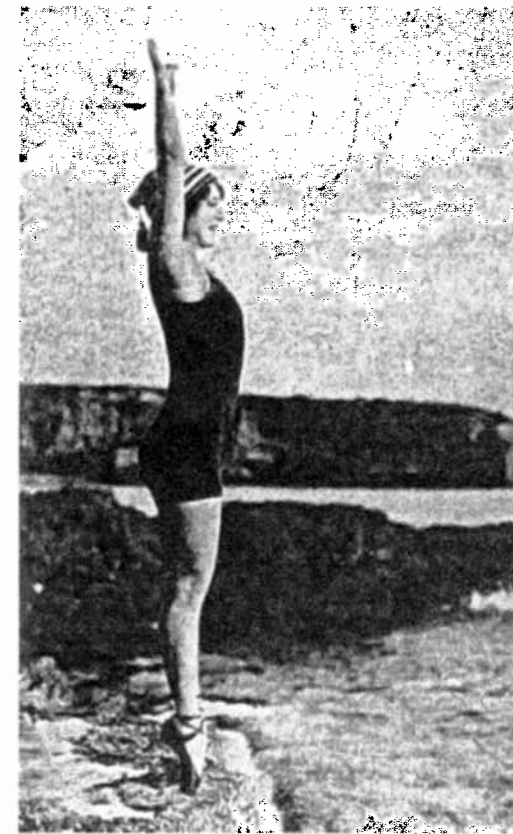
Usually, readers and commentators construe Tanizaki’s obsession with the New Woman as part of his obsession with the West and Western things. The novel *Naomi* (*Chijin no ai*, 1924–25), in which the Japanese heroine’s resemblance to a Western screen actress (Mary Pickford) spurs the protagonist’s obsessive devotion to her, is commonly called upon to reinforce this interpretation. Some commentators even portray Tanizaki’s imagination of the New Woman in terms of “Occidentalism,” a compulsive idealization of the West.³² It is true, of course, that images of Western actresses inspired his imagination of the New Woman, much as European women inspired Yamawaki’s call for the New Woman in *Katsudō no sekai*. Yet dwelling exclusively on the relation between Japan and the West suppresses the problem of Japan’s Orient, which is equally prevalent in Tanizaki’s film work, not to mention in the history of Japanese cinema more generally. In fact, scholars in Japan and the West have tended to mobilize Tanizaki as an exemplary figure for working through their fantasies about Japan’s love of the (Anglophone) West, overlooking questions about Japan’s Orientalism and Japanese empire that also crop up in his film work. Historically, the emphasis on the novel *Naomi* to represent Tanizaki’s relation to cinema has worked to direct critical attention exclusively on Japan-West relations, while *Nikukai* (*A Lump of Flesh*, 1923), his novel of film production written one year prior, has received little attention, surely because it explicitly evokes relations between Japan

Such is the type (or rather archetype, given her almost primordial power) of New/Oriental Woman that Tanizaki strove to bring to the screen in the early 1920s. In his first collaboration with Kurihara, *Amateur Club* (1920), he cast his wife's younger sister, Hayama Michiko (Ishikawa Seiko),³⁶ to play the tomboyish heroine, apparently on the basis of her resemblance to Western actresses. Much like the character Naomi in the novel *Naomi*, the character played by Hayama Michiko is usually construed as Tanizaki's effort to replicate his favorite Western starlets, and in many of the publicity stills, Hayama adopts poses made famous by Western actresses (figs. 1 and 2). What is more, the film *Amateur Club* is often deemed one of the most Western of Japanese comedies of the era, and certainly the most Western of Tanizaki's collaborations.

Nonetheless, even if the film apparently bypasses an overt reckoning with the problem of racialization that otherwise haunts Tanizaki's imagination of the New Woman, hybridity arises in another register, that of tradition versus modernity, which reprises the relation between Japan and the West in a temporal register, only to produce an imperiously hybrid figure.

Amateur Club plays with the relation between the traditional and the modern. The relation is, above all, playful, as one would expect of a mad-cap comedy. The screenplay begins at the beach, introducing the hero and heroine, Muraoka Shigeru and Miura Chizuko (Hayama Michiko), both of whom are young, high-spirited, and attractive. The opening sequence includes a number of scenes that linger on Chizuko in her bathing costume, in her "repetition" of Western bathing beauties (figs. 3 and 4). Significantly, the screenplay includes directions to shoot her with the men visible behind her, in effect assuring that she becomes the object of the male gaze (scene 38).³⁷ While the first sequence establishes Shigeru's romantic interest in Chizuko on the beach, it also cuts to scenes of two thieves pilfering valuables, among them Chizuko's clothing, from the beach house. Scandalously, she decides to return home wearing only her swimsuit.

The screenplay then cuts back and forth between Chizuko's home and Shigeru's home. At Chizuko's home, the family is airing out and cleaning the family heirlooms. Rather obviously, Chizuko is equated with the family heirlooms, the newest in a long line of treasures. As her father dotingly explains the heirlooms to her, the willful Chizuko tries on various costumes. In one sequence, in which she plays with an ancient halberd, the screenplay calls for an overlap dissolve from the contemporary Chi-



zuko to Chizuko dressed as in ancient times, and back again (scene 108). Indeed, overlap dissolve becomes the key to imagining and depicting the relation between past and present. One of the subsequent scenes (111) calls again for overlap dissolve from present to past, and back to the present. In effect, the logic of overlap dissolve structures the entire screenplay, for the screenplay involves a continual overlapping and dissolving of boundaries between the traditional (figured primarily as the Tokugawa-derived past) and the new or modern (contemporary youth).

In *Amateur Club*, the antinomies of male and female as well as tradition and modernity become condensed in the overlap dissolve of Chizuko that presents her simultaneously as modern girl and ancient warrior. In keeping with the devices of romantic comedy, such antinomies are ultimately resolved. In the final scenes the two families meet, and as the two fathers chat and laugh, Chizuko and Shigeru show signs of becoming friendly, even intimate. Ultimately, then, even though Chizuko is a woman of action (exotically tomboyish and even warlike), she can also be a girlfriend. Nonetheless, as elsewhere in Tanizaki, the moment of gen-

1. An image of Akira Kurosawa in the 1920 film *Amateur Club*. From Mamoru, ed., *Kurosawa fukkoku Nihon eiga shokushūsei* (Tokyo: Shobō, 1990–92).

2. Hayama Michiko the publicity still and Kurihara's first film, *Amateur Club* (1920), adopts Kurosawa's famous "bathing beauty" or "mermaid" pose. Courtesy of Kawakita Memorial Museum.



3. A still of Hayama Michiko on the beach at Yuigahama in *Amateur Club*. Courtesy of Kawakita Memorial.



der trouble that the cine-photographic techniques serve to condense (in overlap dissolve) implies race trouble. The image of the modern woman in traditional male dress not only troubles gender but also evokes tradition to generate a sense of racial hybridization: that this girl is, after all, a Japanese girl despite her modern frolics.

Interestingly, *Amateur Club* also includes a moment of the modern boy in traditional female attire (fig. 5): much of the action of the film revolves around the amateur production of a kabuki play that demands an oyama, a man playing the woman's role—precisely what the pure film movement, and Tanizaki himself, presented as anathema to the true nature of moving pictures. How does the oyama nonetheless make an appearance in this effort at pure film? Evidently, in this attempt to produce pure film at least, the power of pure film lay not in purification in the sense of a complete elimination of what was allegedly theatrical, unnatural, and therefore uncinematic. Rather, pure film could reprise these elements as hybridized forms: it is the modern boy (not a traditional actor) who plays the oyama. And, in effect, it is the appearance of a tomboy in the principal female role that also safeguards the appearance of this uncinematic and unmodern mode. Simply put, despite the appellation, this so-called pure film is all about hybridity.

In his last collaboration with Kurihara, *The Lust of the White Serpent*

4. In the opening sequences of *Amateur Club*, Muraoka (played by Uer and his friends Miura Chizuko Michiko) swim then stretching beach. Later, the boys tease Chi. Courtesy of Kawakita Memorial.

In the early 1930s, however, Tanizaki denounced the cine-photographic image as unsuited to Japanese facial features: "In the photographic image itself, there somehow emerge differences in national character. If this is true even when identical equipment, chemicals, and film are used, how much better our own photographic technology might have suited our complexion, our facial features, our climate, our land."⁴³ Even as early as 1921 he complained that it was impossible to produce an experience of the sublime with the faces of Japanese actresses in close-up. But what is at fault, the face of the Japanese woman or the cine-photographic techniques used to render it? Where does racialization happen?

If Tanizaki oscillates, sometimes placing the blame on the face and figure of the Japanese woman, sometimes indicting cine-photography, it is because he implicitly understands cine-photography as a subjective technology. Race does not truly exist in faces, and yet it isn't simply an effect of photography either, and so he oscillates in how he situates it, aware at once of its constructedness and the very real impact of that construction. Earlier, Tanizaki became aware of how cine-photography racialized Japanese faces, and yet he knew that such constructs are not simple effects or merely subjective stances that can be easily swept away or remedied. But it is clear that transformation has to take place in the realm of subjective technologies, in the realm of the cine-photographic image. And so, in the 1930s, even as he denounced Western photography as unsuited to Japanese faces, he strove to produce an analogue, something like an indigenous Japanese cine-photography. He was still thinking cine-photographically. What is more, although in the early 1930s he overtly denounced cinema, it is important to recall that cinema of the 1930s differed profoundly from earlier moving pictures. In effect, Tanizaki's disenchantment with the cinema of the late 1920s and early 1930s allows him to remain faithful to the cine-photography of an earlier era when it still seemed to him that he could use the cine-photographic image to produce a redemptive hybrid. In fact, if we return to one of his earliest film stories, "The Mermaid's Lament" ("Ningyo no nageki," 1917), we find that cine-photography produces precisely those effects that Tanizaki attributes to traditional Japanese art in the early 1930s.

In "The Mermaid's Lament," Tanizaki imagines the city of Nanjing during the Qing Dynasty through the lens of Italian historical epic films and spins a tale of a Chinese prince who falls in love with a mermaid or siren (*ningyo*) from the West. Here the term *siren* refers not only to a

fish-woman or mermaid but also to the bathing beauty of the film world, the siren of the silver screen. In fact, the poses of Hayama Michiko in her bathing suit in the manner of Annette Kellerman are *ningyo* or siren poses (figs. 1 and 2, above). Indeed, the Kellerman photo bears the caption "Human or siren?" ("Hito ka ningyo ka?"). In any event, in a crucial scene in the story the Chinese prince gazes on the siren in her glass jar that replicates the effects of close-up on the silver screen:

Above all, what caught his eye and enchanted his heart was the color of her skin, pure white, spotless, unblemished, without a hint of darkness. The luster of her skin was so white that the adjective "white" could not possibly describe it. It went so far beyond "white" that it would have been better to speak of a "radiant sparkle" that emanated from the entire surface of her skin like the light in her eyes. It was of such whiteness that it recalled the glow of moonlight, which made him wonder if there was not a source of light concealed in her bones, which shone through her flesh.⁴⁴

What is more, the prince's experience of his racial ugliness in "The Mermaid's Lament" reprises, almost word for word, the experience of a film spectator named Tanizaki in the story "The German Spy" ("Dokutan," 1915) who imagines his Japanese ugliness as he watches European films: "Why had I, who received life on the surface of the same globe, been born as a man ugly and stunted in stature, in a backward place so far removed from them? It would have been more fortunate to be raised as a slave in their land than to live as a prince in this one."⁴⁵

As Tanizaki displaces the problem of racial ugliness onto the Japanese woman of motion pictures, it is the power of men over women that comes into play. Note that, in this story, the man frees the mermaid from captivity, allowing her to become a woman of action, but only in the oceans; yet freeing her results in a vast increase in the man's mobility across land and sea. This serves as a reminder that male affection for the New Woman often served to "free" her into circumscribed domains, while the new man enjoyed access to less fettered circulation. It echoes Tanizaki's recommendation for geisha to become movie actresses, for in films they can enjoy global attention.⁴⁶

At the same time, it is the power of the cine-photographic image that promises to produce an experience of the Japanese woman's face that is "beyond white." The direct descendent of the screen siren in "The Mer-

maid's Lament" is the Kyoto geisha that Tanizaki champions in the 1930s, who paradoxically becomes, in the wavering shadow of a lantern, "whiter than the whitest white woman I know."⁴⁷ Needless to say, just as the siren is a hybrid figure (though she comes from the West and has the allure of a Western screen siren, she is a hybrid of human and animal, a supernatural mixture that elevates bestial traits into radiant splendor), so the Kyoto geisha is a hybrid figure. Simply put, it is hybridity that allows for a realization of the "whiter than white," and such hybridity is produced cine-photographically, assuring that a tinge of pale yellow indeed imparts greater depth. Cine-photography is a subjective technology of racialization as hybridization, and it is a subjective technology well suited to a doubly colonial situation.

In sum, even as he denounced cinema and photography as Western technologies in the 1930s, Tanizaki continued to cling to this cine-photographic subjective technology (and it clung to him). If many of his comments about race and women appear today rather silly and downright offensive, it is because he vacillated in how he located race and gender: sometimes these appear as natural physical properties of bodies, sometimes they appear as effects of cine-photographic technologies of imaging. If I have emphasized the latter tendencies in Tanizaki's take on the cine-photographic image, stressing racialization over race, it is not simply because these tendencies today afford a better critical understanding of the doubly colonial situation of Japan in the 1920s and 1930s. It is also because the radical instability inherent in cine-photographic images frequently pushed Tanizaki's film work beyond a symptomatic expression of Japan's doubly colonial situation toward a critical understanding of hybridization as a subjective technology anchored in cine-photographic technologies. There is indeed in the close-up of the human face a "fascination difficult to put into words" that troubles simple attributions of race and gender and forces us to think how imaging technologies work to racialize and gender bodies.⁴⁸ While the doubly (or multiply) colonial situation of today's empire of globalization surely differs in its biopolitics, looking at the hybridizing effects of the cine-photographic image may allow us to think more critically about the digital image, whose modulating multimedia effects are often alleged to bring the play of difference to the fore. In the digital age, Tanizaki's close-up and double exposure are not mere precursors but mark the genealogical fault lines of cine-photography at its inception.

NOTES

- 1 Onoe Matsunosuke (1875–1926), an actor who became extremely popular in the early days of Japanese cinema, worked closely with the director Makino Shōzō, making a number of pictures (168 between 1909 and 1911) in which Onoe played a wizard or sword hero who always triumphed with courage and trickery. He starred in the famous *Chūshingura* that Makino filmed and released in segments between 1910 and 1913.
- 2 Tanizaki, Jun'ichirō "Tōkyō o omou" (*Tanizaki Jun'ichirō zenshu*, hereafter abbreviated *TJZ*) 21: 9. All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.
- 3 Jon Kraniuskas alludes to this problem of the colonial unconscious in his article on Walter Benjamin, "Beware Mexican Ruins!" There has been a great deal of scholarly work in recent years related to early film and silent film that looks at the "cinematization of the world" in relation to the sensory environment of urban modernity, technologies of space and time, and the emergence of mass culture. Recent studies by David Bordwell and Ben Singer propose grouping these efforts under the rubric of a "modernity thesis." See Bordwell, *On the History of Film Style*; Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*. While the so-called modernity thesis does not necessarily preclude an analysis of race or class or gender (in fact, I see in it the possibility of shifting an analysis of power formations away from representational politics toward the operations of media), these problems are not crucial in the theorists (Benjamin, Kracauer, Simmel, and others) who have been central in shaping discussions of cinema and modernity.
- 4 Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*, 9.
- 5 None of these films is extant, but three screenplays survive as published in journals, as well as a "film play" entitled *Murmur of the Moon* (*Tsuki no sasayaki*, 1920). Significant portions of an early film by Kurihara Thomas, *Sanji Goto*, are extant (with the title *Narikin* in Japanese). The details of the film's production are unclear, but the predominant explanation is that Kurihara made the film in 1918, but under the name of his famous mentor, Thomas Ince. A recent exhibition entitled *The Japanese Film Heritage: From the Non-Film Collection of the National Film Center*, which opened in the fall of 2002, presented *Narikin* as part of Japan's film history.
- 6 Tanizaki, "Onna no kao," *TJZ* 22: 124–25. See also "A Woman's Face," 264.
- 7 Natsume, "Letter," 13: 86. See also Masao Miyoshi's discussion of Sōseki's sense of racial inferiority in *Accomplices of Silence*.
- 8 I would argue in this respect that Sōseki does something analogous in the space of the novel, transforming the racialized position into a subjective technology of narration analogous to Gustave Flaubert's *bêtise*, a force of stupidity in narrative that comes to rival and even surpass Western narrative technologies.
- 9 Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*.
- 10 See, for instance, Akira Iriye's discussion of the transformation into a cultural policy of Japanese colonial policy toward Korea in *China and Japan in the Global Setting*.

- 11 Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, 85.
- 12 Iijima Tadashi, a former pure film reformer, provides this outline in *Nihon eiga shi*.
- 13 Tanaka, *Nihon eiga hattatsu shi*. Tanaka subsequently continued from this first volume in 1957 to an expanded and revised five-volume history. The periodization for the early period remains consistent. For a discussion of Tanaka's film history, see Cazdyn, *The Flash of Capital*, 67–75.
- 14 The early association of moving pictures with sideshow spectacle, or *misemono*, is a common theme in Makino, Ogasawara, Gerow, and others. Iwamoto Kenji recently published an important prehistory of cinema centered on *gentō*, or "magic lantern," which was considered almost synonymous with cinema for many years: *Gentō no seiki*.
- 15 Given that very few of the films are extant today, much of the study of the pure film movement tends to be archival by default, with particular attention to the film journals that emerged after 1910, such as *Katsudō gahō*, *Katsudō hyōron*, *Katsudō kurabu*, *Katsudō no sekai*, *Katsudō shashinkai*, *Kinema junpō*, and *Kinema record*, which magazines provided a forum for Pure Film reformers. I draw here on Ogasawara Takeo's discussion in "*Katsudō no sekai sōkan no toshi ni tsuite*," as well as Gerow, *Visions of Japanese Modernity*.
- 16 Makino Mamoru has edited facsimile reproductions of extended portions of many of these journals in a series entitled *Nihon eiga shoki shiryō shūsei*, as well as *Kinema Junpō* with Iwamoto Kenji.
- 17 *Benshi* or *katsuben* were performers who provided live dialogue, narration, and commentary when silent films were shown in Japan. (Although Tanizaki uses the terms interchangeably, *benshi* denotes a speaker or performer, while *katsuben* specifically refers to the *benshi* who performed with moving pictures.) *Katsuben* were so important to movie audiences that they often got higher billing than the stars. They began to decline in importance in the early 1920s as new filmmakers moved away from theater-derived cinema to make films with more elaborate mise-en-scène, editing, and intertitles. Nonetheless, *katsuben* remained popular in certain venues well past the rise of talkies.
- 18 Tanizaki, "The Present and Future of Moving Pictures," 68, 69.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 67.
- 20 Especially telling is the story "Mr. Aozuka's Story" ("Aozuka-shi no hanashi," 1926), in which a crazed film fan collects stills of his favorite actress in order to construct life-size doll replicas of her.
- 21 See Philip Rosen's discussion of Bazin, indexicality, and history in *Change Mummified*.
- 22 Tanizaki uses the term *oo-utsushi*, or "large shot," to refer to what in English became the close-up. In other film essays, he translates *oo-utsushi* as "close-up" (using the English term), but like other commentators, such as Jean Epstein, he tended to think of the close-up as an effect of magnification. For an excellent point of comparison with Tanizaki, see Epstein, "Magnification and Other Writings."
- 23 Tanizaki, "The Present and Future of Moving Pictures," 68.
- 24 Tanizaki, "The Tumor with a Human Face," 99.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 101.
- 26 Ogasawara, "*Katsudō no sekai sōkan no toshi ni tsuite*." In this article he discusses this transformation; he also suggests the translation "active world" for *katsudō no sekai*. Cinema was generally part of the new active world associated with Asakusa Park in the Taishō era. A special issue of *Chūō kōron* solicited impressions of the "three ks" — car, cinema, and café (*kuruma*, *kinema*, *kafē*) — in 1918, to which Tanizaki contributed an occasional essay called "Asakusa Park" ("Asakusa kōen").
- 27 Yamawaki, "Katsudōryoku naki nihon no fujin."
- 28 Kano, *Jiga no kanata e*, 7, cited in Sato, *The New Japanese Woman*, 42.
- 29 See, for instance, Sharon Sievers's account of the Bluestocking Society in *Flowers in Salt*.
- 30 Naturally, there were also bids for a "new man"; an insert accompanying Yamawaki's article elects Shibuzawa Danshaku as the exemplar of the new man in Japan. See Donald Roden's essay on the new woman and the new man in the general context of gender ambivalence and androgyny: "Taishō Culture and Gender Ambivalence." More recently, Miriam Silverberg has written on the café waitress as a sort of new agency in Taishō Japan, in "The Café Waitress Serving Modern Japan."
- 31 Sato, *The New Japanese Woman*, 76.
- 32 Ken Ito, in *Visions of Desire*, writes at length of Tanizaki's "Occidentalism." Emphasizing Japan's Occidentalism runs the risk of establishing parity between Japan's Occidentalism and the West's Orientalism, thus stripping the problem of Orientalism of the power dynamics that made an important site of analysis. Aptly, however, as Ito's discussion turns to Tanizaki's years in Kansai, he emphasizes the hybrid nature of Tanizaki's Oriental traditions.
- 33 See Shih, "Towards an Ethics of Transnational Encounters"; Chow, *The Age of the World Target*.
- 34 Tanizaki, "The Tumor with a Human Face," 86.
- 35 Tanizaki, *Nikukai*, *TJZ* 9: 66–67.
- 36 Ishikawa Seiko adopted the screen name Hayama Michiko. Later she used her married name, Wajima Sei.
- 37 I am indebted here to Bernardi's translation of *Amateur Club*, in *Writing in Light*, 269–99.
- 38 Tanizaki, *The Lust of the White Serpent*, 216.
- 39 Tanizaki, "Miscellaneous Observations on Cinema," 120.
- 40 Tanizaki, "Love and Sexual Desire," 330.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 345.
- 42 The philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō's (1889–1960) *Fūdō* (*Culture and Climate*, 1935) was first drafted as a series of lectures in 1928–29 based on his travels abroad in 1927–28. Tanizaki and Watsuji had been friends since their schooldays. Indeed, Katsube Mitake's biography of young Watsuji, *Seishun no Watsuji Tetsurō*, is really a book about Tanizaki as well, detailing their friendship as students, their collaboration on the journal *Shinshichō*, and their careers and ideas till 1918. See also Tanizaki's "Wakaki hi no Watsuji Tetsurō." After his move to Kansai, Tanizaki and

Oddly, however, in view of Tanizaki's comments that he fled from Japanese films to Western films because he found the face of Onoe Matsunosuke so hideous, "The Tumor with a Human Face" imparts great power to the allegedly ugly face of the Japanese man. It gives his ugly face the power to destroy Western romances of the Orient. In particular, it is the new cine-photographic techniques that Tanizaki associates with pure film—the close-up and double exposure—which enable the racialized man to exact his vengeance. It is the close-up that transforms the ugliness of the Japanese man's face into a supernatural force, as if there were racial power inherent in the experience of racial trauma (seeing oneself as the despised racial other). In this respect, racialization is at once evoked and disavowed: the Japanese woman can almost succeed in passing into the white American world (but for the ugly tumor face on her knee), while the Japanese man remains decidedly dark, unable to travel so easily; his racial appearance prevents his passage into whiteness, and he in turn prevents her passage. The tumor that undermines her beauty is like a racial taint. Still, this racialization is not disempowerment. On the contrary, not only is the film incredibly, supernaturally powerful in its effects, but the story lingers on the transnational movement of the film. In fact, the story ends with the promise of a global expansion of the film's monstrous power. The actress's friend remarks that the film has become the property of Globe Studios, and "because they're in it for themselves, they'll surely make many copies and distribute it widely this time. That's exactly what they'll do."²⁵

In sum, while Tanizaki leapt into the Pure Film Movement to transform *katsudō shashin* into *eiga*, his thinking about cinema remained focused on cine-photographic techniques, and he tended to place the motion of motion pictures in the service of a heightened photographic effect, as manifested particularly in the close-up of the human face. What interested him in the close-up was its potential to impart seemingly supernatural power even to an unsightly (that is, racialized) face. As "The Tumor with a Human Face" attests, the idea was not only to erase and disavow racialization but also to empower it. There is profound ambivalence in his take on the close-up, one that speaks to Japan's doubly colonial situation. For Tanizaki sought to produce with cine-photographic techniques an experience of the Japanese face in which its racialization would appear at once marked and unmarked, under erasure, as it were. This is most evident once he entered into film production and labored to produce a racially and temporally hybrid New/Oriental Woman on the screen.

THE NEW/ORIENTAL WOMAN

In 1916 a journal appeared called *Katsudō no sekai*, *Active World* or *The World of Motion*. Although the title suggests an affinity with moving pictures (*katsudō shashin*), the journal did not initially present itself as a film journal. Rather, it aimed to present a world of healthy, vigorous, and active lifestyles for men and women. Although articles related to film did appear, moving pictures were but a part of the broader world of activity and vitality. In other words, the "motion" or "action" associated with motion pictures coincided with other general social activities that had begun to transform gender roles and relations. For a variety of reasons, however, despite its initial mission, *Katsudō no sekai* rapidly transformed into a film journal. By the third issue all of its articles addressed moving pictures. This serves as a reminder of how integral cinema was to the imagination of a new world, a world of action and motion in which new women and men of action were to live.²⁶

Crucial to this new active world was the promotion of new roles for and images of women. The inaugural issue of *Katsudō no sekai* included an essay on "Japanese women's lack of vitality," in which the author, Yamawaki Fusako, begins with an account of how women in Europe during the recent tragic war took on the activities of men in their absence; thus, she advances the cause of the "New Woman."²⁷ The figure of the New Woman had emerged years earlier, first through the mediation of women's social movements that stressed the "the universalization of modern human values such as 'equality,' 'human rights,' and the 'individual.'"²⁸ Subsequently, particularly around the Bluestocking Society that began publishing the journal *Seitō* (Bluestocking) in 1911, there emerged a new stance that might be thought of as cultural politics, with an emphasis on creative freedom and unfettered activity for women, which coalesced around the New Woman as a "self-aware woman" (*jikaku no onna*).²⁹ By the 1920s, with the debates surrounding the emergence of yet another variation on the New Woman, the *moga*, or "modern woman," it was clear that a new middle-class women's culture had emerged, in the form of a mass consumer culture offering a dramatic redefinition of women, with a range of new identities presented in women's journals with wide circulation.³⁰ In the 1920s, Barbara Sato remarks, the "media projected hope for urban middle-class women to participate actively in the creation of this burgeoning culture, without an intermediary. By going to the movies, for

and China, drawing analogies between Yokohama and Shanghai, dwelling on the production of Orientalist films, and generally calling attention to Japan's colonies.

The question is not simply one of whether the Japanese "woman of motion (pictures)" was fashioned on the model of European and American actresses (she was). Rather, the question is whether this fashioning ever entailed a *simple* imitation or emulation of the West. Clearly it was not simple, but how does one get at the complexity? Postcolonial theory suggests that, even as the non-West strove to copy the West, imitation failed for historical, material reasons, resulting in a copy whose differences from the original show the fault lines of the original (Western) modernity. Such "failures" can subsequently be recuperated as successes, as signs of authentic difference. The result is a second moment of displacement or disavowal, in which national difference is mistaken for an alternative to Western modernity, even as it subjects local differences ever more ruthlessly to the dictates of (national) modernity.

While in some ways this is a serviceable point of departure, it continues to focus attention somewhat exclusively on Japan-West relations, making Japan appear primarily as a (post)colonial nation and only secondarily (if at all) as a national empire, as if Japan's empire itself could be construed only as a failed and somehow inauthentic imitation of Western empire. Consequently, as critics as different as Shu-mei Shih and Rey Chow have remarked, there is a tendency in such theory to evoke the non-West only to shore up and accrue power to the West, demanding ever more sophisticated analyses of Western power.³³ For such reasons, it is crucial to understand the hybridity that arises in the context of the Japanese New Woman not simply as a failure to replicate Western models due to material constraints, which then stands for the persistence of native authenticity. The example of Tanizaki's imperious screen beauties suggests that hybridity is the sign not merely of the failure of Japanese modernity but also of its success. While we may still insist that Japanese modernity is (in)operative, this is not simply in relation to an omni-operative West.

Even in "The Tumor with a Human Face," for instance, Tanizaki explicitly depicts the cinematic woman of action as a hybrid figure: "Her smooth, ample figure ranked her favorably with American and European actresses, and her lovely face tempered Occidental coquetry with Oriental modesty. In her appearances on the silver screen, she showed a degree of vigor rare in Eastern women, and because she was possessed of pluck and liveliness that enabled her to laugh her way through adventurous

scenes, she seemed to excel at roles that required both charm and agility, such as women bandits, dragon ladies, or female detectives."³⁴

While, on the whole, Tanizaki's Japanese woman of action is noteworthy for her Occidental physique and physical vigor, it is important that "her lovely face tempered Occidental coquetry with Oriental modesty." In other words, at the level of the face at least, with a slapdash use of stereotypes Tanizaki strives to imagine a hybrid figure rather than a look-alike. It is significant that the face is the site of hybridization, for Tanizaki consistently evoked the face of Japanese women in his imagining of skin, skin texture, and skin color, and his imaging of race frequently settled on the face in close-up. As his description of the actress in "The Tumor with a Human Face" suggests, at this juncture in the history of his obsession with constructing his fantasy woman, Tanizaki imagined a sort of racialized act-alike, a slightly Orientalized woman who acted like Western adventure serial actresses. Ironically, perhaps, in this respect, he was not entirely at odds with the Hollywood film industry's interest in exotic beauties.

In general, in his imagination of the New Woman of motion pictures, Tanizaki resorted to hybrid figures, usually ones that evoke a mixture of East and West, rather than straightforward replications of the Western model. The hybridity implicit in Tanizaki's imaging of the New Woman becomes most explicit in *Nikukai*, his novel centered on film production in Yokohama, which, as I mentioned above, tends to be overlooked in favor of the novel *Naomi* because *Naomi* does not trouble analyses based exclusively on Japan-West relations that apparently remain appealing to Japanology.

In *Nikukai* the ideal actress is of mixed race, or "between races" (*ai no ko*). In one scene, at a ball, the protagonist stares at her, marveling over how her appearance hovers between the traditional and the modern.³⁵ He notes her resemblance to an exotic film beauty, Viola Dana, and continues to stare, fascinated by her eyes. What is more, the films concocted by the ambitious screenwriter in *Nikukai* tend to revolve around China. His first collaboration tells the story of a Chinese prince who encounters a Western mermaid (which recalls another of Tanizaki's film stories, "The Mermaid's Lament"), and his second film concerns a Japanese girl who favors Chinese styles of dress, who turns out to be a Chinese princess. Moreover, the novel itself abounds in scenes of Japanese men and women in Chinese dress in Yokohama, a town famous for its Chinatown and Western settlement, which is thus said in the novel to resemble Shanghai.



5. In *Amateur Club*, the members of the Amateur Club stage a performance of the classic play *Taikōki*. In scene 147, the maid helps Ono Kamekichi into the costume of Mitsuhide's mother, Satsuki. Courtesy of Kawakita Memorial.

(*Jasei no in*, 1921), Tanizaki makes clearer his push toward racial hybridization in the Japanese actress. *The Lust of the White Serpent* is a traditional ghost story set in "classical" times (the late Heian period) about a young man who is seduced by a snake woman (fig. 6). Even after he breaks off his marriage with her, the snake woman continues to pursue him, taking control of his second wife's body. A moment of terrifying revelation occurs when the face of the snake woman reappears on the face of his sweet new wife, in double exposure and in close-up (scenes 189 and 191).³⁸ The double exposure is calculated to present, in the same image, types that are apparently incommensurable: the dark seductive beauty from the ancient past and the bright modest beauty of the present.

As these examples indicate, in terms of cine-photographic techniques, Tanizaki in his film work showed as much fondness for double exposure (or superimposition) and overlap dissolve as for the close-up. In fact, he often combined them, as in the close-up of the tumor face superimposed on the beautiful skin of the courtesan in "The Tumor with a Human Face." Again it is clear that he imagines the power of cinema largely in terms of cine-photographic techniques. Moreover, it makes sense that he would gravitate from the close-up to such devices as the overlap dissolve and double exposure. Both are techniques of combining opposites or contraries in a single image; just as the close-up promised to make the un-

sightly face exalted, so overlap dissolve and double exposure allowed the viewer to see two apparently contradictory states at once: past and present, tradition and modernity, Oriental and Occidental, modesty and sexual appeal. Where the close-up affords a technical transformation of a racialized face into an exalted face, the overlap dissolve or double exposure serves as a reminder that the idea for Tanizaki is not truly to erase the racialized (or the traditionalized) altogether but to elevate it, to sublimate and even to sublimate it, raise it to a different power. It is not surprising that he not only favors both close-up and overlap dissolve but also sees them as analogous, compatible techniques. Both offer a way to see two states at once, thus combining opposites in order to raise the lesser one to a new power. This may recall a dialectical synthesis, but it is more like Benjamin's dialectical image in that the idea is to see the two contradictory states at once. But then, for Tanizaki, in this cine-photographically doubled vision lies potential redemption of the "antithesis" as the de-

6. Scene 51 of *White Serpent* Tanizaki direct "Put carbon in shadows, or ill only the area a two with a spo entire interior not be illumina the sliding doc them, the two should cast hu rible shadows. of Kawakita M



valued term, that is, redemption of the Oriental, the racialized, and the traditional as the devalued antithesis to the West. Rather than a synthesis of opposites, he favors dialectical rivalry.

The result was a cine-photographic image in which the New Woman and the Oriental Woman appeared simultaneously, in double exposure, as a hybridized New/Oriental Woman. In conjunction with double exposure, the close-up promised not so much to redeem the Oriental Woman as to exalt hybridity by marking and elevating what was perceived as racially Oriental via its double exposure with the New.

WHITER THAN WHITE

After he left the world of film production and returned to literature, Tanizaki construed these attempts as a failure, for a variety of reasons. While the film and screenplay are lost and only publicity stills remain from his third collaboration with Kurihara, *The Sands of Katsushika* (*Katsushika sunago*, 1921), these stills, in conjunction with passing remarks by Tanizaki about his goals, suggest that he strove to present a film that was “purely Japanese in style.” Even here there is some evidence of efforts at hybridization, insofar as the film oscillates between images of the young woman dressed as a courtesan by night and images of her in everyday attire (figs. 7 and 8). Yet, in an essay that appears to have been written between the release of *The Sands of Katsushika* and *The Lust of the White Serpent*, in which Tanizaki continues the discussion begun in “The Present and Future of Moving Pictures,” he complains of his efforts with *The Sands of Katsushika*, “Whenever one strives to make a film purely Japanese in style, the greatest obstacle is the lack of actresses with faces like those in ukiyoe prints. If I may say so, most young women these days, especially those who wish to become actresses, without exception, reek of Westernness.” In his words, “It is the women above all who present an obstacle.”³⁹

Elsewhere he blames his failure to produce the New Woman on the “materiality” of Japanese women, that is, their face and physique, as here in “Love and Sexual Desire” (“Ren'ai oyobi shikijō,” 1931):

We aspired to raise the Japanese woman, long burdened with ancient traditions, to the status of Western women, but because spiritually and physically this would take countless generations of discipline, we could not be expected to accomplish this in a single generation. To

be brief, the Western style of beauty relates first of all to a woman's figure, her facial expressions, and her walk. To make a girl spiritually superior, one must first make use of her flesh of course. . . . For our women to possess a beauty truly equal to theirs, we would have to live their myths, worship their goddesses as our own, and transplant to our land an aesthetics that for them goes back some thousands of years. At present I may at last confess that I myself entertained such a preposterous dream and also experienced the incomparable sadness of a dream that could never be realized.⁴⁰

With such remarks, Tanizaki himself returns us to a postcolonial framework that emphasizes the failure of the non-West to replicate the Western model and to the instrumental use of women by men to establish and secure the boundaries of the nation: Japanese women embody the material constraints that consign to failure the efforts of Japanese men to achieve Western modernity, even as they mark the boundaries of Japaneseness. Oddly, however, where Japanese women in 1921 all “reek[ed] of Westernness,” in 1931 they all fail to achieve Westernness, apparently condemned to Japaneseness.

I previously contested a simple postcolonial explanation of Tanizaki's obsession with cine-photographic images of Japanese women, and would also complicate it here, precisely because his distress about the failure of Japan's women in relation to Western modernity is articulated alongside a comparison of Japan to other locations in the “Orient,” especially to China. In “Love and Sexual Desire,” he concludes, “While Oriental women are inferior to Occidental women in beauty of face and figure, they surpass them in beauty of skin and in delicacy of complexion. . . . As far as I know, Chinese women rank first in delicacy of complexion and softness of skin, but in comparison with that of Westerners, the skin of Japanese women is also far more delicate, and while it is not as white, in certain instances a tinge of pale yellow lends it greater depth and adds to its suggestiveness.”⁴¹

As such comments suggest, Tanizaki's connoisseurship of Occidental and Oriental women allows him ultimately to situate Japanese women favorably in relation to Western women, but only by referring them to Chinese women. Throughout his essay, which reads as a parody of Watsuji Tetsurō's *Culture and Climate* (*Fūdo*, 1935) but replaces climatology with sexology, Tanizaki situates Japan between the Occident and the Orient, in a hybrid position that ultimately empowers Japaneseness.⁴²

(this page and opposite)
7 and 8. Tanizaki and
Kurihara adapted *The
Sands of Katsushika*
from Izumi Kyōka's story,
which tells the tale of
a young woman, Kikue,
who works by night as
a courtesan. This film
prompted Tanizaki to
express concern about
filming *ukiyo-e* faces.
Courtesy of Kawakita
Memorial.



In other words, he seems to resolve the doubly colonial situation of Japan by condensing it into the figure of the Japanese woman, finding in her skin the “tinge of pale yellow” that “lends it greater depth” than purely Occidental or Oriental complexions. This fragile moment of hybridity is where subjection (to the West) confers subject status on Japan over its Orient. It is an imperial moment predicated not on Japanese purity but on its racial hybridity, resulting in a subjective technology of hybridity that bears consideration in relation to Japan’s multiethnic empire and ideologies of pan-Asianism.

Crucial here is the status of cine-photography. Until about 1921 Tanizaki showed great enthusiasm for and confidence in the capacity of cine-photographic techniques to “resolve” the racial ugliness of the Japanese face. The close-up, overlap dissolve, and double exposure were to make for an experience, however fleeting or fragile, of the coexistence of otherwise incompatible and even incommensurable modes: past and present, tradition and modernity, East and West, and, of course, something like “color” (racialization) and “whiteness” (deracialization).



his wife often socialized with the Watsujis, and Tanizaki's essays and stories show his familiarity with Watsuji's philosophy. Nevertheless, Tanizaki's essay is not a repetition of Watsuji's ideas. On the contrary, it shifts the logic of *Climate and Culture* into a pornographic register, where Watsuji's more Platonic and Kantian framework is undermined, much as in "Mr. Aozuka's Story." See chapter 21 in Lamarre, *Shadows on the Screen*.

- 43 Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*, 9.
- 44 Tanizaki, "The Mermaid's Lament," 45–46.
- 45 Tanizaki, "Dokutan," *TJZ* 3: 243–44.
- 46 Tanizaki, "Miscellaneous Observations on Cinema," 120–21.
- 47 Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*, 43.
- 48 Tanizaki, "The Present and Future of Moving Pictures," 68.

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