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mon Japon: the revue theater as a technology of Japanese imperialism

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[T]he greatest drama . . . is . . . war itself. The greatest theatre is the theatre of war. [Dana 1943:5]

[T]he colonial policy of Orientals in dealing with Orientals is a unique feature in the study of the general subject. [Asami 1924:1]

To view those who are in essence unequal as if they were equal is in itself inequitable. To treat those who are unequal unequally is to realize equality. [*Yamato minzoku o chûkaku to suru sekai seisaku no kentô* (An investigation of global policy with the Yamato race as nucleus) 1943, as cited in Dower 1986:264, 357]

introduction: performing imperialism

To global ports. Onward! To global markets
So thrilling, made in Japan
Onward! To the Seven Seas
Onward! Japanese commerce
So thrilling, made in Japan
Spirits soar: maritime patriotism
Our flag waves in ports around the world
Announcing, this is our Japan
And inviting Japanese trade
Our made in Japan
The less advanced
Will join with us
To revive their trade
Our fortune is lucky for those lacking foreign currency. [*Sekai no ichiba* 1941:70–71]

“Made in Japan” is an expression that has been associated in the United States with many contradictory images over the past 50 years, from inexpensive merchandise in the 1950s to superior manufactures from the 1970s onward. It was also the signature song in a popular Japanese musical (of the same name) about foreign trade staged in 1941 at the height of Japanese imperialist aggression in Asia. The 16-scene production, performed by the celebrated all-female Takarazuka Revue, opened with a swinging “money dance” on a set decorated with large-scale

In this article I examine the role of the montage-like revue theater in dramatizing and aestheticizing Japanese imperial ideology in the first half of this century. The all-female Takarazuka Revue serves as an organizing framework for exploring the general pattern of theater-state relations during this time. I review intersections of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and nationalism on and off the revue stage together with the specific Japanese orientalism informing the imperialist project and the formation of national identity. As a technology of imperialism, the revue theater helped to bridge the gap between perceptions of colonized others and actual colonial encounters; it was one way of linking imperialist fantasies and colonial realities. [theater, imperialism, colonialism, orientalism, gender ideology, ethnicity, Japan]

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copies of the currencies of eight countries. A chorus followed with the prosaic song “Made in Japan” (“Meido in nippon”), cited in translation above, which celebrates the expansion of Japanese trade into global markets and alludes to Japanese colonialism in such “underdeveloped” areas as Micronesia, a Japanese mandate since 1919. The show earned glowing newspaper reviews:

Ingenuously punctuated with pathos, comedy, and embellished with well-worked out gags, [*Made in Japan*] . . . depicts the silk, porcelain ware, musical instruments, bicycles, and other representative manufactured goods of the Island Empire—and that in a remarkably artistic way. . . .

As an added feature of the revue, scores of born-in-Nippon girls play made-in-Nippon violins, accordions, and organs on the stage. [Matsumoto 1941b]

In a spirited display of imperialist scopophilia, the revue also linked together a Tyrolean clock scene, a view of “bicyclists on an Annamese street,” a “pathetic romance” set in Mexico, a “rather weird” Thai dance, a “graceful” Indian dance, and a “lively” Argentine tango (Matsumoto 1941b).

The revue *Made in Japan*¹ alerts us to the role of theater as a technology of Japanese imperialism. Perhaps because the affective, aesthetic, and cultural dimensions of Japanese imperialism have been much more neglected relative to the bureaucratic, military, and political-economic dimensions, the mainstream historiographical consensus is that “imperialism never became a very important part of the [Japanese] national consciousness” and that “[t]here were no Japanese Kiplings, there was little popular mystique about Japanese overlordship and relatively little national self-congratulation” (Jansen 1984:76). In my consideration of the relationship between theater and imperialism I focus precisely on the affective, cultural dimensions of that expansionist project. An abundance of archival and dramaturgical evidence suggests that the mainstream consensus is premature; theater, for one, was deployed as a powerful agent in shaping and mobilizing popular attitudes about colonial subjects and the superiority of Japanese culture.² Japanese ideologues and impresarios were no different than their counterparts in Germany, Italy, Russia, and the United States in manipulating the relationship between entertainment and social engineering.

What was the general pattern of theater-state relations during the wartime years (specifically, 1931–45)? In exploring this question together with the ideological operations of theater, I will employ the all-female Takarazuka Revue as an organizing framework reasons elaborated below.

Founded in 1913 by Kobayashi Ichizō—a businessman, impresario, and onetime Cabinet minister—the enormously popular Takarazuka Revue was utilized by the state as a vehicle for disseminating and enacting a vision of co-prosperity.³ This vision was premised on a doctrine of assimilation (*dōka*, literally: same-ization) or Japanization (*nipponka*) that, by the 1930s, was a central issue in Japanese colonial affairs.⁴ It will be helpful here to digress briefly on this point. Infused with a Confucian morality, the rhetoric of assimilation equated Japanese expansion in the Pacific with a mission to civilize and “equalize”—as defined in the epigraph—the peoples of Asia (see also Takagi Hiroshi 1993 on the wartime assimilation of Ainu, an “aboriginal” people in northern Japan). The assertion that the Japanese imperial household was the source of the Japanese “race” and the emperor was the head of the nation further distinguished Pan-Asianist ideas on assimilation.

The origins of the Japanese race were held to be mystically linked to the Imperial house and thus to constitute an Imperial “family,” a principle which could be extended outward to include new populations brought under Japanese dominion, so that these too could become “imperial peoples” (*kōmin*). [Peattie 1984a:97]

In general, the proposition that colonized peoples were capable of “becoming Japanese” was contingent on their outward Japanization:

Concerned primarily with the problem of control, the Japanese colonial bureaucrat was delighted with programs which induced Taiwanese, Koreans, Chinese, and Micronesians to speak Japanese, live in

Japanese style houses, dress in modern Japanese (Western) clothing, and reinforce their physical identity with the ruling elite. [Peattie 1984a:100]

In the prevailing Japanese colonialist rhetoric assimilation did not imply an end state, that is, the emergence of “new” Japanese, with the “same claims to liberties and economic opportunities as the citizens of metropolitan Japan” (Peattie 1984b:40; see also 1984a:96–104). Rather, assimilation was both a compelling theory and a fundamentally ambiguous and contradictory process. On the one hand, attempts were made to remold colonial peoples as “Japanese” in outward appearance and behavior. On the other hand, assimilation ultimately defined a process whereby, as a strategy of colonial domination and control, the Japanese nation assumed a protean character capable of absorbing, reappropriating, and thus neutralizing cultural difference. The ambiguous referent of assimilation is especially evident in wartime theatrical productions.⁵

The relationship between the revue theater and the state was more a matter of mutual convenience and opportunism than of seamless consensus or total state control over forms of popular entertainment. As I elaborate below, the usefulness of Takarazuka in creating a vision of a global hierarchy headed by Japan, according to which all nations and races would assume their “proper place,” was linked to the symbolic ambivalence of the all-female theater and to the structure of the revue form itself. Revues consisted of a montage-like display and concatenation of different, even contradictory, images, lands, settings, peoples, and scenarios as a means of shaping and reshaping popular and national consciousness. Even as Japanese colonial policy was erasing the cultural difference embodied by colonial subjects, Takarazuka actors were recuperating that difference through wartime dramas designed to familiarize the public with the vast range of geographical and cultural difference contained and redefined by the Japanese Empire.

Conceived in part as a novel inversion of the all-male Kabuki theater, Takarazuka revues include Japanese-style classical dramas and historical subjects, such as the *Tale of Genji*, European-style and Broadway-based performances, such as *Mon Paris* and *West Side Story*, and folk dances from all over the world. It appears that, with the exception of wartime revues, contemporary Japan and Japanese were not, and are not now, objectified on the Takarazuka stage. Generally speaking, it was during the 1930s and 1940s that presentist plays were staged, that is, plays dealing with the then-present (emergency) situation (*jikyoku engeki*). Most of the wartime revues produced were about military policies and exigencies, such as the “southward advance” (e.g., *Saipan-Palau: Our South Seas* [*Saipan-parao: Waga nan'yō*], 1940), immigration to Manchuria (e.g., *When Spring Orchids Bloom* [*Shunran hiraku koro*], 1941), patriotic college students (e.g., *College Students of a Military Nation* [*Gunkoku daigakusei*], 1939), and battlefield casualties (e.g., *Navy Hospital* [*Kaigun byōin*], 1940).

The Takarasiennes, as the revue’s actors were nicknamed, included *otokoyaku*, men’s role players, and *musumeyaku*, women’s role players (see Figure 1).⁶ Like the Kabuki actors before them, the cross-dressed women clinched the popular appeal of the revue among a very broad, multigenerational, mixed-sex audience. The oppositional construction of gender was refracted through the Takarasiennes, who embodied the eroticized tension between sexual and gender transgression and repression (Robertson 1992a, 1992b; cf. Theweleit 1989[1978]:330).⁷ This tension was significant in the history of Japanese popular theater and was a main factor in the Tokugawa Shogunate’s 1629 prohibition of “women’s Kabuki” and in the proscriptions on cross-status sexual relations among male Kabuki actors and their patrons (see Schalow 1990; Shively 1970[1968]). It was also a significant component of the “libidinal economy” underlying Japanese nationalism and imperialism (cf. Parker et al. 1992), and was realized metaphorically in the homologous relationship between cross-dressing and what I call “cross-ethnicking.”⁸ Just as gender was constructed on the basis of contrastive physical and behavioral stereotypes about females and males, so, too, ethnicity was constructed based on reified images of “us” and



Figure 1. The Takarazuka Revue. A scene from the 1936 revue *Rosarita* (*Rosarita*). (Photograph from Hagiwara 1954:13.)

“them.” In addition to “doing” a wide range of men and women, the Takarazuka actors also embody and perform non-Japanese characters of diverse national and ethnic backgrounds. One aspect of the revue’s erotic allure that paralleled the colonial project was the process of locating and containing the gendered or ethnically marked other within, and thereby assimilating it—but sometimes purging parts of it, as we shall see (cf. Bhabha 1983; Gilman 1985:14–35; Pease 1991; Pickering 1991; Renov 1991).

This is an appropriate moment for an elaboration of the specifically Japanese “orientalism” that characterized both colonial policy and revues built around the theme of Japanese cultural superiority and military supremacy. Orientalism is now a familiar component of anthropological discourse and needs no detailed introduction here. Recently scholars have effectively criticized the more monolithic and totalizing aspects of Edward Said’s (1979[1978]) initial formulation of Orientalism, arguing that the rubric glosses the messy knots of textual, imperial, social, historical, and cultural practices and discursive formations that constitute international relations (see Lowe 1991; see also Carrier 1992; Clifford 1988). Critical reappraisals of Orientalism presented in the guise of Western self-critique nevertheless retain an asymmetrical relationship between “East” and “West,” and, ironically, both further privilege Euro-American intellectual and theoretical trends as universal and obfuscate and neutralize the histories and legacies of non-Western imperialisms and associated “othering” practices.

Generally speaking the recognition of multiple Euro-American Orientalisms (cf. Lowe 1991) has not translated into an activated awareness of “the third world” as more than a singular formation defined in terms of its experience of colonialism and imperialism (Ahmad 1986:5). Japan, which was not colonized by Euro-American powers but was itself a colonizer, complicates the critique of Orientalism and the oppositional construction of “the third world,” which does not exist as an internally coherent entity. Japan remains unmarked as a colonizer in

Euro-American, but not Asian, eyes. Although “Japan” may have been appropriated by “the West’s” orientalizing impulse, evident in literature ranging from Victorian travelogues to Roland Barthes’s *Empire of Signs* (1980), Japanese wartime ideologues were no less adept at creating various orientalist schemata to rationalize and aestheticize their imperialist claims in the Pacific.

When referring to Japanese representational practices I therefore use *orientalism* in its lowercase form to distinguish it from Said’s specific definition of Orientalism as a product of “the West’s” presentation of the “other” (the non-West) as “absolutely different” from the West. In this way the concept is rendered available as a useful processual theory of oppositional, essentialized constructions that work to intensify a dominant cultural or national image by dramatizing the “distance and difference between what is closer to it and what is far away” (Said 1979[1978]:55).⁹ Orientalism in this generic sense has been deployed since the late 19th century by influential Japanese historians and ideologues in two apparently contradictory but actually mutually constitutive ways: to present *the Japanese* as culturally superior to other Asian peoples, and/or to claim an essential, mystifying uniqueness that distinguishes Japan from nation-states perceived as comparable in industrial and military power (i.e., the West) (cf. Tanaka 1993). Some scholars have even argued that Japanese orientalism was so totalizing that it obviated the need for the concomitant deployment of an equally evolved Japanese occidentalism in order to dramatize and allegorize cultural difference.¹⁰ The widest line of difference was drawn not between Japan and the West, but between Japan and the rest of the world.

The Euro-American influenced revue was an ambiguous and unstable symbol of, and for, the New Japan, as the imperial nation-state was called. On the one hand the New Japan was an imagined community constructed from select artifacts of Western material culture, a nation whose Western inflections would allow it to withstand the encroachments of European and American powers (cf. Feuerwerker 1989). On the other hand the New Japan was both the legacy of, and repository for, the products of Asia’s ancient cultural histories, and bore the burden of salvaging Asia for the Asians.

Figure 2 provides a striking illustration of Japanese wartime orientalizing (please refer to the caption), and this article presents others in the context of theater performances. I should note, in conjunction with Figure 2, that the gender politics informing Japanese orientalism did not simply invert the Eurocentric categorization of the East as feminine and the West as masculine. Rather, the deployment of gender was adapted to extenuating circumstances. When the martial spirit of the Japanese was at issue, the West and Western material culture were cast as feminine and feminizing and, by the same token, as unmanly and emasculating. On the other hand the nation was sometimes represented as feminine when the superior cultural sensibility of the Japanese was emphasized. As a discourse of comparative otherness, Japanese orientalism was activated through the wartime mass media and popular entertainment fora with the catalytic effect of enabling a broad spectrum of Japanese to think that they were familiar with, knowledgeable about, and superior to manifold cultures, European and Asian alike.

colonialism as theater, theater as colonialism

If orientalism was the theory informing the representation of colonized Asian peoples, Japanization was the colonial practice. Although I have limited the scope of this article to the use of theater as a technology of Japanese imperialism, it is also useful to consider briefly the implicit theatricality of the colonialist project.

A newspaper photograph published in 1943 (see Figure 3) depicts a group of Japanese soldiers stationed in Burma performing the “East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere South Seas Dance” (*Tôa kyôeiken nan’yô odorî*).¹¹ They appear as caricatures of South Sea Islanders brandishing spears and dressed in grass skirts and paper crowns. One soldier-native pounds on a drum. The South Sea islands were incorporated into Japan’s southward advance (*nanshin*), an early imperialist



Figure 2. "Person of the Southern Region." This cartoon appeared in *Osaka Puck* in December 1942 as part of a before-and-after sequence depicting Asia under Western domination and after Japanese liberation. It reveals many of the ways the Japanese signified their superiority vis-à-vis other Asians. Here the familiar purifying sun (labeled "Co-Prospity Sphere") beams down on Indonesia, driving out the Dutch, while the Japanese hand—symbolizing a larger-than-life patriarch—clasps the native's. The Japanese hand is far lighter in color than the dark-skinned native's, and a modern (Western) jacket cuff is evident, whereas the "southern person," obviously a manual laborer, is half-naked and implicitly half-civilized. His inferior "proper place" as a race, nation, and culture is absolutely clear, as is his subordinate role in the division of labor within the Greater East Asia Co-Prospity Sphere (adapted from Dower 1986:200). The Netherlands is personified disparagingly as a woman in the archetype of traditional Dutch attire, including wooden clogs, holding a lantern whose light is nearly extinguished by the advance of Japan into the former Dutch colony. Whereas the subjugated Indonesians are reduced to the image of a sarong-clad laborer, the Dutch, an enemy of equal status and power, are feminized in the zero-sum game of sex/gender polarity exaggerated in military-imperial ideology. (Photograph from Dower 1986:200.)

impulse that gained momentum in 1919, when, under the Versailles Peace Treaty, Japan gained the Micronesian islands formerly held by Germany (see Peattie 1988).

This performance of cross-ethnicning complemented and overlapped with the cross-dressing that constitutes a little studied but probably significant form of Japanese "soldier show" entertainment. Inspired by both memories of the revue and Kabuki theaters and by overseas tours made by Takarazuka and its contemporaries, frontline soldiers staged shows in which some of them performed as women. In one recorded case, the cross-dressed soldier was the biggest attraction: "she" was hugged, kissed, and had "her" dress lifted by the other men (Kamura 1984:121–122; also Maruki 1930).¹² Whereas state-sponsored wartime prostitution (the so-called comfort women) paralleled mainstream sexual power relations, those same relations were exaggerated and parodied in the military's transvestite revues, in which women were



Figure 3. A newspaper photograph published in 1943 of a group of Japanese soldiers in Burma performing the “East Asia Co-Prospersity Sphere South Seas Dance.” (Photograph from Hosokawa 1992:146.)

erotically reappropriated as male-to-male sexual play (see Maruki 1930 on homosexual practices among Japanese soldiers).

Military strategy afforded an easy transition from costume to camouflage: one of the more thespian tactics used by the Japanese in invading Malaya involved dressing their soldiers as Malays to confuse British troops (Hall 1981[1955]:859). This tactic was premised as much on the close relationship between camouflage and makeshift entertainment as on the Japanese belief that the British were unable to distinguish among Asian peoples.

A final example of the theatricality of colonialism comes from Indonesia. The stage was set in March 1942 for the induction of Indonesia into the Greater East Asia Co-Prospersity Sphere with the dismantlement of the Dutch regime and the reorganization and centralization of local, regional, and governmental administrative apparatuses under Japanese military command. One of the fundamental objectives of the Co-Prospersity Sphere policy in Indonesia was to eliminate as quickly as possible all European and American influence. The Japanese pursued cultural hegemony by the removing Dutch colonial monuments; replacing the Western calendar with the wartime Japanese one, including public holidays; renaming buildings, places, streets, squares, cities, and islands in Japanese; and the compulsory study of Japanese, which was further mandated through the reform of the education system, press control and censorship, and the use of radios, loudspeakers, films, photographs, music, and theatrical performances. Artists were required to join a “cultural corporation” that regulated the production of orientalist works and “native” arts (Aziz 1955:174–177; Kurasawa 1991). My point here is not to inventory and measure the effectiveness of the cultural policies implemented throughout the Japanese Empire, but simply to highlight the practice of assimilation qua Japanization.¹³ Indonesia, along with other areas under Japanese domination, was conceptualized as a newly constructed stage fitted with Japanese sets and backdrops on which native actors would speak their lines in Japanese and perform their lives as if they were Japanese.

Meanwhile in Japan, as I discuss below, Indonesians, Chinese, Micronesians, Germans, Italians, and other colonized peoples and imperial allies were represented by Takarazuka actors enacting a fantastical vision of empire.¹⁴ The Japanese folktale “Peach Boy” (“Momotarô”), for example, was adapted to both Takarazuka and local theaters throughout the Japanese Empire.¹⁵ The wartime version of the story was about a miraculous Japanese boy who recruited a retinue of loyal followers from Indonesia, China, and the Philippines to help free Japan and Asia from American and European ogres (Dower 1986:253, 356). On a subtextual level “Peach Boy” articulates the ambiguity of Japan as an anticolonial colonizer.

Although colonialism possesses a dramaturgy of its own, it cannot be reduced to theater. Theater, however, can and did expand the affective reach of colonialism (cf. Bratton et al. 1991). The Japanese cultural administrators appreciated theater as the preeminent mass medium, capable of providing a form of topical news show in which images and events, foreign places and peoples were “authentically” recreated and recaptured (Holder 1991:135). These administrators were deeply influenced by their counterparts in the Allied and the Axis countries, and many articles on the American Federal Theater Project and on Bolshevik, fascist, and Nazi uses of theater were published in leading theater journals (Iizuka 1941:52; see also Dana 1943; de Grazia 1981; Stourac and McCreery 1986; White 1990; Zortman 1984).¹⁶ Colonial administrators and state ideologues regarded theater as far more effective a didactic medium than cinema (Endô 1943:1). They recognized theater not only as a means of organizing and rationalizing the leisure of soldiers and subjects but also as the art of “claiming the people” (cf. Dana 1943; de Grazia 1981; Schnapp 1993; Tsuchiya 1985:100, 97, 104). The simultaneous interaction in theater of characters in a play, and of performers and spectators, produces a “performance consciousness” or a collective imaginary capacity to engage in the construction of potential worlds. The potential or possible worlds encountered in the performance are transmitted by the audience into the wider—“real”—sociopolitical world in ways which may influence subsequent action (Kershaw 1992:25–29). The Japanese wartime state was especially interested in securing a link between the New World Order (*seikai shinchitsujō*) and the potential world conjured by the theater (cf. Endô 1943:1).

intermission: from *mon Paris* to mon Japan

Well before Takarazuka and the theater world in general fell under state supervision, many of the revue’s performances were informed by a belief in the imperial prerogatives of the Japanese people. The 1927 revue *Mon Paris* (*Mon pari*) provoked a new discourse in Japan on the entertaining, didactic, and ideological possibilities of the revue form.¹⁷ Written by Kishida Tatsuya, one of Takarazuka’s leading playwrights, *Mon Paris* is generally recognized as Japan’s premier revue. It was revived in 1947 and again in 1957, and its elements have been incorporated into countless programs since its debut.

Mon Paris consisted of a panoramic sequence of vignettes inspired by Kishida’s travels through Asia and Europe the previous year. Most of the 16 scenes were orientalist fantasies set in China, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and Egypt—“exotic countries” through which the protagonist Kishida passed on his way to Paris (Shirai 1947:17; *Waga pari yo* 1927).

The 1947 version of *Mon Paris* is less a revival than a whole new revue, in both senses of the word: a theatrical form and a retrospective. Kishida remarks that “thanks to the Allies” the past (read: the former Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere) is accessible to the Japanese as a zone of fun and adventure: “Everyone here can come on board and travel to Paris with us” (*Mon pari* 1948:11). But although immediate postwar Japan was portrayed as a radically changed society, socially and politically, the countries through which Kishida and his party traveled en route to Paris had not changed; the orientalist stereotype of a static, “primitive” Asia employed in the original *Mon Paris* remained unchallenged. For example, China again was represented as

teeming with “bandits”—by 1947 a code word for communists—from whom Kushida rescues a feudal landlord’s daughter.

Several days after the China episode the travelers arrived in Ceylon and attended a religious ceremony performed at the Temple of the Tooth in the town of Kandy.¹⁸ There, lotus-flower vendors danced gracefully before Buddhist sculptures that “came alive” momentarily to the sounds of swing music. The original *Mon Paris* included a subsequent scene in which Kushida cavorted with an “Indian mermaid” (Shirai 1947:17; *Waga pari yo* 1927:26).

On to Egypt, where the Japanese travelers toured the “pyramids, sphinx, and vestiges of Egypt’s 5,000 year history” (*Mon pari* 1948:14–15). The audience was then treated to an enactment of an “ancient Egyptian story” dreamed by Kushida (1948:14–15). Among the “Orientals” featured in the dream sequence were a Cleopatra-like queen, her son the prince, manifold female attendants, grand chamberlains, and an evil sorceress from Libya who appeared and disappeared in a cloud of smoke, snickering “*ihehehe*.” In short, Asia—the Orient—existed in a timeless vacuum: Egypt was a realm of magic and mystery; Sri Lanka was populated by pious natives who lived and breathed Buddhist ritual; China was feudal and lawless.

Paris, on the other hand, was portrayed as a marvel of modern, urban technology. Soaking up the Parisian ambience of the lively, bustling, tree-lined boulevards, the characters profess, as they did in the 1927 version, that “Japan has much to learn from the West” (1948:15). Kushida and a friend decide to see a revue—and what else is playing in Paris but *Mon Paris*! Kushida declares, “[French revues] are nothing like Takarazuka, but let’s go and see it anyway” (1948:16). In an assimilationist moment, he notes that both Paris and France as a whole resemble Takarazuka, which is described as “everyone’s beautiful, enchanted country; a country of dreams smoldering since childhood” (1948:16). Kushida even refers to Takarazuka as the main household (*honke*) of the revue theater (1948:16).

The *Mon Paris* revision of theater history makes a uniformitarian claim for the Japaneseness of the revue form and recalls the boundary-collapsing rhetoric of the paternalistic “family state system” that infused Co-Prosperity Sphere doctrine. In the revue Takarazuka and Japan are distanced from the rest of “sleeping Asia” and positioned within European modernity. Also significant is the depiction of Takarazuka as a dreamland. Kobayashi had in fact named the entertainment complex “Paradise,” an image that continues to be emphasized in the revue’s public relations literature.

Imperial dreams were the thread out of which many wartime revues were spun. In *Mongol* (*Mongôru* 1941), for example, the first revue in Takarazuka’s Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity series, Mongolia is called the “land of dreams” (*yume no kuni*). This dreamland status was achieved, two characters remind the audience, under Japanese guidance, whereby vast resources such as coal and animal pelts were being developed for export to North China and Japan (*Mongôru* 1941:60, 63–64).

The protagonists in *Mon Paris* travel to Paris by train and ocean liner. The railroad is a particularly important framing device in *Mon Paris* and other revues, particularly those staged during the wartime period. It is employed as a metaphor of nation, empire, and progress. In addition to a railroad’s Taylorist qualities, geostrategists in Europe and Japan were well aware of the “capacity of railroads for absorbing small states into empires” (Robinson 1991:1). The South Manchuria Railway Company, for example, has been described as “having the appearance of a commercial company but really functioning as an organization for the [Japanese] state to carry out colonial rule and colonization” (Myers 1989:118–119). The Takarazuka Revue, on the other hand, was a commercial company that the state was keen on harnessing to help carry out the imperial project at home and abroad.

The two companies converged in another Kishida-authored revue, *From Manchuria to North China* (*Manshû yori hokushi e*, 1938), that, like *Mon Paris*, was described as a “stage version

of a travelogue . . . intended to make the audience more conscious of the prevailing conditions in Manchuria and North China,” where a full-scale war between the Chinese and Japanese had erupted in 1937 (Matsumoto 1938).¹⁹ Incorporated into the revue was “a motion picture showing South Manchuria Railway’s famed streamlined limited express speed across the wilderness and fast developing regions of Manchuria” (Matsumoto 1938).

Train travel epitomizes the montage-like form of the revue in that space and time, geography and history, are compressed: the locomotive signifies a civilizing, modernizing force and allows travelers a view of its antithesis, namely, “natural” landscapes and “primitive” and “traditional” practices. The Takarazuka Revue, which continues to operate under the aegis of the Hankyū railroad and department store conglomerate, celebrated and capitalized on the form, function, and ideology of the railroad. Kobayashi initially developed the theater and entertainment complex in part to increase passenger service on his train line connecting Takarazuka with Osaka. Train travel in general increased from 1927 onward, and domestic tourism was promoted enthusiastically by the railroad ministry as a form of organized recreation capable of linking the periphery to the center (Takaoka 1993).²⁰

On one level, *Mon Paris* was an allegory about the Japanese people moving forward in unison. Significantly, the “train dance” (*kisha odori*) was introduced to Japanese audiences in the 1927 production of the revue (see Figure 4).²¹ On another level, *Mon Paris* was a traveling exhibition in which global sights/sites were brought to local audiences. The metaphor of the railroad linked domestic strategies of mobilization with imperialist expansion and control. It also signified the containment of the global by the local, and, within Japan, the absorption of the local by the state. The image was one of Japanese people moving forward in mechanical unison, and the principal goal of the “train” was to keep itself moving and absorbing. No mere steam engine, this; this train was the Japanese Empire.

siting theater

A review of the concept and process of theater informing this article is in order at this juncture. I follow Erika Fischer-Lichte in defining theater as a cultural system that generates meaning in the moment of its performance. An important ontological feature of theater is the dialectical



Figure 4. The “train dance” from the 1927 production of *Mon Paris*. The “train” consists of a row of 23 actors, legs extended, in two-tone top hats and tuxedos linked hand-on-elbow so as resemble the axle of a chugging steam engine. The legs of their white trousers are decorated with three wheels to capture the effect of locomotion. Kushida, the protagonist, is clutching a carpet bag and umbrella in his left hand and grasping the right shoulder of the last “wheel” with his right. The “train” is leaving Marseilles for Paris; it reappears in the last scene when Kushida reminds the audience that he has overseen their safe arrival in Paris and bids them good cheer (*Waga pari yo* 1927:30–31). (Photograph from Hashimoto 1988:18.)

relationship between, minimally, a spectator and an actor (and, implicitly, a character). Without an audience, there is no performance. Theater by definition is thus a public event; the production and reception of a theater performance are synchronous (Fisher-Lichte 1992[1983]:1–10; McConachie and Friedman 1985:7). Regardless of how many times a play is performed, each occasion constitutes a uniquely configured event since, unlike cinema, subsequent shows are not—and cannot be—formally identical. As in the dynamics of everyday life, the transitoriness of theatrical performance in conjunction with the mutually constitutive relationship between actors and audiences means that the meanings generated both within and across performances are inherently unstable. There is no guarantee that the meanings communicated by an actor in character, much less in a script, will be the meanings construed by members of an audience. In fact the history of the Takarazuka Revue has been characterized by a tension between the dominant text of a performance and the subtexts generated by it. As we shall see, theater reformers and Japanese state ideologues grappled with the problem of how to measure and control the performance efficacy of wartime theatrical productions.

From this theoretical position we are able to move beyond the simple notion that theater passively mirrors social reality and to recognize the role of the medium in legitimating and delegitimizing certain forms of social interaction—forms that, in turn, may have their own impact on initiating, reinforcing, and ultimately altering theatrical events (McConachie 1985:17). I will never know firsthand the dialectical dynamics of the revues I cite and analyze. Instead, I must rely on scripts, photographs, critical reviews, memoirs, fan letters and literature, government policies, and other sources to explore the places, purposes, receptions, and efficacies of the revue theater in wartime Japan. Admittedly, it is more difficult to account for instances of resistance occasioned by theater not categorized as agitprop, although such can be inferred from reading between the lines of official policies and regulations and from the occasional documented case.

In Japan, the wartime revue theater generated subtexts that maintained the uncertainty of popular consent for militarization and imperialism.²² Assuming that dominant ideologies themselves are potentially unstable and never totally effective, it was in the state's interest to allow some of the subtexts to surface some of the time, a practice tantamount to an affective approach to social control. For example, state censors did not favor shows that presented the Allied countries in a less than critical light, although shows with foreign settings produced in the name of the Axis Alliance, Japan's southward advance, or East Asian (*tōa*) development, and so forth, were lauded. Whenever a seemingly pro-American element was included in a revue, the indiscretion was quickly criticized in the newspapers even though the production was allowed to continue its run. Thus, in reviewing the 15-scene play *The Navy* (*Kaigun*, 1943), staged with the support of the Navy Ministry to celebrate Navy Day, a critic made the following comments about the "musical side of the play":

[O]ne would find [*The Navy*] to be quite entertaining except for the inclusion of "Aloha Oe." One fails to understand the reason why the management has chosen this song of enemy character, especially at this time when the national drive is going on for eliminating the tunes of hostile states. [Matsumoto 1943a]

Given that "Aloha Oe" was among the 60 or so Hawaiian (i.e., enemy) songs banned by government censors (Hosokawa 1994:62), the inclusion of the tune in *The Navy* could be interpreted as a sign of the persistent resilience of popular cultural formations backed in part by private enterprise.²³ The conflict pitted the commercial success of Hawaiian music in Japan against the military's perception that the "effeminacy" of "exotic tunes" weakened the people's fighting spirit, even though a number of Hawaiian-style tunes eulogized Japanese imperial expansion. These included "Manchurian Snowstorm" ("Manshū fubuki," 1936) and "From a Cup of Coffee" ("Ippai no kōhī kara," 1939), which presented drinking coffee as analogous to the touristic possession of Java (the latter being represented as a young woman) (Hosokawa 1994:59–61).²⁴

The tension between text and subtext was also mediated through the architectural units of the theater that were employed to enhance the dialogical and dialectical character of performances. Wartime revues were especially illustrative of this synthesis, which was facilitated by the historical relationship in the Kabuki theater between stage and auditorium, a relationship adopted by the Takarazuka Revue—despite its Western veneer—and characterized by audience-centered performances. Structurally, intimacy in the revue is achieved above all through the use of a detached apron stage known as the “silver bridge” (*gingyô*), introduced as a permanent fixture in 1931. The “silver bridge” serves to integrate the audience with the staged activity, a function that follows from the primary impulse of Kabuki theater architecture to move the actor toward the audience and to create a focal center of performance in the midst of the audience (Ernst 1956:65, 104).²⁵

During the 1930s and 1940s, the combination of presentist plays and interactive theater space theoretically incorporated the viewers into the staged scenarios, interpellating them as agents of the New Japan. The Takarazuka Revue as a whole was positioned by Kobayashi as a bridge between the larger sociopolitical order and an idealized vision of the Co-Prosperity Sphere.²⁶ Moreover, Takarazuka functioned as a “traveling bridge” as mobile troupes of Takarasiennes were dispatched in the late 1930s to factories, farm villages, hospitals, and even war fronts throughout China, Korea, and Manchuria to provide civilians and soldiers with “wholesome entertainment” (*kenzen na goraku*) and to weave together symbolically the disparate parts of the Japanese Empire (Matsumoto 1939; *Shasetsu: engeki bunka to engekihô* 1942; Takagi Shin’ichi 1942; Toita 1956[1950]:250–252; Uemoto 1941).²⁷ Later, in 1941, the state pressured commercial theaters to organize the mobile troupes under the auspices of a national federation.²⁸

revue theater as montage

Japanese avant-garde intellectuals called the 1930s the “revue age” (*rebyû no jidai*). It was an age of things “mass”—mass production, mass consumption, mass entertainment, mass mobilization, and, in the context of imperialism, mass assimilation. Kobayashi often boasted that the main theater in Takarazuka was the ultimate “mass theater” (*taishû engeki*) in Japan. A conservative estimate of the total annual number of spectators at both the original Takarazuka and Tokyo Takarazuka theaters in the wartime period produces a figure of several millions, a significant audience that, in the eyes of the state, could not remain unclaimed.

Kobayashi’s profit-oriented, commercial interest in organizing and rationalizing leisure and entertainment overlapped with the state’s interest in the same forms of social management. Ever the opportunist, Kobayashi promoted Takarazuka as the dramatic equivalent of the New Japan. Takarazuka, he proclaimed, represented a break with the past and captured the modern zeitgeist of the 20th century (Kobayashi 1967:130–131). Kabuki, in contrast, was an “antique” (*koten*) theater whose “pathetic shamisen melodies did not resonate with the spirit of the times” (1967:130).

Kobayashi’s enthusiasm for the revue form and its manifold social, economic, and political possibilities was not shared by many of his contemporaries, who regarded the 350-year-old Kabuki theater as a cultural artifact in which they could admire the past and recognize themselves as a nation. Although they recognized the class-cutting popularity and “awesome commercial appeal” of the Takarazuka Revue and were impressed by both the disciplined actors and the rationality of Kobayashi’s production methods, they dismissed the revue form itself as “devoid of content,” as “a fad . . . that, like people’s lives today, is superficial, intuitive, divorced from tradition, and without systematicness” (Iizuka 1941:65, 66, 68–69). Whereas Kobayashi gave Takarazuka the positive valence of signifying the differentiation of Japan—a unique hybrid

culture—from Asia and the world, his critics placed a negative valence on the revue as signifying the Westernization and thus the corruption of Japan.

The “revue age” was described by the intellectual avant-garde as

[A]n age not of systematically argued essays, but of critical commentaries (*hyōron*) that capture [and generalize from] essential points. Today’s aesthetic is represented not by the stable order of the classics, but by disorder and chaos. Consequently, the [mental] weapon (*buki*) of choice is not deductive logic (*en’eki*), it is induction (*kinō*). [Sasaki Norio, as cited in Sakata 1935:i].²⁹

The epistemological aesthetic of the “revue age” was also evident in the imperial state’s slogan, New World Order, shorthand for the liberation of Asia from Western imperialist powers and the consolidation of a new regional, and ultimately international, hierarchy headed by Japan. The New World Order signified a new chain of historical associations and newly historicized memories; a new system of cultural artifacts in the service of Imperial Japan. The revue theater was to serve the new order as an important proving ground where the composite image of New Japan could be crafted, displayed, and naturalized.

What were some of the salient characteristics of the revue form that the Japanese state found particularly useful? In keeping with its etymology, the “revue” theater represents a break from “the past”—that is, a break from a fixed, singular, canonical reading of events past and present. Like photomontage, the revue offered “completely new opportunities . . . for uncovering [and making] relationships, oppositions, transitions and intersections of social reality” (Joachim Büthe, as cited in Ollman 1991:34). The “performance efficacy” (Kershaw 1992) of montage, whether in photography or theater, is allegorical.³⁰ To work as allegory, montage necessarily requires the viewer’s or audience’s concatenation of the fragmented and juxtaposed images and scenarios.³¹ In the case of wartime revues such as *Made in Japan*, it was a common practice to call for a narrator, either an emcee or a character in a play, to venture out onto the “silver bridge” at regular intervals and synthesize the various dramatic elements for the viewers, thereby attempting to reduce the degree of slippage between the performance, its reception, and its lasting effects.

The genealogy-building capacity of the revue theater was acknowledged in a two-part article on the production and goals of wartime revues published in 1942 by a Takarazuka administrator in *Gendai Engeki*, an influential theater arts journal. The article defers to the state’s interest in exploiting theater as a cogent means of popularizing imperialism and Japanizing Asia:

The Japanese revue theater is best described as a cultural engineering corps, and, as such, has a role in teaching and guiding East Asian peoples. The Japanese revue must work toward purging from Asian cultures the bad influence of Euro-American revues which have all but eradicated local cultures with glorious histories spanning thousands of years. It is the responsibility of the Japanese to raise the standard of culture in East Asia; they [East Asians] are leaving that task to us. We must . . . pursue affirmative, spiritual ideals. The revue is a rich repository of cultural forms; [foreign] customs and manners must be incorporated into revues in order to capture the charm of ordinary people. The revue is a type of entertainment that can and will become deployed as war matériel (*gunjuhūin*). [Komatsu 1942:67]

The administrator provided an example of a hypothetical revue, *East Asian Bouquet* (*Tōa no hanataba*), inspired by the Greater East Asian theater of war. *East Asian Bouquet* was to present various colonized Asian nationals and ethnic groups and their cultures to Japanese audiences. The ten sequential scenes constituting the proposed revue were Japan, Manchuria, “New China,” French Indo-China, Thailand, Luzon, Burma, Malaya, Java (Bali), and a multiethnic finale (Komatsu 1942:65).³² The people involved in its production—lyricists, choreographers, costume designers, and so on—were to travel to the featured sites in order to recreate “authentic” local settings for their Japanese audiences (Komatsu 1942:65).

East Asian Bouquet may have been a hypothetical revue, but it accurately describes the conception, dramaturgical organization, and production of wartime revues in general. The Takarazuka staff in fact often traveled to the countries and colonies represented on stage to gather firsthand, culturally relevant material and ideas for their productions (Komatsu 1942:65;

Miyatake 1942). In addition to incorporating ethnographic data into their plays, the staff also wrote anthropological reports about the various cultural areas they visited; these were published in script anthologies. But although Takarazuka playwrights and directors claimed to recreate culturally specific practices, they sometimes resorted to staging eclectic, Pan-Asian spectacles, such as orchestrating Indonesian gamelan music and dances in plays set in Thailand (e.g., *Only One Ancestral Land [Tada hitotsu no sokoku]*, 1943, as cited in Matsumoto 1943b).

Likewise, the revue *Saipan-Palau: Our South Seas*, composed by a Takarazuka playwright following his research trip to the Japanese-mandated islands, was described in a newspaper review as a “potpourri of the delicacies of South America, Mexico, Spain, and [North] America” (Matsumoto 1940). The reviewer was less disturbed by the eclecticism of the spectacle than by the “mistake” the playwright made in musically representing native peoples who had neither dances nor tunes of their own (Matsumoto 1940). His assertion was, of course, erroneous and inconsistent with the well-documented ethnomusicological interests of Japanese colonialists and scholars in the South Seas since the turn of this century; some of their work was indeed used by Takarazuka playwrights (Peattie 1988; Tsubouchi Hakase Kinen Engeki Hakubutsukan 1932:482). Moreover, a South Seas cultural exhibition, sponsored by the South Seas Bureau (Nan’yôchô)—basically the Japanese colonial government in the South Seas—was staged at the main theater complex in Takarazuka to augment the ethnographic “infotainment” contained in the play (Hagiwara 1954:130). Such cultural exhibitions tended to be held in conjunction with revues set in areas of national interest to imperial Japan. The revue, and the Takarazuka complex as a whole, may have functioned as an archive, but on stage the concatenated fragments of cultural data often amounted to a fantastical vision of us-ness and (Japanese-inscribed) otherness. The Japanese audience was thereby able simultaneously to set itself apart from the rest of the world, and to recuperate the rest of the world within its collective imagination.

toward a state theater

The Japanese state acknowledged the social and political transformational power of drama and proposed several theater reform measures, including the centralization of theater groups in Japan and in the colonies. A Film Law enacted in 1939 set the precedent for a Theater Law formulated, but never formally legislated, two years later. This was not the first time that the state took the initiative to regulate theater performances. The Tokugawa Shogunate had monitored strictly the form and content of Kabuki, beginning with a ban on female actors in 1629 (Shively 1970[1968]). At the turn of this century the Meiji oligarchs may not have intervened directly, but they did pressure playwrights and directors to incorporate public morals into their dramas (Iizuka 1941:51). By the late 1930s and 1940s, however, the theater policies of Germany, Italy, Russia, and the United States were studied and adapted in an effort to claim the people through didactic entertainment that would catalyze the consolidation of a transcendent and unifying “citizens’ culture” (*kokumin bunka*). Theater, asserted one nationalist reformer, must become a “paragon of civic morality” (*kokumindôtoku to naru tehon*) that will turn audiences away from Westernism (i.e., individualism) and toward a collectivist New Japanism (Iizuka 1941:47, 50).

In an effort to “bring the theater to the people,” Ôyama Isao and Iizuka Tomoichirô, both prominent theater historians and critics, inaugurated the Citizens’ Theater Movement (*kokumin engeki undô*)³³ as a component of “cultural administration.” They recognized the influential reach and wide appeal of theater as a manipulable artifact of everyday life (Fuwa 1941:2). “Citizens’ theater” was defined as “a theater in which the spiritual essence of the [Japanese] people is expressed and nurtured” (Iizuka 1941:45; Ôyama 1941). The movement would facilitate the “advance of the Japanese race” (*nihon minzoku hatten*), a nationalist and imperialist agenda sanctioned by the military government (see Robertson 1991). As the epitome

of “wholesome entertainment,” citizens’ theater necessarily precluded dramas dealing with suicide, prostitution, and the grotesque, topics that were perceived to have a deleterious psychological effect on popular audiences (“*Shinjū no shibai kinshi* 1939; Terazawa 1943).

To a certain extent, the Citizens’ Theater Movement represented a viable but informal Theater Law, one that was to be implemented “spontaneously” and “voluntarily” by commercial theaters such as the Takarazuka Revue. Theater directors were required by the Ministry of Education to pass an examination to qualify for their profession. It was widely recognized that this prerequisite was a form of thought control (*shisō tōsei*); leftist or Westernized personnel were not welcome actors in the New Japan. Similarly, in a move designed to sever the ties between theater performances and uncensored theater criticism, the five main drama journals remaining after an earlier purge were consolidated in 1940 under one publisher and reissued under two titles over which the Cabinet Information Bureau exerted complete editorial control (Toita 1956[1950]:274–275).³⁴ These developments were matched by the state’s admonitions to Japanize mass entertainment.

Japanizing the theater

The Japanization of mass entertainment in Japan was homologous to the state’s Co-Prosperty Sphere agenda for Asia and the Pacific (*Asu no shōjo kageki* 1940; Toita 1956[1950]:243). Only *One Ancestral Land*,³⁵ for example, a revisionist allegory of the 1940 Thai offensive on Cambodia and Laos, illustrated the emphasis on Pan-Asian linkages, including the specious claim that Japanese and Thai were “blood relatives” who, moreover, shared a common Buddhist heritage (Reynolds 1991:94).³⁶ The Japanization of the theater also entailed, from September 1940 through April 1944, the government-mandated substitution of foreign loan words (especially English) with Japanese equivalents. Revue (*rebyū*) and opera (*opera*) were replaced with *kageki* and *ongakugeki*, and musical comedy (*myūjīkaru komedei*) with *kikageki*.³⁷ In addition, new categories of dramatic production were created to promote a paternalistic ethos of emergency-mindedness, such as “social welfare dance” (*kōsei buyō*); “citizens’ songs” (*koku-min kashō*); “mirror of women’s morality” (*fudō no kagami*); “culture dramas” (*bunka kageki*); and “onward, Japanese products” (*yuke nipponhin*) (Hagiwara 1954:240–243; Hashimoto 1993:51).³⁸

Advance! Naval Ensign (*Susume kaigunhata*), staged in 1941 with the support of the Navy Office, was “[i]ntended to make the public conscious of the importance of submarines in the defense of the Island Empire.” The play, one of the several multimedia “cinema-dramas” (*kinodorama*) produced at this time, included footage from a French motion picture to show “how a submarine submerges and rises” (Matsumoto 1941a; *Takarazuka eiga no senku* 1938). Other plays, such as *Made in Japan* and *Ears, Eyes, and Mouths* (*Mimi to me to kuchi to* 1941), included songs that emphasized, respectively, the virtues of recycling everything from old watches to cigarette butts (“to insure the production of superior airplanes”) and the necessity of antespionage precautions in everyday living (“for spies are lurking everywhere, in trains, buses, coffee shops, barber shops, public baths, and movie theaters”) (*Mimi to me to kuchi to* 1941:26; *Sekai no ichiba* 1941:77). The didactic purpose of the latter revue was underscored by an emcee who, from the “silver bridge,” explained the dominant, unequivocal meaning of the play, contextualized the episodes, and delivered axiomatic summaries for the audience.

The concept of Japanization also included the strategic effect that the Takarazuka Revue, for one, was to have on peoples subjected to some form of Japanese domination or direct colonial rule. One component of the revue’s Japanization policy involved having actual “natives” in the audience vouch for the cultural authenticity of a play set in their respective countries. Thus, the (Thai) director of the Thai Monopoly Bureau, who attended *Return to the East*, discussed below, declared publicly that “the stage sets, acting style, and choreography were redolent with the

aura of Thai culture . . . I felt as though I had actually returned to my country” (Takarazuka Kagekidan 1943:37).

orientalism: made in Japan

The symbolically titled revue *Return to the East* (*Higashi e kaeru*, 1942) was the second drama in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere series. The series reflected, in part, Kobayashi’s efforts as Minister of Commerce and Industry in the period 1940–41 to consolidate the newly conceived Co-Prosperity Sphere.³⁹ Based on a novel by a Thai official, *Return to the East* promoted a vision of a Japan-centered New World Order.⁴⁰

Briefly, the 15-scene play focuses on the short life of Rambha, the beautiful daughter of the deposed maharaja of Mirzapur in North India. Concerned for his infant daughter’s safety, the maharaja had entrusted her upbringing to his best friend, the Thai ambassador to France and his wife, and the girl, unaware of her royal lineage, was educated at an elite French school. (The play opens with a formal reception at the school.) When she comes of age, the ambassador recounts her biography and urges her to return to the East and devote her life to restoring her late father’s kingdom in Mirzapur. She travels to Japan, Thailand, and India in order to learn more about her ancestral domain and soon finalizes plans to transform Mirzapur into “a strong country like Japan” (*Higashi e kaeru* 1942:51).

While still a student in France, Rambha had fallen in love with Paul Roy, like her an “Oriental” (*tôyôjin*) but unlike her raised in a Bombay orphanage. Paul was later adopted by a wealthy Indian who moved to France where the boy was educated. The two teenagers shared a sense of alienation from their Asian roots and bemoaned the fact that they knew little about “the East.”

When she is bitten by a poisonous snake in Thailand Paul rushes to her side to spur her recovery. Rambha has already decided to choose her country over Paul, but just as she is about to break her decision to him, the two discover that they are siblings. Rambha, recovered and relieved, journeys to Mirzapur, which has been ravaged by a cholera epidemic, and, as planned, manages to win the heart of the current maharaja, Ravana, son of the usurper. She poisons the cruel Ravana and then commits suicide by swallowing poisoned tea. Paul ascends the throne as Bhumindra, the rightful maharaja of the now liberated Mirzapur (*Higashi e kaeru* 1942:40–68).

The intertwined themes of Western colonialism, patriotism, duty, imperialism, sibling incest, murder, and suicide form an allegory of Pan-Asian history and co-prosperity shared by Japan, Thailand, and India.⁴¹ The relationship between Rambha and Paul/Bhumindra is a beautified refraction of the hierarchical relationship between Asia and Japan. Rambha signifies the feminized orient whose duty is to clear the way of obstacles (read: Western imperialists and local anglophiles) in preparation for the emergence of a Pan-Asian New Order spearheaded by Japan. Like Paul and Rambha, Japan was orphaned from both Asia and the West and alienated from its Eastern roots. The nation, like Paul/Bhumindra, was able to regain its identity and preeminence through extreme sacrifices made by non-Japanese Asians who were part of the imperial family system. In this connection, *Return to the East* shares key motifs with the folktale “Peach Boy,” noted earlier. The review published in the Japanese press recommended that *Return to the East* be presented throughout Asia as well as in Germany and Italy, where the Takarazuka Revue toured several times during the 1930s (Matsumoto 1942).

concluding review

Let us review, in conclusion, the relationship between Japanese national identity and the colonial doctrine of assimilation. The integrity and stability of Japanese cultural and national

identity are premised on a protean ability to assimilate difference and absorb otherness (cf. Morisaki 1973; Renov 1991; Saburi 1942; Ueno 1991). In so saying, I seek not to naturalize the process of national identity formation but to present its dominant expression in Japan. I follow the analysis of Morisaki Kazue, a present-day Japanese litterateur, critic, and human rights activist, who suggests that the protean ability of dominant Japanese to assimilate “aliens” and minorities reveals the majority’s inability to deal with differences. By insisting on assimilation, or the outward invisibility of otherness, she argues, dominant Japanese thereby avoid having to deal with the social-historical structures and legacies of colonialism and racism (Morisaki 1973).

The wartime state also recognized that while the perceived protean character of the Japanese nation guaranteed its resilience, the same character also compromised its purity. If Japanese could masquerade as Southeast Asians and others, then the reverse was also possible: “others” could pass as Japanese. Passing as Japanese is expected of Chinese and Korean residents of Japan today, who are strongly encouraged by the state to adopt “Japanese-style names” when applying for naturalized citizenship. But their passing as Japanese posed a serious threat to the xenophobic military state in the late 1930s and early 1940s.⁴²

This dilemma was highlighted in the Takarazuka revue *Ears, Eyes, and Mouths*, a play categorized as an “antiespionage primer” (*bôchô tokuhon*). In one vignette, titled “Guarding Each Word Is the Most Immediate National Defense,” a young boy is approached by a friendly man, identified as a “Japanese uncle” (*nihon no ojisan*), who is interested in extracting information from him. Later, when the “uncle” is arrested for espionage, a police officer warns the boy that enemy spies often masquerade as Japanese (*nipponjin ni misekake[ru]*). The allegedly Chinese ethnicity of the spy is never explicitly identified; rather, the character utters Chinese expressions as well as English loan words, the offstage use of which among Japanese had been censured since 1940 (*Mimi to me to kuchi to* 1941:29–32).⁴³

Some forms of assimilated difference and otherness were newly coded as pathogenic in the rhetorical climate of war, and a number of wartime revues accordingly alluded to things Anglo-American in terms of dangerous “germs” (*baikin*). These germs had to be destroyed before they irrevocably weakened individual Japanese and the “national body” (*kokutai*) alike. The lead song in the “comic opera” *The Battle Is Also Here* (*Arasoi wa koko ni mo*, 1943), for example, dwelled on the need to eradicate “the much-dreaded germs called Anglo-Saxon ideologies” (Matsumoto 1943c). Hashimoto cites the lyrics:

Attack and destroy the germs
The germs in our heart-minds
Get rid of them now
Quick, quick expel them
Attack and destroy the germs
The Anglo-American[isms] in our heart-minds [1993:77–79]

Expunging “degenerate and corrupt” Western artifacts and ideas, and particularly individualism, from everyday life was part of the state’s mass surveillance campaign to search, locate, and destroy the internal enemy from within. It was a battle every bit as strategically crucial as those fought with guns—a battle in which the erotic allure of the Revue was invested with sadomasochistic nuances: for the expulsion of Chinese-isms and Anglo-Americanisms simultaneously implied an identification with and a repudiation of the historical and contemporary “other” within. The inversion of imperial expansion is imperial implosion, whereby political power and eroticized domination are compressed and interiorized. As I have emphasized, the theatrical space of Takarazuka was not an inert area but interacted with social and psychological space, creating a site where ambiguous gender and ethnic otherness were linked allegorically to the ambiguous status of Japan as a colonizer.

Even as the state embarked on an imperialist campaign to Japanize Asia, Kobayashi promoted the Takarazuka Revue as the epitome of the nationalist slogan “Japanese spirit, Western skills”

(*wakon yōsai*) (Kobayashi 1967:130, 131). The actors, selectively recruited for their “naturally long legs” and “straight, white teeth,” were lauded as fulfilling the Western ideal of feminine beauty better than their Euro-American counterparts (Hata 1948:133–134). Here too we see the ambivalent appropriation of non-Asian otherness as a necessary activity in the ongoing process of cultural and national identity formation. The evocation of “the West” through the figure of women, in short, was less about Euro-American societies than about contemporary social transformations in Japan since the turn of this century. “The West” and its locations in Japan, including the revue theater, were appropriated by competing parties as a sites for animated cultural and political critique (cf. Chen 1992:688). Kobayashi sought to use the stage as a showcase not just for the ideal man, but for *his* version of the New Woman⁴⁴—namely, a woman who, without “mixed” ancestry or the intervention of plastic surgery, looked Euro-American but acted Japanese and symbolized the New Japan. As I argued earlier, however, the Euro-American-influenced Revue was an ambiguous and unstable symbol of and for the New Japan.

“Japanese spirit, Western skills” signifies, not a clear-cut division, but a doubling—an epistemological condition that makes it possible to be in at least two places or mental spaces or bodies at once (Bhabha 1990:187). Takarasiennes were recruited for their allegedly atypical bodies and displayed as ethnic or racial hybrids—that is, as living examples of body montage. The actors could also be described as body doubles or as bodies that doubled as their other(s). Writing in 1942, culture critic Saburi Yuzuru asserted that Japan constituted a unique, composite culture enhanced by the assimilation and absorption (*kyūshū*) of foreign (*gai**r**a**i*) cultural products and practices. His views were shared by Kobayashi. The Takarazuka Revue and its hybrid actors, like Japanese culture in general, possessed, in Saburi’s words, the captivating charm of “wholesome exoticism” (*kenzennaru ekizoteizumu [sic]*) (Saburi 1942:25).

A Japanese actor (or soldier) embodying a Thai, Indian, South Sea Islander, Malay, or Mongolian simultaneously represented both the utopian and the dystopian politics of Pan-Asianism. The utopian idea involved unity in diversity, and the dystopian idea, the refracted, hierarchical relationship between Japanese and non-Japanese. Japanese soldiers caricaturing South Sea Islanders, Asian peoples subjected to Japanization, and revue actors performing gendered, ethnic characters were all participants in the dramatic process of body montage or body doubling. Aroused in these oscillating roles—colonizer and colonized, man and woman, Japanese and non-Japanese—was the erotics of the exotic, the libidinal economy of imperialism.⁴⁵ It goes without saying that entertainment, together with the erotic dimensions of the colonial encounter, constituted visibly central concerns of the Japanese state, which attempted to manipulate scopophilia, or pleasurable viewing (and, by the same token, viewing made pleasurable), as both a powerful trope and an equally powerful tool of imperialism. But in a manner homologous to the antipodal operations of Japanese orientalism, the ambiguous gender and ethnic symbology of the Takarazuka Revue simultaneously rendered that spectacular theater both representative of a New Japan and the antithesis of a pure Japan. The montage-like Takarazuka Revue, with its allegorical concatenations of meaning and oscillations between text and subtext, both epitomized and extended a dominant Japanese cultural and national identity premised, ambivalently, on a protean ability to assimilate difference and absorb otherness.

As a technology of imperialism, the revue theater helped to bridge the gap between perceptions of colonized others and actual colonial encounters; it was one way of linking imperialist fantasies and colonial realities. Takarazuka was a type of imperial archive that, along with census reports, maps, photographs, ethnographies, statistics, and newsreels, worked to create and naturalize among the people a pleasurable vision of the New World Order. The difference represented and embodied by the Takarasiennes was the revue’s key attraction and served diverse and often contradictory ends simultaneously. At the very least, wartime revues both invited a vicarious, fantastical experience of foreign travel and exotic romance, and sounded a call to cultural arms and the shared work of empire.

notes

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1. The full title in English newspapers at the time was *Made in Nippon; For World Market*; in Japanese it appeared as *Sekai no ichiba (World Market)*. Four years earlier, in 1937, the rival all-female Shōchiku Revue staged a musical titled *Made in Japan (Meido in nippon)* at the International Theater (Kokusai Gekijō) in Tokyo. Doubtless the Takarazuka playwright was familiar with the Shōchiku production; the directors and playwrights of the two revues often borrowed heavily from each other. The two versions of *Made in Japan* are similar in celebrating the international demand for Japanese manufactures, although the Shōchiku piece is limited largely to song and dance sequences with very little dialogue (*Rebyū: meido in nippon* 1937). An updated version of the play was staged by Takarazuka in 1962, the “miracle sixties,” when the Japanese economy was moving into high gear.

2. There is relatively little research on the ways in which theater interfaces with imperialism and colonialism. In the case of Japanese studies, the uses of film and radio as vehicles for the spiritual and physical mobilization of the Japanese and colonial peoples have been expertly documented and discussed (e.g., Dower 1993; Fukushima and Nornes 1991; Goodman 1991; Hauser 1991; Kasza 1988; Silverberg 1993). There is, however, a dearth of critical research on wartime theater, where staged performances operated as social metacommentaries on and motivators for such interconnected practices as nationalism, imperialism, racism, militarism, sexual politics, and gender relations (cf. Bratton 1991; Pickering 1991:229). Similarly, theater-state relations are overlooked or ignored in the otherwise excellent scholarship on the Japanese colonial empire (Beasley 1987; Dower 1986; Duus et al. 1989; Myers and Peattie 1984; Peattie 1988; Shillony 1991[1981], etc.). Rimer (1974) offers a complementary overview of the New Theater (Shingeki) movement through the career of the playwright Kishida Kunio.

3. I refer to “the state” in the singular, as a thing in itself, for the sake of convenience. I follow Corrigan and Sayer (1985:2–3) in regarding “the state” not simply as an “organ of coercion” or a “bureaucratic lineage,” but as a repertoire of agencies (sites, technologies, institutions, ministries) that collectively, albeit not without internal contradictions, shape and reproduce the dominant ideology.

4. Assimilation or Japanization was also known as “imperialization” (*kōminka*, literally: imperial subject-ization) (Peattie 1984:41). Imperialization, however, embodied an intensified concept of assimilation.

5. As a general concept, assimilation was not uniquely Japanese and was most articulately expressed in French colonial theory, with which Japanese ideologues were familiar. As I explain, Japanese assimilationist theory differed significantly in practice from its French counterpart, in which assimilation was defined as “that system which tends to efface all differences between the colonies and the motherland and which views the colonies simply as a prolongation of the mother country beyond the seas” (Roberts 1929:67 in Peattie 1984a:96). See also Peattie (1984a) for a discussion of competing versions of Japanese assimilationist theory.

6. I have published elsewhere on the sexual politics and gendered organization of the revue and will not recapitulate that information and argument here (see Robertson 1989, 1991, 1992a, 1992b).

The 4,000-seat Takarazuka Grand Theater (Daigekijō) was completed in 1924, the largest Japanese theater of its kind at the time. It remains one component of an expansive “wholesome entertainment” complex that in 1943 included a hot springs spa, a library, a botanical garden, an entomology museum, and a zoo noted for its white tiger. A similarly large theater was opened in Tokyo in 1935. In 1919 Kobayashi established the Takarazuka Music Academy, from which all actors must graduate.

Approximately 700 people presently enable Takarazuka to function, and the literature suggests that about the same number was employed during the wartime period: 400 performers and 300 specialists including producers, directors, writers, costumers, set designers, instructors, and two 35-piece orchestras. The actors are divided into four troupes that were established between 1921 and 1933 (see Robertson 1992b). Dividing the women into troupes facilitated organizing the growing number of actors (from 20 at the outset to about 350 in 1931 [Hashimoto 1984:118–120]), and enabled year-round performances at different venues throughout Japan. Each troupe is overseen by a (male) member of the revue administration appointed to that post. The internal hierarchy consists of a troupe manager and a vice manager appointed from among the senior actors. The revue’s patriarchal management, strict vertical social organization, and emphasis on hierarchy determined by age and gender were confluent with the social agenda of the wartime state.

There were other all-female revue theaters established in the early 20th century as well, notably the Shōchiku Revue founded in Tokyo (in Asakusa, a major working-class theater district) in 1928, which quickly became Takarazuka’s main rival in every respect. Other, much smaller, Tokyo revues included the Casino Follies (opened in 1929) in Asakusa, and the Moulin Rouge (opened in 1931) in Shinjuku, a student and intellectual center at the time (see Seidensticker 1990:68–87).

7. Sex, gender, and sexuality are related and often used interchangeably, but they are not the same thing. The pattern of their articulation is negotiable, and negotiated constantly, in part through gender performances. Neither femininity nor masculinity is the exclusive province of females or males, respectively (see Robertson 1992b:420–421).

Klaus Theweleit’s *Male Fantasies*, in which he explores the desires and anxieties of fascist soldiers and writers of the *Freikorps* in an effort to describe the political culture out of which Nazism developed, is particularly useful in understanding the pleasurable play of male cross-dressing in wartime or military contexts. Several accounts and photographs of transvestite performance are provided, and Theweleit suggests that “what the soldier males seem to find enjoyable is the *representation of sex-role inversion*” (1989[1978]:330, 327–335). More recently, articles have appeared on the gender-bending homoerotic rituals codified and performed at military academies in the United States (Adams 1993; Faludi 1994).

8. I am using “cross-dressing” here as shorthand for a gendered performance that includes “cross-speaking” (including body language) and other oppositionally constructed behaviors and actions.

9. Unlike Carrier (1992), I find it unnecessarily complicated to divide O/orientalism into unmarked (what “the West” does) and marked (the “ethno-orientalisms” of the non-West) categories. In using the lower case form, I wish to draw a distinction between the products of Orientalism (i.e., “the West” and “the Other”) and the orientalizing process, through which a national or cultural dominant is constructed and dramatized. I have retained the term *orientalism* as both it and its overtones are salient in the context of Japanese imperialist expansion and colonial domination. As Stefan Tanaka notes in *Japan’s Orient*, by the 20th century *tōyō* (literally, east seas) signified the opposite of “the Occident” in both a geopolitical sense and an ideological sense (Tanaka 1993:4). He argues that the contested discourse of *tōyō*/the Orient helped to occasion a new sense of national and cultural identity in Japan even as it revealed the ambiguity of Japan’s place in Asia and the world (Tanaka 1993:11–12).

10. As Tanaka notes in this respect, “Whereas Romantic [European] historians looked to the Orient for their origins, Japanese historians found them in *tōyō* [the Orient]” (1993:14).

11. *Daitōa kyōeiken*, or Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, was an integral part of Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro’s idea of a “New Order” in which the Japanese would lead a Pan-Asian effort toward Asian self-sufficiency and stability, anticommunism, and resistance to Western imperialism. The projected area of the Sphere covered Japan, China, Manchukuo, the former Dutch, French, and British colonies in Southeast Asia, and the Philippines. Some ideologues included Australia and New Zealand in the projected area (Hunter 1984:42, 143–144).

12. The spectacle of males cross-dressing as women was a regular feature of the mobile entertainment troupes who performed for British and American soldiers during World War II. As Bérubé and Fawkes note, the women’s role players often were more popular and sought after than actual female actors and dancers (Bérubé 1990:67–97; Fawkes 1978:45, 53, 125, 163). Apart from recent scholarship on state-coerced and regulated prostitution (i.e., the traffic in “comfort women”), little research has been conducted on the organization of soldier entertainment in the Japanese armed forces.

13. See Kurasawa 1991 for a consideration of the effects of and resistance to Japanese colonial propaganda strategies in Java.

14. Radio broadcasts of these same productions were transmitted to Mongolia, China, Thailand, India, Burma, and elsewhere, with the aim of “introducing Japanese theater culture to the peoples living within the area of the Co-Prosperity Sphere” (Hagiwara 1954:141). Peoples under Japanese domination were treated to Japanese orientalist representations of themselves; in one broadcasted play Chinese spoke and sang in Japanese and Mandarin of their love for Japan and the benefits of colonial rule, namely, “progress and prosperity” (Hagiwara 1954:141).

15. “Peach Boy,” the story of Momotarō, is one of the most popular of all Japanese folktales. He was born from a peach that an elderly couple plucked from a stream as it floated past. Under their tutelage,

Momotarô grew to embody the quintessence of Japanese masculinity and was later rewarded by the emperor for having subdued the demons of Onigashima.

16. The Japanese were interested in the Federal Theater Project (1935–39) largely because it involved the direct intervention of the federal government in theatrical production as well as employed, and thereby contained, activists from the indigenous workers' theaters (McConachie and Friedman 1985:10). Japanese reformers viewed the project as a "cultural movement" (*bunka undô*) from which they could learn much about local-level mobilizing along with strategies of targeting and containing working-class audiences (Nakagawa 1941).

The Axis Alliance of 1940 occasioned a flurry of interest in strategies to organize leisure in fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, which represented other versions of the fusion of politics and national culture (Niizeki 1940:37).

17. Although the 1927 revue was widely referred to in Japanese as *Mon pari*, the proper title was *Waga pari yo*, literally, "my/our Paris." *Mon pari* was the Japanese title of all subsequent revivals.

18. An eclectic Pan-Asianism is evident here as well in that both the original and later versions of *Mon Paris* confuse India and Sri Lanka as well as the cities of Colombo and Kandy.

19. The revue *From Manchuria to North China* deals with the China Incident, more popularly known as the Marco Polo Bridge Incident of July 1937. The incident in question was a clash of Chinese and Japanese troops at said bridge near Beijing: this led to a full-scale war lasting until 1945. Earlier, in 1931, a group of Japanese soldiers based in Manchuria plotted to blow up a section of the South Manchurian railway line; this was known as the Manchurian Incident. The soldiers then blamed Chinese troops as a pretext for occupying the city of Mukden, and, eventually, several Manchurian provinces (Hunter 1984:120–122).

20. Industry figures show about 6 million train passengers in 1920, increasing to 10 million in 1927 and to over 12 million in 1928, reaching nearly 18 million passengers by 1936 (Takaoka 1993:12).

21. "Train dance" is also known in Japanese by the neologism "line dance" (*rain dansu*).

22. In this connection, Dower documents how "sensational rumors" and "seditious graffiti" reveal the popular dissidence and declining morale that characterized social life in wartime Japan (Dower 1993:101–154).

23. Similarly, in her book on the mass organization of leisure in fascist Italy, de Grazia (1981:243) argues that the vested economic interests of private enterprise often conflicted with the fascist regime's need for a politically responsive mass base.

24. Gender and otherness were deployed in various ways in Japanese wartime propaganda to underscore the fundamentally irreconcilable differences between Japan and "the West."

25. The *gingyô* consists of a narrow platform that arcs around the orchestra pit from either side of the stage proper, and its intimate reach is augmented by wing extensions of the stage proper, which dominates the auditorium. It was first employed in the revue *Rose Paris* (*Rôsu pari*, 1931) by the leading Takarazuka playwright, Shirai Tetsuzô, who claims to have been inspired by a similar structure used in Parisian revues (e.g., the Casino de Paris and Folies-Bergère) (Shirai 1967:121–122). Although the structure itself may be Parisian in origin, however, Shirai equates the function of the bridge with the Kabuki theater's *hanamichi* (literally, flower way), or passageway through the auditorium (1967:121). Most of the time in Kabuki, the passageway or bridge is used as a kind of private stage for a leading character, where an actor can both improvise and focus exclusively on texturing a character without interference.

26. Takarazuka was one of several symbolic "bridges" linking imperialist fantasies and colonial realities. The Tokyo Peace Exposition of 1922 included the recreation of colonial holdings linked to "Japan" by a Peace Bridge (Silverberg 1993:127).

27. Revue administrators briefly entertained a plan of establishing a Takarazuka-like theater in North China (Matsumoto 1939). As of 1934, the 1,934 drama theaters of widely varying sizes were concentrated in cities (Monbusho goraku chôsa 1932) and the regional tours by commercial theater troupes were important components of national community building. The intensive activities of the mobile groups of actors further popularized theater among diverse audiences in Japan and abroad (Toita 1956[1950]:252) and helped to disseminate a military and imperialist ethos in the guise of entertainment. Members of the Shôchiku Revue also toured the same war fronts and colonial outposts, and also those in Southeast Asia and Micronesia (Shôchiku Kagekidan 1978:45–48).

Although mobile theater troupes have a centuries-old history in Japan, the specific use of such troupes during wartime was reinforced by the example set in fascist Italy, where the state deployed Thespian Prose Cars, basically portable stages, to bring sanctioned entertainment to the masses. Japanese theater critics were aware of such innovations in Italy and elsewhere. By 1936, over a million spectators were accounted for throughout Italy. The actual effectiveness of the cars is another matter (see de Grazia 1981:162–163).

28. This federation was known as the Japanese Federation of Mobile Theaters (Nippon idô engeki renmei). Under the auspices of an emergency economizing measure, the state closed 19 commercial theaters, including Takarazuka—although the mobile units were continued—and levied a stiff tax on them (Toita 1956[1950]:243–244). Six theaters were reopened the following month for a maximum of two-and-a-half hours daily, during which patriotic plays and films were scheduled (Hagiwara 1954:150–151). Takarazuka revues were resumed in May 1945 at the Takarazuka Eigagekijô (movie theater), the main theater having been expropriated by the Navy as an educational facility for air corps trainees. The Tokyo branch had been converted into a factory for the assembly of balloon explosives made from Japanese paper. Although the main theater was reopened after the war in April 1946, the Tokyo branch fell under the jurisdiction of the Allied Powers General Headquarters headed by General Douglas MacArthur. It was

renamed the Ernie Pyle Theater—after the popular American war correspondent killed in action in 1945—until reverting back to Kobayashi's control in April 1955 (Hashimoto 1993:78, 84; Toita 1956[1950]:244). Throughout the Occupation period (1945–52) Tokyo Takarazuka performances were staged at other local theaters, and the revue produced special shows for Occupation personnel at the Ernie Pyle (Hashimoto 1993:142).

29. *Induction* has many layers of meaning and signification beyond its standard definition as the process of inferring a generalized conclusion from particular instances. It also refers to an initial experience, or an initiation or beginning; to an act of bringing something on; to the sum of processes by which morphological differentiation is brought about.

30. Kershaw (1992:1) uses “performance efficacy” to mean “the potential that theatre may have to make the immediate effects of performance influence, however minutely, the general historical evolution of wider social and political realities.” As Peter Bürger describes this process, the allegorist pulls one element out of the totality of the life context and isolates it:

Allegory is therefore essentially fragment. . . . The allegorist joins the isolated fragments of reality and thereby creates meaning. This is posited meaning; it does not derive from the original context of the fragments. [Bürger, as cited in Buck-Morss 1991(1989):225]

31. Because a single concatenated meaning cannot be guaranteed, montage generates a tension between the dominant meaning and the subtextual, and potentially subversive, readings of the same performance. Moreover, once an audience disperses and reenters the wider social realm, the twofold problem remains of how to reinforce the official text of a play and how to measure accurately any influence that the performance may have had on their behavior (Kershaw 1992:2).

32. New China, or *shinkō shina*, refers to parts of China under Japanese control. *Shina*, in use since the mid-18th century as a name for European-dominated China, is now regarded as a pejorative term for China.

There is no record of *East Asian Bouquet* ever having been performed by either Takarazuka or Shōchiku. The closest equivalent to this revue was *Children of East Asia (Tōa no kodomotachi, 1943)*, a drama “dedicated to the juveniles of East Asia, especially the sons of Nippon who shoulder the future destiny of the East.” The 18-scene revue was divided into three parts: Manchukuo, with an emphasis on the founding of the puppet state established in 1932; China, whose relationship with Japan is portrayed metaphorically as a father-son relationship; and the “Southern Area,” represented as a utopian garden whose feathered inhabitants happily chirp praises of Asian unity (Matsumoto 1943c).

33. Whereas *kokumin engeki* can be translated literally as “citizens’ theater,” “state theater” is a more accurate description of the movement, which was sanctioned by the military state as a means of claiming the people through the interpellative power of dramaturgy (see Robertson 1991).

34. These were the short-lived *Nippon Engeki* and *Engekikai*. The Cabinet Information Bureau (Naikaku chokuzoku jōhōkyoku) was established in December 1940 with offices in Tokyo’s Imperial Theater. The bureau established the Japanese Federation of Mobile Theaters in June 1941 to centralize and regulate the activities of traveling theater groups (Toita 1956:251).

35. *Sokoku* is literally “ancestral land,” which I use, although in the English-language newspapers it appears as “fatherland.”

36. As Reynolds notes, only the flimsiest of evidence supports the “blood relatives” theory: “Thailand’s Therevada [*sic*] and Japan’s Mahayana Buddhism offered little more basis for accord than Italian Catholicism and British Protestantism” (Reynolds 1991:94).

37. The Japanization of vocabulary was widespread: although baseball already was referred to as *yakyū*, “safe” (*sēfu*) was changed to *yoshi*, “out” (*auto*) to *dame*, and so on, and cigarette brands were changed from Golden Bat (Goruden Batto) to Kinshi, Cherry (Cherī) to Sakura, and so on. Entertainers, athletes, and celebrities with foreign names were required to alter them to their Japanese equivalent; the singer Dick Mine, for example, became Mine Kōichi (Hashimoto 1993:54).

38. Plays grouped under these categories included, respectively, *Bathed in Glory (Hikari o abite, 1943)*, *Victory Pledge (Kachinuku chikai, 1944)*, *Legends of Virtuous Japanese Women (Nippon meifu den, 1941)*, *Cheerful Neighborhood Associations (Tanoshiki Tonarigumi, 1941)*, and the aforementioned *Made in Japan (Hagiwara 1954:240–243)*.

39. Kobayashi traveled to Batavia (Jakarta) in the fall of 1940 to secure Indonesia’s place in the Sphere by seeking, unsuccessfully, to obtain mineral oil and other concessions from the Dutch (Beasley 1987:228–229; Hall 1981 [1955]:858–859; Mook 1944:42–65).

40. Phra Sarasas, a former finance minister. The novel, written in “flowery English” (Matsumoto 1942) is *Whom the Gods Deny (or River of Fate, Unmei no kawa* in Japanese).

41. *Return to the East* anticipates the militant nationalist Subhas Chandra Bose’s path from India to Southeast Asia, via Germany and Japan, where he proclaimed a Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India) in 1943. A Japanese-supported Indian National Army was recruited before his arrival. Bose’s campaign to invade India was followed closely in the Japanese press.

42. *Passing*, as applied in this context, is both transitive and intransitive, or bi-directional. *Passing* can refer to what people do to efface their difference or otherness deliberately, and it can refer to what is achieved, consciously or unconsciously, when someone else does not recognize one’s difference or otherness.

43. A scathing review of this play appeared in *Engei Gahō*, an important theater arts journal whose publication eventually was suspended by the state. The author described the revue as simplistic, concep-

tually weak, vapid, and inappropriate for the Takarazuka stage. He also asserts that none of the Takarazuka playwrights or directors have been able to work creatively within wartime parameters (Mogami 1941).

44. New Woman (*atarashii onna*) was a category of female created in the 1910s and used in reference to women whose ideas and style contradicted the “good wife, wise mother” model of femininity codified in the patriarchal Meiji Civil Code operative from 1898 to 1947. To critics such as Kobayashi, the label New Woman referred to “an indulgent and irresponsible young Japanese woman, who used her overdeveloped sexuality to undermine the family and to manipulate others for her own selfish ends” (Sievers 1983:175–176).

45. Similarly, Homi Bhabha has observed that it is “in relation to the place of the Other that colonial desire is articulated” (Bhabha 1990:187).

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