

The Colonial Eyeglasses of Nakajima Atsushi

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Japan was the most important non-Western colonial power in the modern period. In this paper, I will shed light on the “eyeglasses” of Japanese colonialism by examining the South Seas (Nan’yō) literature of Nakajima Atsushi. Upon returning to Japan from a short stint as editor of Japanese language textbooks in Japanese-ruled Micronesia in 1941, Nakajima wrote two collections of stories based on his experiences, *Nantōtan* (Tales of the Southern Islands) and *Kanshō* (Atolls). The fifth work in the latter collection is a sketch called “Mariyan,” a portrait of a young Micronesian intellectual. The narrator of this story starts by offering the reader a compendium of colonial discourses, or stereotypes, on Nan’yō in order to “explain” Mariyan. Yet he is at the same time pained by the resemblances he discovers between himself and Mariyan: both are objects of a Western orientaling gaze and hybrid products of cultural colonization. In a second story in “Atolls” called “High Noon,” a Japanese narrator looks into the sources of his own stereotypes of the South Seas and attempts to “decolonize” his vision. Oguma Eiji argues that Japanese imperialism, as the first modern example of a “colored imperialism,” differs in many ways from the Western pattern. By studying Nakajima’s Micronesian stories, I explore both the complexity and inconsistencies of Japan’s imperial gaze.

Keywords: COLONIALISM, NAKAJIMA ATSUSHI, EYEGASSES, MIMICRY, LITERATURE, MICRONESIA, DISCOURSE, IMPERIAL GAZE

It seemed that there were many strange creatures dwelling together within me in total disorder, including miserable and revolting creatures.

—Nakajima Atsushi 中島敦, *Mahiru* 真昼 (High Noon)

Before their nation began its invasion of Asia, the Japanese learned to look at Asia anew through Western-tinted eyeglasses.

—Masaki Tsuneo 正木恒夫, *Shokuminchi Gensō* 植民地幻想 (Colonial Fantasy)

A “Colored” and Mimetic Colonialism

How did the Japanese consider their own role as “leading race” or view the “Southern” people over whom they exercised domination at the time of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere? In this article, I will attempt to provide one answer to this question by taking a close look at two stories written by a Japanese writer who lived in Palau from July 1941 to March 1942. Scholars have only just started to examine the vast archive of literary texts from Japan’s colonial period, in part because they have not enjoyed untrammled access to these texts until recent years but also because they have been reluctant to study the works of writers tainted by their association with Japan’s discredited colonial past.¹ In focusing my attention on works of literature, I am guided by the conviction that the literary archive is an unparalleled resource for tapping into what is absent from most other documents: the ambivalence, anxieties and unresolved contradictions that characterized the lived experience of Japanese colonialism. In advancing this claim, I do not mean to imply either that the literary work is nothing but an “archive” or that it will offer us any new “knowledge” about the “realities” of colonialism. Rather I believe that a painstaking and attentive reading of the literary text will cast light on the specific affective experience of the agents of Japanese colonialism. An ancillary aim of this article is to complicate and problematize the writings of certain post-colonial theories—notably those of Homi Bhabha—as well as of those of Japanese thinkers who have attempted to apply post-colonial theory in their analysis of the specific features and structures of Japanese imperialism.

Let me begin with this second point, taking as an example the idea of “colonial mimicry” that Homi Bhabha develops in a ground-breaking essay titled “Of Mimicry and Man.” According to Bhabha, mimicry is “the desire for a reformed, recognizable other *as a subject of difference that is almost the same but not quite*.”² Bhabha goes on to argue that colonialism is haunted by ambivalence toward this colonial mimicry. The colonizer demands that the colonized resemble him/herself through a process of “narcissistic identification” but he/she also disavows this resemblance and even regards it as a “menace.” Thus the colonizer both requires successfully colonized subjects and rejects them: they are, impossibly, required to be “*almost the same but not quite*.”

At first glance, Bhabha’s notion of a “desire for a reformed, recognizable other” seems directly applicable to the case of Japanese colonialism, and particularly to the policies implemented by colonial authorities fostering assimilation or Japanization of the colonized. “Colonial mimicry” offers a fruitful and persuasive paradigm for interpreting the mixed messages that Japanese colonial authorities directed at their colonial subjects. For the subjects under Japan’s control were placed in a classic double bind. On the one hand, they were encouraged to “assimilate” and to become “like the Japanese” by learning the Japanese language and adopting Japanese ways of life. On the other, they were never accorded the political and economic rights of Japanese citizenship and were discriminated against as a

matter of policy till the bitter end of the imperial period.

However, there is a danger of applying this idea without alteration to the case of Japan. Bhabha, to be sure, makes use of the terms “original” and “mimic” to deconstruct the colonial relationship in his essays (his analysis is largely informed by the example of the British colonization of India); yet his theory inevitably presupposes a stable framework in which one can draw a meaningful distinction between original and mimic.³ How can this framework be maintained in a case like Japan where, to quote Peter Duus, “imperialism, like so many other aspects of Meiji development, was an act of mimesis?”⁴ That is to say, even before Japan insisted that its colonized people copy Japanese customs and language, Japan jettisoned centuries of its own traditions and copied Western institutions and values wholesale, down to and including late-nineteenth-century imperialism. Duus goes on to characterize Japanese imperialism in the following terms:

Although the Meiji Japanese mimicked the imperialist culture system that developed in the West, Meiji imperialism was the imperialism of a backward or follower country. It was characterized by a psychology of inferiority vis-à-vis the West, a desire to catch up with the more advanced economies, limited foreign contacts, dependency on the import of capital goods, a lack of political leverage over the advanced powers, and a high degree of state involvement in economic development.⁵

In short, one must wield Bhabha’s concept of colonial mimicry with circumspection if one would apply it to the case of an imperialism that was also an act of mimicry.⁶

Japanese imperialism was not only the “imperialism of a backward country” that copied Western imperialism. It was also the first historical example of a modern, ‘colored’ imperialism. In this second aspect, too, there are problems with applying Bhabha’s concept to the case of Japan. Bhabha sets his colonial mimicry in opposition to a narcissistic authority which insists that the colonized other “authorize the self, recognize its priority, fulfill its outlines, replete, indeed repeat, its references and still its fractured gaze.”⁷ This narcissistic authority is identified as ‘Western’ and ‘white’ at a crucial point in Bhabha’s argument; the colonial mimic is always betrayed by a difference that is visible and racial, or to quote Bhabha, he/she must be “*almost the same but not white*.”⁸

As Oguma Eiji 小熊英二 argues in his book “*Nihonjin no kyōkai* <日本人>の境界 (The Boundaries of the Japanese), Japan constitutes the first example of a new phenomenon he defines as *yūshoku teikokushugi* 有色帝国主義 (colored imperialism). Oguma uses the word “colored” not in its biological sense to denote a darker shade of skin, but rather as an epistemological term to refer to the discursive system in which the West stood for “white, civilized and colonizer” and the East was “colored, barbaric and colonized.”⁹ Oguma argues that Japan’s position as a “colored” empire contributed to a fractured and ambivalent sense of identity that set it apart from the Western powers. As a non-Western empire, Japan harbored complex feelings toward the West in which admiration for Western civilization mingled with resentment toward Western racism. Japan attained great power status, but its “colored” people were victims of invasion and discrimination at the hands of the West. This sense of

Japan as victim was heightened by two events during the interwar years: the rejection by the major Western powers of the Japanese racial equality proposal at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and the exclusion movements targeting Japanese immigrants overseas (epitomized by the United States' notorious 1924 Immigration Act).

Japan was not only victim but also victimizer, not only colonized but also colonizer. As the first Asian nation to follow the Western model of the civilized nation ("to escape from Asia and join the West," in Fukuzawa's terms), the Japanese felt superior to other Asians. However, since Japanese imperialists viewed Japan as a victim that had suffered at the hands of the white race, they stressed that the Japanese shared common ground with and identified closely with the people they colonized. As a result, Japan presented itself to its neighbors as a liberator from colonial domination by Europe and America even as it actively colonized them.

When facing the West, Japan was identified as a part of the non-Western world. When it faced Asia, it became a member of the Western world from which it felt excluded. Due to this dual belonging, the Japanese worried that they had forfeited their cultural identity as an Asian people in the process of "escaping from Asia" without gaining an alternative identity in exchange for "joining the West." As Oguma puts it, Japan's "colored imperialism" was a "parasite that grew in the spaces between the binaries of 'Europe' and 'Asia,' 'victimizer' and 'victim,' 'colored' and 'empire.'"¹⁰ Notwithstanding these colonial ambivalences, the Japanese did not treat the peoples in their own empire any less harshly than did any other imperialist powers. As Oguma writes, "In some cases, this sense of victimization will cause the ruler to mitigate some of the harshness of its domination, but in general this same sense may exacerbate its sadism toward the dominated, particularly when its sense of identity is in violent flux."¹¹

In short, Japanese imperialism differed from that of the West in two important ways: Japan was a latecomer that mimicked Western imperialism and it was the first case of a modern, non-white imperial power. How did these two crucial characteristics of Japanese imperialism affect the way the Japanese viewed their colonial subjects or their own role as colonizers, specifically in the South and at the time of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere. To answer this question, I will stress that Japan's modernization was not simply the imitation of European socio-political, economic or cultural models; it also involved the adoption of Western ways of viewing parts of the world other than Japan and Europe. In particular, it involved learning to adopt a Eurocentric imperial gaze, to see the "others" that lay beyond the borders of civilization and modernity. When Japanese empire builders discovered others who were backward and primitive from a Western point of view, they appropriated this way of viewing others and made it their own.¹² Furthermore, when Japan fashioned its own empire of overseas colonies, it rearranged and domesticated Western rankings of the people of the world based on race or level of civilization to buttress its own claims as an imperial power.

In his book *Shokuminchi gensō* (Colonial Fantasy), Masaki Tsuneo, a scholar of English literature,¹³ uses the metaphor of "Western-tinted eyeglasses" to highlight the fantasy that lay at the heart of Japan's colonial project:

Before their nation began its invasion of Asia, the Japanese learned to look at Asia anew through Western-tinted eyeglasses. Almost 400 years after the Europeans, Japan attempted to create a new “world” in Asia. It was called the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. Needless to say, it was the political and economic culmination of Japan’s modernization. In tandem with this process, there developed a view that the different people of the world formed a pyramid with the Japanese at the top and the natives of the South Seas at the bottom. Japan just rearranged the ranking of values that it inherited from Europe and applied them to the new world it formed. Referring to this phenomenon, one writer suggests that the Japanese have been wearing ‘Western-tinted eyeglasses.’¹⁴

As the title of his book implies, Masaki uses the metaphor of “eyeglasses” to highlight the unreal element in Japan’s imitation of Western colonialism. According to his argument, the Japanese have assumed the fictional position of Western subjects when they regard their colonial subjects. Masaki ends his book by exhorting his fellow countrymen to remove these eyeglasses and to become aware of what kind of eyeglasses they are wearing.

Masaki rightly highlights the fictional and constructed character of the Japanese colonial gaze.¹⁵ If the Japanese colonial gaze was fictional in nature, then it stands to reason that works of fiction may be places to look to discover the “truth” of this gaze. But there are also problems with Masaki’s metaphor of “Western eyeglasses.” In the first place, when Masaki blames Japan’s adoption of a Western standpoint for its imperialism, he implicitly exonerates the Japanese from any responsibility for their colonialist past. Even a cursory examination of Japanese history, however, will show that Japanese imperialism and chauvinism had roots in the nation’s pre-modern past. Under Hideyoshi, Japan invaded Korea in the seventeenth century, centuries before it began to wear “Western tinted spectacles,” and Motoori Norinaga, the *kokugaku* 国学 scholar, already placed Japan at the top of a global hierarchy in the eighteenth century.¹⁶ Secondly, Masaki’s idea that the Japanese simply need to remove their Western tinted spectacles to recover their authentic identity as Japanese seems simplistic and misguided. Finally, his assertion that Japanese were blinded by Western ways of viewing is open to question and needs to be tested. In my study of Nakajima Atsushi 中島敦, I will argue that this writer appropriated “Western-tinted eyeglasses” and used them to situate himself within a Japanese empire. In his fictional works, the reader is struck by the complexity of the Japanese colonial gaze, and the inability of this writer to view the world through Western eyeglasses.

If Masaki depicts colonial era Japanese as blinded and deluded by their “Western eyeglasses,” Komori Yōichi 小森陽一 draws on Freudian concepts of “the unconscious” and “repression” to suggest that they were not conscious of their “self-colonization.” In *Post-colonial* ポストコロニアル, he describes Japan’s enlightenment and civilization as a process of self-colonization: Japan recreated itself in the image of a threatening other (the Western powers) in order to avoid the fate of colonization and to escape from being viewed as “barbaric” and uncivilized by the Western nations.¹⁷ Later, repressing this self-colonization to its

“unconscious,” Japan adopted an internalized Western gaze toward its neighbors as a pretext for colonizing them. By constantly discovering new “barbarians” outside its borders, Japan confirmed itself as a member of the “civilized” world.

Japan hid the fact that it faced the imminent danger of colonization by Western powers and presented its own “civilization and enlightenment” as a spontaneous program undertaken as an act of free will. It concealed the *self-colonization* implicit in copying the Western powers and consigned it to oblivion; in that way, the nation’s *colonial unconscious* was formed. Later, Japan had to discover “barbarians” in its neighborhood and take control of their territories in order to prove that it was indeed civilized.¹⁸

In short, Komori treats the Japanese colonial gaze as the site of forgetting and repression. But were the Japanese really so repressed and forgetful? Colonial literature offers a domain to test Komori’s hypothesis that the Japanese repressed their self-colonization to the “colonial unconscious.” Leaving Nakajima to the side for the moment, I would mention that Natsume Sōseki 夏目漱石, who wrote at a time when the “colonial unconscious” came into being (and when the mechanism of repression was presumably strongest), was acutely aware of Japan’s self-colonization. In his 1911 lecture *Gendai Nihon to kaika*, 現代日本と開花 (Modern Japan and Civilization), Sōseki likens Japan’s externally imposed modernization to a forced march in which Japan had to “compress 100 years of development that went into the enlightenment of the West into a span of 10 years.” He goes on to write: “As long as you socialize with Westerners, you cannot go by Japanese standards. . . and unfortunately, the present situation is one in which the Japanese have no choice but to socialize. When you socialize with a stronger power, you have to abandon self and follow the customs of the other.” Sōseki anticipates Komori’s theory of self-colonization, but he also stands as a sharp rebuttal to the latter’s claim that self-colonization was repressed and consigned to the “unconscious.”¹⁹

In the remainder of this article, I will look closely at two short stories by the writer Nakajima Atsushi. These works offer us a glimpse of the emotional experience of a single Japanese man of letters during the final years of Japan’s imperial trajectory. By looking closely at the narrator’s point of view in these stories, I will also test the hypotheses of Masaki and Komori by applying them to the case of a particular writer: was Nakajima really blinded by “Western spectacles” and “unconscious” of his own self-colonization? To be sure, Nakajima was not necessarily representative of the Japanese people as a whole but neither was he an isolated figure. Nakajima Atsushi will emerge as a complex figure who had ambivalent feelings about his own place within the empire, about Europe and the South Seas, and about the Japanese empire he both served and grew disillusioned with.

I also believe that this study will complicate and call into question some of the theories about colonialism that I have discussed. These theories tend to speak of “Japan” as if it were a single actor and to make broad generalizations about the experiences of the Japanese people as a whole. Yet the concept of “Japan” as a unified actor is an abstraction; in reality, colonialism was lived in manifold ways by millions of individuals Japanese who held varied viewpoints,

had widely divergent experiences and struggled with contradictory feelings toward both Asia and the West. I believe that future studies of particular writers from the colonial period—including proletarian and feminist writers from the early twentieth century—will help to deepen our knowledge of the complexities and ambivalences of Japanese colonialism.

Nakajima Atsushi's South Seas Adventure

Kawamura Minato 川村湊, the foremost scholar of Japan's colonial literature, describes Nakajima Atsushi (1909-1942) as the quintessential writer of the colonial period. His literary imagination embraced both the northern and southern geographical limits of the Japanese empire during the early Shōwa years.²⁰ Nakajima spent several years of his adolescence in Keijō 京城, capital of Japanese-controlled Korea, where he graduated from the elite Keijō Middle School in 1926. He set his early stories (published in *Kōyūkai zasshi* 校友会雑誌, the magazine of the Tokyo First Higher School) in colonial Korea and Manchuria.²¹ From 1933 to 1935, he worked on an unfinished novel titled *Hoppōkō* 北方行 (Heading North), set mainly in contemporary Beijing. In addition, Nakajima's most famous works, a handful of stories based on classic Chinese texts, are set in ancient China.²² As for works set in the south, Nakajima wrote a full-length novel in 1940 about the final years of Robert Louis Stevenson in Samoa and subsequently wrote two collections of stories based on his own experiences as a colonial official in Micronesia

In July 1941, the young Nakajima resigned from his position as English and Japanese teacher at the Yokohama Girl's School and set sail for Koror, the administrative capital of the Japanese colony in Micronesia (Nan'yō Guntō 南洋群島). Japan seized these Micronesian territories (mainly, the three archipelagoes of the Marianas, the Carolines and the Marshalls) in 1914 from Germany. In 1920, the islands were officially assigned to Japan as a Class C mandate by the League of Nations.²³ When Nakajima went to Palau in 1941, he worked in the Regional Section of the South Seas Agency (Nan'yōchō 南洋庁), the government agency responsible for administering Micronesia. The Regional Section was the nerve center of Japanization (assimilation—*kōminka* 皇民化) policies then being promoted in fields such as education and culture in order to foster among the indigenous populations a sense of identification with the Japanese empire. Nakajima was specifically hired to investigate the current situation of Japanese language (*kokugo* 国語) education in the archipelago and to edit new textbooks that would meet the requirements of Japanese educators.²⁴

Finding that the climate aggravated his chronic asthma and that he was not suited for bureaucratic work, Nakajima spent a mere eight months in Micronesia, mostly touring outlying islands to visit schools. He returned to Japan on a business trip in March 1942 and shortly thereafter resigned his charge with the Agency. In letters from his period of residence in Palau, Nakajima expressed disillusionment with Japan's colonial education policy generally and with his job as textbook reviser in particular.²⁵ In a diary entry of November 28, 1941, he describes in unflattering terms the ultra-nationalistic and militaristic education being dispensed by the schools:²⁶

I am shocked by the harsh treatment meted out to pupils by principal and teacher alike. Several students who are unable to pronounce *Ōkuninushi no mikoto* オホクニヌシノミコト²⁷ are forced to stand up and practice saying it over and over for hours. A young boy in a pink shirt (evidently the classroom leader) angrily reprimands the other students brandishing a short stick in his hand. Generally, this class leader walks around the classroom during the lesson and is ordered to administer a beating to students who are loafing off. What kind of school insists that students must have military orders barked out at them—one, two!—just to take off their caps!²⁸

In a letter to his wife dated 9 November 1941, Nakajima writes of his job in the following terms:

Now after the tour [of inspection to the schools of eastern Micronesia], I have come to see the utter meaningless of this job of editing textbooks for the natives (*dojin* 土人). To make the natives happy, there are many things of far greater importance than textbooks, which are really a triviality, the last thing they really need. In the present conditions in Nan'yō, we have more and more trouble providing them with adequate food and shelter. At such a time what good would it do even if I were to produce a slightly improved textbook? Providing the natives with a half-baked education may only deepen their misfortune. I no longer feel the least zeal for my job as editor. It is not because I hate the natives. It is because I love them.

In another letter to his father dated 6 November, he notes the drastic worsening of exploitation of the islanders as the Japanese military launched a large-scale plan to fortify the islands in preparation for the Pacific War.

In the present emergency situation, education of the natives (*domin* 土民) is hardly a priority. It seems that the policy of the authorities is to treat the natives as a labor force and exploit them until they are used up (*tsukai subushite* 使い潰して). In these circumstances I have totally lost even the modicum of enthusiasm for my job that I had previously.

Nakajima Atsushi was not simply a disgruntled and disillusioned colonial official. After returning to Japan, he wrote two collections of stories based on his experiences in Palau, *South Sea Tales* (Nantōtan 南島譚) and *Atolls* (Kanshō 環礁).²⁹

Learning to See the World through Western Eyeglasses

Before I turn to these works, I would like to consider briefly representations of the South Seas in the works of this writer before he traveled to Palau in order to uncover the literary sources of his vision of the South Seas. As I hope to show, Nakajima encountered the textual “South Seas” long before he traveled to its actual counterpart. In fact, he traveled to the South Seas partly to actualize the representations that he had first discovered in literary

texts. For example, Nakajima was happiest when nature imitated art: that is, when real places approximated the fantasy of a “primitive” paradise he sought. During a tour of the Marshall islands, he wrote a letter to his wife Taka dated October 1, 1941 in which he claims: “I like Jaluit best of all the islands I have visited because it is the most uncivilized (*hirakete inai* 開けていない) and the closest to the South Seas of Stevenson.”³⁰ In this statement, Stevenson supplies the standard against which reality is measured and this standard is tantamount to the standard of civilization itself. By contrast, the authentic South Seas is “uncivilized.”

In noting that Nakajima discovers the South Seas via texts, I do not mean that he was passively “influenced” by Western writers and their vision of the South Seas. On the contrary, he actively adopted these writers as models and appropriated their stance in order to establish his own position and persona as a writer. One can find an early example of this process in a *tanka* sequence called *Henreki* 遍歴 (Pilgrimages), written in 1937. In *Henreki*, one finds the following two poems: “At times I wish I could feel the power of life in the raw like Gauguin. At times, I want to plunge into Stevenson’s beautiful dreams and be intoxicated.”³¹ Here the young Nakajima wishes to experience the South Seas through the emotions and dreams of two artists associated with South Seas exoticism. By adopting the point of view of Western writers, he experiences the South Seas as a dream of primitive and “raw” life—that is, the contrary of the urban, industrial society—and is “intoxicated” with his dream.³²

At the time he wrote *Henreki*, Nakajima was a dilettante content to formulate imaginary projects without actually carrying them out. However, a few years later, he carried out one of these projects, and curiously, one with clear South Seas connotations. In 1940, a year before he departed for Palau, Nakajima wrote *Tsushitara no shi* ツシタラの死 (The Death of Tsusitala), a work published in 1942 under the title *Hikari to kaze to yume* 光と風と夢 (Light, Wind and Dreams),³³ a fictional autobiography based on Stevenson’s last years in Samoa. This “fictional autobiography” is an odd hybrid that defies easy classification: the evenly numbered chapters of the book are fictional entries in the diary of the narrator “Stevenson” (based mainly on Robert Louis Stevenson’s so-called *Vailima* Letters)³⁴ while the oddly numbered chapters constitute a literary biography of Stevenson’s years in Samoa (1890-94) told by an omniscient narrator. Nakajima clearly identified himself strongly with the figure of Stevenson in this “diary,” particularly with his protagonist’s critical attitude toward European imperialism and his fascination with the “primitive” islanders. From the opening passage, we see Samoa from the viewpoint of the European artist seeking spiritual renewal through contact with a “primitive” people:

Love the sun, the land and all living creatures, scorn wealth, give alms to the one that asks and consider the white’s man’s civilization as nothing but a great prejudice. Stride side by side with uneducated but strong people, feel the pleasant sensation of blood pulsing under your skin wet from labor in the wind and the bright light. . . Say only what you truly think and do only what you really want to do. This was his new life.³⁵

Nakajima ends the story with the death of Tsusitala, the character named with a

Samoan native word meaning a “narrator of stories,” which had become Stevenson’s title among the Samoans. “Just as the people of South Seas are inebriated with the joy of life, they are overcome with despair and grief in the face of death. As tears streamed down his bronzed and wrinkled face, the old chief whispered in a low voice. *Tofa* (sleep)! Tsusitala.”³⁶ Tsusitala thus ends his life surrounded by the islanders who loved him and accepted him as the narrator of their story.

In a study of Nakajima, Wada Hirobumi 和田博文 poses an intriguing question about this odd literary work: why did Nakajima choose to entrust (*takusō* 託送) to himself the writer Robert Louis Stevenson?³⁷ Wada points to the many obvious affinities Nakajima had with the Scottish writer: both men were writers of “tales,” both were physically weak, and both were fascinated by the exoticism of the South Seas.³⁸ This reasoning, however, appears to be based on a retrospective illusion: that is, it compares Stevenson in Samoa with Nakajima as canonized by post-war critics rather than with the Nakajima who actually wrote this novel.³⁹ I would argue that, on the contrary, Nakajima discovers the exoticism of the South Seas precisely by putting himself in Stevenson’s position or viewing the world through Stevenson’s eyes: that is by writing *Hikari to kaze to yume*, he becomes his own image of Stevenson and the South Seas becomes the South Seas as seen by Robert Louis Stevenson. For Nakajima, Stevenson was not a mirror in which he could see a reflection of himself but a model he sought to emulate, vicariously, by writing.

If we compare the geopolitical position of these two men, we will discover a similarity of perhaps greater significance than the superficial connections that one can point to in the two authors’ biographies. As creative writers living at the peak of their respective empires, Nakajima stood in a position toward the South Seas in 1940 analogous to that of Stevenson to Samoa in the 1890s.⁴⁰ By telling the story of Stevenson in Samoa as a “fictional autobiography,” Nakajima fused himself with Stevenson and mastered his perspective on the South Seas. To understand the import and the novelty of this geopolitical similarity, it will be fruitful to compare the perspective of Stevenson in Nakajima’s novel (written half a century after Stevenson’s death) with that of a Japanese contemporary of Stevenson, Shiga Shigetaka 志賀重昂.

Shiga wrote *Nan’yō jiji* 南洋時事 (Conditions of the South Seas) in 1887, a year after spending ten months cruising the South Seas on the Navy training vessel *Tsukuba* 筑波. In a chapter titled “Dream Story [*yumemonogatari* 夢物語] of the God Tagaloa,” Shiga offers an account of Samoa’s loss of independence, which overlaps with the plot of *Hikari to kaze to yume*. Both works stress the devastating effects of Western settlement upon Samoa and denounce the meddling by England, America and Germany in Samoan affairs. The chief difference between these two accounts of late nineteenth century Samoa lies not in the events being narrated but rather in the position of the narrator toward these events. Shiga implicitly identifies not with the white settlers who came to Samoa but rather with the Samoan victims of Western imperialism. In Shiga’s account, Tagaloa, the national god of Samoa, addresses the narrator after he falls asleep beside the ruins of the palace of the former ruler of Samoa. “Are you not a man of the yellow race? I will set before you the grievances that fill my breast.”

That is, Shiga is addressed because he is not white and because he can empathize with the grievances of the Samoans. The god then explains how the Germans have used trickery and force to seize control of his country at a time when all of Europe is in a “colonial fever,” scurrying to grab the last remaining lands of the South Seas. In his closing words, he issues the following warning to Shiga:

In the end, Samoa will probably not be able to secure its independence because of a combination of domestic unrest and foreign interference. If you make it back to Japan safely, I want you to let your countrymen know about recent events in Samoa and to take them as a warning for your future. In the future you should strive to avoid mistakes such as defying the laws of biological evolution and worshipping all Western things and intoxicating yourself with Western ways.⁴¹

In having the national god of Samoa tell the story of Samoa’s loss of independence, Shiga presents us with a Samoan perspective on his own country as well as on Europe. As addressee of the Tagaloa’s words, Shiga is invited to see Samoa’s experience as an example of the dangers presented by the Western imperialist threat from which Japan can learn a lesson.

Writing about the same series of events in *Hikari to kaze to yume*, two generations after Shiga traveled to Samoa, Nakajima completely reverses the perspective from which the history of Samoa is narrated. Rather than offering a Samoan perspective on Europe, he tells us about Samoa seen from a European perspective: that of the writer Stevenson. Rather than Samoa being held up as an example for Japan, it is evidently Stevenson himself, with his exotic romanticism and critical point of view on Western colonization of the South Seas, who is upheld as the figure to emulate. In adopting Stevenson’s—that is, a Westerner’s—perspective, Nakajima depicts the South Seas both as an antidote to the ills of civilization and as a tropical paradise under threat from the same civilization. Perhaps the political significance of *Hikari to kaze to yume* lies in this fusion not only of writer and character, of Nakajima and Stevenson, but also of the British empire in 1890 and the Japanese empire in 1940, of Stevenson’s criticism of Western imperialism and of the rhetoric of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.⁴² As we have seen, even the Samoans in the novel view Stevenson as their benefactor and choose him as their storyteller at the end. As I show in this article, Nakajima’s literary works based on his experiences in Micronesia are written from a similar point of view, but with a Japanese narrator substituting for Stevenson.

“Mariyan”: Colonial Official meets Assimilated Native

In this article I will focus mainly on two stories from the collection of travel sketches called *Atolls*: “Mariyan” マリヤン and “High Noon” (“Mahiru” 真昼). Nakamura Kazue has called the former work the start of post-colonial literature in Japanese.⁴³ Written at the time of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, “Mariyan” is the portrait of a native woman of the South Seas placed at the bottom of Japan’s “pyramid of peoples” (to use Masaki’s Tsuneo’s phrase). The story is Janus-faced, looking back at the colonial period and forward to our post-

colonial present. An analysis of this work can shed light on the contradictions and anxieties that bedeviled Japan's empire in the early 1940s and illuminate the troubled identity of Japan as a post-colonial nation today.

"Mariyan" is an episodic work in which nothing really happens. The narrator meets Mariyan for the first time during a visit to the house of a friend, an ethnographer who has lived in Micronesia for several years. The narrator gleans much of his information about Mariyan from this friend. He describes Mariyan, tries to explain her and occasionally cites her opinions. He also hints that Mariyan may enter into a romantic involvement with either himself or his friend; in the end, this romantic entanglement fails to occur. At the end of the story both Japanese men suddenly return to Japan, ostensibly on a temporary trip. Writing from the metropolis (*naichi* 内地) a few months later, the narrator reminisces about his encounter and wonders what Mariyan is thinking. Although the narrator ends his story back in Japan, he continues to be haunted by this Micronesian woman.

The narrator of "Mariyan" is a representative of the colonial government and an agent of colonial power but he is hardly a "typical" colonial bureaucrat. He says of himself: "I have a rather odd character, so I was completely unable to be myself in my dealings with all of my colleagues in the Palau government office; aside from Mr. H, I had no other person that I could really call my friend."⁴⁴ Due to his "odd character," the narrator neither fits into his government office nor gets along with his colleagues. By emphasizing the peripheral position he occupies in the bureaucracy and the eccentricity of his character, this narrator appears to disavow his authority. Thus, *at least in his own eyes*, the narrator of "Mariyan" occupies a dual position: officially, he is an agent of authority but unofficially he is a non-conformist who keeps his distance from institutional authority. From this dual position, he simultaneously expounds colonial discourse on the South Seas and subverts it by exposing its incoherence and contradictions.

If the narrator is a somewhat reluctant colonialist, Mariyan is an exemplary product of the policies of assimilation that the narrator is half-heartedly implementing. Mariyan is not only a well-educated woman who attended a higher girl's school (*jogakkō* 女学校) in Japan, but also a bilingual intellectual/informant in her own right. The narrator's first meeting with Mariyan takes place in the room of his ethnographer friend H, who is collecting ancient narrative poems of Palau. Mariyan is introduced to the narrator as H's Palauan language teacher: she stops by regularly to assist him in transcribing these ancient poems into Palauan and translating them into Japanese. Related on her mother's side to the most distinguished family in Palau, Mariyan is also the foster child of a character named William Gibbon, who once served as interpreter to the German ethnographer Kramer when the Germans ruled Micronesia. Accordingly, Mariyan is second in a line of culturally hybrid native mediators/informants between Palau and its successive colonial ethnographers. The mention of Kramer (a real historical figure who wrote ethnographic studies of Micronesia in the early twentieth century) is the first appearance of a recurring motif in this story. H and Mariyan are represented as reenacting an earlier colonial relationship first performed by the pair Kramer and Gibbon. But the narrator takes this theme of replication one step further:

Hearing H mention William Gibbon, the narrator immediately associates his name with the famous Edward Gibbon, author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, treating William Gibbon not as a recurrence but rather as a colonial double or ironic parody of the renowned English historian.

Authoritative Discourse and Colonial Surveillance

“Mariyan” begins with the declaration: “Mariyan is the name of a woman that I got to know quite well in the southern islands.”⁴⁵ As a general rule, the narrator relies on two sources for the knowledge he conveys to us about Mariyan: the first is the secondhand information he obtains from the ethnographer H, and the second is the evidence of his own eyes. For example, it is largely through H’s mediation and interpretations that the narrator comes to hear about Mariyan’s family background, her education, her marriage and divorce. H is introduced as an authoritative expert on Palau, qualified to represent its people and to speak on their behalf. An early exchange exemplifies the narrator’s reliance on H as privileged commentator on the Micronesian environment. In her presence, the narrator asks H whether Mariyan speaks English.

Laughing, Mr. H looked at Mariyan and said, “Does she know English? Why, English is her forte. She attended an upper school for girls in Japan.” Looking as though she were embarrassed, Mariyan’s thick lips broke into a smile, but she made no attempt to deny what H had said.⁴⁶

Rather than questioning Mariyan directly, the narrator prefers to have his information filtered through H’s expertise. Mariyan is the topic of their conversation but does not take part in it; at most, she assents to what is said about her or, to be precise, makes “no attempt to deny” it.

As a spectator who observes Mariyan from a distance and records her effect on him, the narrator also relies on his own direct observation to form his opinions. His position in the scene where he first meets Mariyan typifies his perspective as interested bystander: he is introduced to her in H’s room and then left to observe as H and Mariyan proceed with their language lesson. It is worthwhile to reflect on the structure of this narrative gaze, particularly on its non-reciprocity and inequality. While the narrator is free to watch and react to her at his leisure, Mariyan does not return his gaze or scrutinize him. She is exposed and vulnerable, whereas he is insulated by his privilege and invisibility. Indeed, one could characterize his point of view as a form of voyeuristic surveillance. As the focus of this narrator’s gaze, Mariyan is primarily apprehended as an object placed under surveillance. This voyeurism is not simply a psychological peculiarity of the narrator but a fundamental narrative structure of “Mariyan.”

Peeping (*nozoku* 覗く) out of my window, I saw Mariyan cutting weeds in a nearby banana field. She must have been performing the labor service (*kinrō hōshi* 勤勞奉

仕) that was imposed on the women of the island from time to time. Besides Mariyan, there were several other women bending over among the grasses and holding sickles in their hands. She was probably not whistling to get my attention—Mariyan frequently visited H's room, but she probably did not know where I lived. She was cutting diligently, oblivious to the fact that she was being watched by me (*watakushi ni mirarete iru koto o shirazu ni 私に見られていることを知らずに*) ... After her big basket was stuffed full of weeds, she straightened her bent back and turned in my direction. She smiled wryly on recognizing me, but she did not come over to talk to me. To conceal her embarrassment, she deliberately called out loudly, "heave ho," lifted the basket on top of her head and walked away without saying goodbye.⁴⁷

In this scene, the reader is shown in miniature the basic structure of the narrator's position with regard to Mariyan. First we catch a glimpse of the narrator peeping out at Mariyan from a protected and hidden position (she does not know where the narrator lives). In addition, the narrator observes her precisely at the moment that she performs a forced labor duty in the company of other island women; under his surveillance she is transformed into a docile object of colonial rule as well as a passive object of his gaze (her passivity is underscored by the narrator's use of the passive voice). Lastly, when Mariyan realizes that she is the unwitting object of the narrator's observation, she reacts with a "wry smile" and "embarrassment," thereby offering the narrator a mirror that reflects his authority over her. In addition to presenting the narrator as a voyeur exercising his "right" of surveillance over Mariyan, this scene also throws into relief the wider context in which narrator and Mariyan meet: a context of colonial disciplinary power over the bodies of the colonized.⁴⁸

Eugenics and the "Limitations" of Race

We have seen the method by which the narrator comes to know Mariyan; but what does he actually have to say about her? And how does he justify his own position toward her? First, the narrator uses a racial discourse to construct her as a member of a backward and ignorant race. According to this discourse, Mariyan is a Kanakan (a derogatory term applied especially to the indigenous people of the Carolines and Marshalls)⁴⁹ and her ethnicity naturally entails a variety of physical and mental limitations. After mentioning that Mariyan is "very much the intellectual," he hastens to add the qualification that "the contents of her brain have practically nothing Kanakan about them"—plainly implying that being Kanakan and being an intellectual are mutually exclusive. In his description of Mariyan's face, he writes: "There is nothing you can do about the limitations of her race, but if you keep these limitations in mind . . . she has a truly natural and full face." Mariyan's "truly natural and full face" is all the more unexpected since Mariyan has not the "slightest admixture of Japanese or Western features," even though people in the South Seas assume that "anyone with good looks must be of mixed blood." In assigning Mariyan to membership in an inferior race, the narrator himself assumes the perspective of a member of a superior race, that is to say, those Japanese

or Western races that are free of such “limitations.”

What social backdrop lies behind this rhetoric of “the limitations of race” and this insistence on the congenital inferiority of the Kanakans? In the first place, one can point to the institutionalized racism of colonial society in which social rank was determined by race and ethnicity. In his history of the Japanese colonization of Micronesia, Mark Peattie notes, “Micronesians were always viewed by Japanese colonial administrators as lesser peoples in an empire that, ethnically, was sharply hierarchical.” Whereas the Japanese stood at the top, followed by Koreans and Okinawans, the indigenous islanders were designated a “third class people” (*santōkokumin* 三等国民) and relegated to the bottom.⁵⁰ Besides the institutionalized racism of colonial society, one cannot overlook the powerful influence that media images denigrating the “backward” South Sea islanders had on all Japanese during the interwar years.⁵¹ Kawamura Minato argues that a “popular orientalism” in which images of colonial and backward groups are contrasted with Japanese modernity, was disseminated to the masses by popular novels, children’s comic strips and film from the late 1920s. *Bōken Dankichi* 冒険ダン吉 (The Adventures of Dankichi), a comic strip created by Shimada Keizō 島田啓三, epitomizes this popular orientalism.⁵² Serialized in the periodical *Shōnen kurabu* 少年倶楽部 between 1933 and 1939, *Bōken Dankichi* relates the adventures of Dankichi, a young boy who falls asleep in his fishing boat and drifts to a southern island called *Banjintō* 蛮人島 (Barabarian Island). With the assistance of Karikō, his loyal and clever mouse, Dankichi becomes king of this island of cannibals (also referred to as “barbarians” and *kuronbō* 黒ん坊⁵³ or “darkies”) and brings its inhabitants the benefits of civilization. *Shūchō no musume* 酋長の娘 (The Chief’s Daughter), a hit song from the late Taishō and early Shōwa period is another work that offers a compendium of Japanese stereotypes about the South Seas. The lyrics of this song are as follows:

My lover (*rābā*) is the daughter of the chief. She is black but in Nan’yō, she is thought of as a beauty. She sways and dances beneath the palm trees in the Marshalls, south of the equator dancing as she swigs down muddy liquor. Tomorrow is the happy festival of the severed heads. The chief’s daughter I saw yesterday is sleeping today beneath the banana tree. How can a girl who does not dance make a good wife?

As the daughter of a Palauan chieftain, Mariyan must also be seen in counterpoint with the images of offhand savagery and innocent playfulness evoked by this popular song.⁵⁴

However, when the narrator speaks about “mixed blood” and racial improvement by intermarriage, he is drawing on a different register of discourse, namely, that of eugenics. The narrator refers to this theory of “racial improvement” to present his own solution to the conundrum posed by Mariyan—for, as an intellectual Kanakan, Mariyan does constitute a challenge to the narrator’s racial categories and his preconceptions about “backward” races. She may belong to a race of ignorant and inferior savages, but the narrator has to draw a distinction between her racial identity as a Kanakan and her individual story. In fact, he relates her individual story as a narrative of progress and enlightenment: Mariyan, who attended higher school in Japan, was able to rise above the limitations of her race and

become “enlightened” or “the number one reader in Koror, even if we include all the Japanese residents.”⁵⁵ If “the contents of her brain have practically nothing Kanakan about them,” then the narrator is tempted to think of this woman, whom he praises as so “enlightened” and exceptional, as a woman of mixed blood. Of course, the narrator does not assert that Mariyan is of mixed blood: in fact he assures us that Mariyan, unlike her foster father William Gibbon, is a “pure” Micronesian. Rather, he attempts to understand and explain her in terms of the category of mixed blood: his construction of Mariyan as a child of mixed blood is a purely rhetorical exercise.⁵⁶ Among eugenicists, it was a truism at the time that the Kanakans—as an inferior race—would benefit most from intermarrying with members of superior races, whether they be Japanese or Western.⁵⁷ In constructing Mariyan as a child of mixed blood, he makes tactical adjustments in racial categories to accommodate an “exception” without calling into question the racial hierarchy *per se*.⁵⁸

Paradise Lost and the Corruption of the Primitive

In contrast to this racialized figure of an ignorant savage, the narrator uses a discourse of climate to construct a narrative of Mariyan as an innocent primitive corrupted by civilization. In his discourse on climate, the narrator divides the world into temperate and tropical zones, assigning Japan to the former and the South Seas to the latter. Although terms such as temperate and tropical are ordinarily employed to designate geographical regions, the narrator uses them to denote esthetic standards and values that govern different societies.⁵⁹ Effectively, he sets up a binary opposition between essentialized tropical and temperate standards of beauty in order to demonstrate that the two are mutually incompatible and must not be mixed. For example, he offers the following explanation about the administrative capital of Koror.

Mariyan herself seems to be a bit ashamed of her own Kanakan looks... (because) she lives in Koror City (the cultural center of the Nan'yō Archipelago) where standards of civilized beauty exert a great influence even among the indigenous islanders. In reality, it seems to me that this Koror—and the fact is that I have lived longest in this place—is in a state of chaos brought through the intrusion of values belonging to the temperate zones in a city that lies in the tropical zone. I was not so struck by this fact when I first came to Koror, but now whenever I return to the city after making a circuit of islands where there are no Japanese residents, I have come to feel it quite clearly. In this place, neither tropical nor temperate things seem very beautiful. Or it would be more accurate to write that what we call beauty—whether tropical or temperate—does not exist here at all. Things that you would expect to have tropical beauty wither after suffering castration at the hands of temperate civilization, while things that ought to possess a temperate beauty become feeble and lose their poise in this tropical landscape, particularly under the relentless light of the sun. The city absolutely reeks with decadence and a strange poverty; everyone is obviously obsessed with keeping up appearances, but that only adds to the sense that the place is a colonial backwater.⁶⁰

If the narrator envisions race in terms of a hierarchy, he describes these different climates as forming zones or bands (*obi* or *tai* 帯) that are horizontal and non-hierarchical in nature. Yet these “tropical” and “temperate” zones stand in a clear power relationship: he uses “temperate” and “civilized” (*bunmeiteki* 文明的) interchangeably and implicitly treats “tropical” as synonymous with uncivilized. At the same time, he tries to be evenhanded: he recognizes that both tropical and civilized beauty—in their pure, authentic forms—are worthy of admiration. By contrast, he condemns mixing as a form of adulteration or pollution. This “adulteration” happens especially when natives of the tropics give up their own standards of beauty and adopt those of civilized peoples.

The power relationship between temperate and tropical standards is made explicit by the narrator’s use of metaphors. Tropical beauty suffers “castration at the hands of temperate civilization, while things that ought to possess a temperate beauty become feeble and lose their poise in this tropical landscape.” Tropical beauty is a wild animal rendered impotent after being operated on by a castrating “civilization.” Beyond the harm it does to the individual, castration is of course fatal for the species and cuts off any hopes that it can survive into the future. By contrast, civilized beauty is like an overdressed woman in the tropics who loses her poise in the blazing sun: the harm is limited and temporary, a result of environment rather than competing standards.

While the power differential in the narrator’s use of metaphor is easy to unravel, the same cannot be said of the complicated gender politics in this passage. Most colonial narratives tend to depict the South Seas as feminine and to depict the colonizer in masculine terms. By contrast, the narrator of “Mariyan” implicitly treats the tropics as a male when he speaks of castration but then goes on to attribute the “feminine” predicate of beauty to the tropics. Civilization is also depicted in feminine terms as wilting under the sun and lacking in “poise.”

Conversely, civilization also plays a masculine role, castrating the tropics by imposing its standards on the natives. The passage thus likens the process of civilization to castration. The narrator treats Mariyan as male in order to castrate her, but by castrating her he makes her more like him. As a civilized Japanese, he is already castrated and in this passage he performs his own emasculation. I return to this complicated gender bending later when I discuss the relationship of this narrative to Western narratives of the South Seas.

The harm caused by civilized standards does not end with the castration and destruction of primitive beauty. Unlike the residents of “islands where there are no Japanese,” indigenous islanders in Koror tend to internalize civilized standards. Mariyan “seems to be a bit ashamed of her own Kanakan looks.” Corrupted by civilized standards, she cannot appreciate her own beauty. The beauty Mariyan represents exists only outside herself—as an object of longing and nostalgia for this narrator from the temperate zone. Only he is able to “discover” this beauty, turn it into an object of esthetic contemplation, appropriate it for his own enjoyment and rescue it from destruction. The narrator both laments and savors the tragic disappearance of tropical beauty under the castrating influence of civilization.

Whereas the benighted savage is redeemed in the racist narrative of progress and civilization, the primitive innocent is seen as an endangered species in this nostalgic and pessimistic narrative of civilization and corruption. The narrator expresses his strongest aversion for the half-civilized colonial backwater of Koror, which “reeks with decadence.” Koror is ugly because it belongs neither to the civilized nor to the uncivilized world: it is in-between, an impure mixture and a second-hand copy of civilized culture. The obverse of this horror is the nostalgia he expresses for the beauty that continues in its pure state only in “islands where there are no Japanese residents.” He longs for the primitive beauty of islands that he alters by his very presence and condemns the chaos of colonial cities where the Japanese have imposed their civilized standards.⁶¹ In this narrative of the vanishing primitive, Mariyan, the cultural hybrid, figures as a primitive corrupted by civilization.

The Rhetorical Construction of a Westernized Narrator

The narrator uses discourses of race and environment to construct two contradictory figures of Mariyan: benighted savage and innocent primitive—both familiar figures to any student of Western colonial narratives. But the narrator does not merely force Mariyan into these Western colonial stereotypes. He also interposes himself as a spokesman for an ambivalent Western perspective on Mariyan. To construct this point of view as quasi-Western, Nakajima conflates the conventional colonial rhetorics of Japan and the West, overlooking specific differences to produce a broad, inclusive category of “the civilized” that can be contrasted with the tropics: for example, he writes of the superior looks of islanders with “Western or Japanese” blood, stressing his identification with Europeans as a superior race. He also speaks of the Japanese as *ontaijin* 温帯人—literally, inhabitants of the temperate zones.

By comparing the published text of “Mariyan” with an early draft of this story, we discover that Nakajima made significant deletions in order to make his construct of “the civilized” more cosmopolitan—indeed to suggest that it is universal. The statement “the contents of her brain have practically nothing Kanakan about them” originally read “the contents of her brain were like those of a civilized person, more than half Japanese, and had almost nothing Kanakan about them.” Or consider his description of the colonial contradictions of Koror: the final manuscript reads “where standards of civilized beauty exert a great influence even among the indigenous islanders,”⁶² but an earlier draft reads “where the standards of Japanese civilized beauty exert a great influence even among the islanders.” Without speculating on the reasons behind the author’s decision to cross out “Japanese” twice, I would suggest that the effect of these changes is to endow the narrator with a universal point of view rather than one linked to a Japanese national identity. Adopting the point of view of the West toward the South, he both stresses his identification with the West and rhetorically constructs the South as a place of backwardness.

The Ambivalence of Japanese Colonialism

As we have seen, the narrator constructs Mariyan as a primitive and a savage, simultaneously incorporating her into long-standing Western colonial narratives and introducing himself as a quasi-Western observer of her. These two narratives, those of race or climate, offer conflicting images of the primitive, always a problematic and ambivalent figure in Western history. The narrator treats Mariyan as problematic not because she is “primitive” but rather because she is culturally hybrid, at once a native Micronesian and a product of Japan’s assimilation policy. While Mariyan is not depicted as internally troubled about her split identity, she is shown as a problem for the narrator who reacts to her with ambivalent feelings and even pain. To the narrator, Mariyan fits neither into her environment, nor into the clothes she wears; for him she is a dissonant chord, an incongruous juxtaposition.

Consider two brief scenes in which the narrator discusses his ambivalent reaction to Mariyan.

One time, Mr. H and I paid a visit to Mariyan’s house, which we happened to be passing by. As in almost all houses of the islanders (*tōmin* 島民), the flooring was largely made of bamboo planks lined up alongside each other, and only partly of wood. I walked in without ceremony and noticed a small table set on the wooden floor with two books lying on it. I picked them up to see what they were. One was a selection of English poetry edited by Kuriyagawa Hakuson and the other was the Iwanami edition of *The Marriage of Loti*.⁶³ Several baskets made of palm leaves were lined up on shelves hanging from the ceiling and light summer wear was hanging in disorder from a rope strung across the room (the islanders do not put their clothing away but hang them out on a clothesline). The cries of chickens could be heard from under the bamboo flooring. A woman, probably a relative of Mariyan, was sleeping in a slovenly posture in a corner of the room; when we came in, she cast a suspicious glance in our direction and then turned over and fell right back to sleep. It was odd to come across Kuriyagawa Hakuson and Pierre Loti in such an environment. I would even say that I found something distressing (*itamashii* いたましい) about the place but I cannot say for sure whether it was the books or Mariyan herself that pained me.⁶⁴

The narrator is distressed when he discovers Japanese translations of European literature on Mariyan’s desk: as we have seen, he finds that Mariyan is confused by Western esthetic standards and feels pity for her. Mariyan is not reading Pierre Loti in the original but rather a Japanese translation, the Iwanami edition of *The Marriage of Loti*. Recently, Komori Yōichi has argued that translators and interpreters of Western concepts such as “civilization” and the “law of nations” played an essential rule in fitting Japan within a new hegemonic discursive order, a process he names “self-colonization.”⁶⁵ However, as the narrator makes clear, Japanese translators were not merely mediators between Western ideas and the Japanese people; in this scene, they serve to introduce Western civilization to the colonial subjects over which Japan

ruled. Mariyan, a colonized woman, reads Loti's classical colonial novel of the South Seas in the language of the new colonizers of the South Seas. Since their tongue is the medium, the Japanese can regard Mariyan's efforts to assimilate European culture from a superior or patronizing point of view. But the attitude of the narrator is more complicated and ambivalent: if H and Mariyan reenact an earlier colonial encounter between ethnographer and native informant, here Japanese translators recycle an old Western narrative about the South Seas for the benefit of their colonized subjects.

In the second scene, he writes,

Once I saw Mariyan all dressed up. She was decked out in a pure white dress with high heels and carried a short parasol in her hand. As usual her face was bright, or rather it beamed with a brownish sheen; her thick, bronze arms, so powerful that they could crush a demon to death, stuck out from her short sleeves; it looked like the narrow shoes with their high heels at the base of her column-like legs would bend and give way. Even as I tried my best to thrust aside the bias with which a person of weak physique regards someone who is physically superior, I could hardly help but be amused at the spectacle she offered. At the same time, it is true that I felt the same distress (*itamashisa* いたましさ) that I had earlier experienced when I discovered the *Selected English Poems* in her room. Just as before, this time too I was not sure whether I was disturbed by her white dress or by the person who was wearing it.⁶⁶

Here again, the narrator uses the term "*itamashii*," although he also stresses the comical effect that Mariyan makes on him.

Why does the narrator insist, not once, but two times in the story that he feels "distress"? In stressing that he is "distressed" by Mariyan, the narrator confesses to a kind of identification he feels with her. The question of his "distress" takes us to the heart of his confusion over how he should consider her. Only by analyzing the specific structures of Japanese colonialism can we understand why he sees himself in Mariyan.

When the narrator tells us that he is "distressed" to discover a novel by Pierre Loti in Mariyan's home, he is not simply reacting to the juxtaposition of objects. Loti's novels or Mariyan's high heels are emblems of civilization. It is Mariyan's appropriation of these emblems, of this cultural capital, that gives rise to his complex reaction. Homi Bhabha writes that for "mimicry to be effective, it must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference."⁶⁷ It is not Mariyan who produces this slippage or excess, but rather the narrator who produces Mariyan as "difference." Mariyan is ontologically different from a Japanese reader of the Iwanami edition of Loti. She is ontologically deficient because she is a copy—and in this particular case, the copy of a copy. In the final analysis, Mariyan's ontological deficiency is of course an optical illusion: it has nothing to do with her and everything to do with the gaze of the viewer.

Good and Bad Copies

If the narrator insists on viewing Mariyan as a “copy” who deserves pity, the question then becomes: what is the “original” on which she is modeling herself? And what is his own relation to this “original”? By choosing only Western artifacts as the standards of civilization, he adopts a European perspective from which to look down on Mariyan. But the narrator of “Mariyan” does not stand in relation to Mariyan as original to copy with respect to the Western cultural standards he invokes. In this case, both colonizer and colonized are culturally hybrid—products of mimicry.

In this situation one can imagine that the narrator would have two ways to represent his relationship to Mariyan. Instead of presuming to be the “original,” he would base his sense of superiority on a distinction between different types of copies. Japan, as a fully modern but non-Western country, is a “good” copy and an “authorized” copy. In the first place, the narrator of “Mariyan” has assimilated Western cultural standards so well that that he does not see them as foreign appurtenances. In the second, he is an authorized copy by virtue of the very language of the League of Nations mandate under which Japan ruled Micronesia. As a member of an “advanced nation,” he exercises authority under “a sacred trust of civilization,” while the Micronesians are a primitive people incapable of exercising rule over themselves “under the strenuous conditions of the modern world.”⁶⁸ This official involved in assimilation policies suffers from conflicted feelings, however: he feels a sense of superiority to Mariyan and “imperial nostalgia” for her tropical beauty—beauty that is endangered by the very policies that he is called upon to implement.

Yet since both Mariyan and the narrator are equally “copies,” he also finds a touch of Mariyan in himself and is tempted to make common cause with her rather than to exaggerate the differences between them.⁶⁹ While he only occasionally cites Mariyan’s words, he allows her to wax eloquent about *The Marriage of Loti*.⁷⁰ This novel tells the story of an English naval officer who travels to Tahiti, has a brief affair with a Tahitian girl and then abandons her to return to England. Mariyan does not hesitate to take Loti to task. “Mariyan aired her dissatisfaction about the *The Marriage of Loti* and criticized its author for misrepresenting the reality of the South Seas. She argued, ‘Naturally, I don’t know anything about what went on long ago and in Polynesia, but even so, it is hard to believe that such things could really have happened.’”

In this passage—and this is the originality of “Mariyan”—the narrator cites Mariyan’s words and allows her to talk back to Loti. Why? One would need to recall that Loti is also the author of *Madame Chysanthème*, which might be described as the Japanese variant of *The Marriage of Loti*. Translated as *Kikusan* 菊さん by Nogami Toyochiro 野上豊一郎 in 1915, Loti’s novel was reprinted many times and was much better known in Japan than *The Marriage of Loti*. Though the narrator does not explicitly mention *Kikusan*, the specter of this work seems to haunt Nakajima’s text. The reference to Loti also serves to complicate the narrator’s relationship with Mariyan and to destabilize his view of her; effectively, it institutes a triangular relationship among Loti, Mariyan, and the narrator.⁷¹

How do the three sides of this triangle interact with one another? A contemporary of Stevenson and Shiga, Loti treats Japan and the South Seas indifferently as exotic decors against which his protagonists pursue their colonial and erotic conquests. Here I do not mean that the Japanese and South Sea islanders in his works resemble each other but rather that both are apprehended as objects of a hierarchical gaze and as colorful background.⁷² Offended by Loti's novel, Mariyan criticizes the writer for "misrepresenting" the reality of the South Seas. Indirectly, she points to the blind spot in the narrator's perspective toward her, which is mediated by these same Western "misrepresentations" and no less hierarchical than that of Loti. By citing Mariyan's critique of Loti approvingly, the narrator expresses his solidarity with her: both reject becoming the objectified "other" for a European imperial subject. By the same token, he seems to "air his own dissatisfaction" both with Loti and with his own "Western eyeglasses."⁷³ He is torn between his identification with Mariyan and his sense of superiority over her, between being observer and observed, colonizer and colonized. Ultimately, this triangular relationship among Loti, Mariyan, and the narrator shows that it is impossible for the narrator to view Mariyan through Western eyeglasses.⁷⁴

Rewriting Western Narratives of the South Seas

Robert Nicole has described *The Marriage of Loti* as a formula story that later became "the blueprint for hundreds of other such stories." Later writers recycled Loti's formula in their books; constant repetition in turn contributed to the formation of enduring myths about the South Seas. Here I will call attention to two key motifs of Loti's novel which figure in the tradition of South Seas novels he inaugurated: the island wife and the tragic desertion of the woman by the hero. In *The Marriage of Loti*, Loti turns a temporary emotional and sexual relationship between himself and a fourteen year old Tahitian girl into a famous love story, whitewashing its exploitative nature and ignoring the girl's point of view: I will refer to this as the "island wife" motif. At the end of the novel, he sails back to Europe while she is left behind on the shore to agonize and eventually die: this is the tragic desertion motif.

We have remarked that the author of "Mariyan" encountered a textual South Seas long before he actually set foot in Micronesia. Is "Mariyan" simply a Japanese version of Loti's novel that reproduces the same formulas, or does Nakajima rework the inherited motifs and differentiate his story from Loti's? The open-ended conclusion of "Mariyan," I will argue, proves the latter. Nakajima's achievement is to take these familiar motifs and produce an anti-conquest narrative.

If Loti's novel is centered on his erotic conquest of Rarahu, "Mariyan" could be subtitled "Mariyan's (re)marriage." Early in the story, we learn that Mariyan broke up with her former husband because he "was too prone to jealousy" and that she lives alone with her five-year old daughter. "H. used to wonder whether Mariyan would finally be able to marry again—her high lineage ruling out almost every possible match and her excessive 'enlightenment' making it all but impossible to find a match among the islanders." Mariyan's "remarriage" is a constant preoccupation for these two Japanese males. Indeed, remarriage to a Japanese (*naichijin*

内地人) is presented as a form of salvation for Mariyan and a solution to the problem of being an enlightened hybrid in primitive Micronesia.

Toward the end of the story, the narrator, H, and Mariyan take a stroll out to a wharf in Koror during which the drunken H suggests to Mariyan that she ought to take a Japanese husband if she ever remarries. Mariyan does not reply to H at first, but eventually answers after a long pause: "But you know. . . . As far as Japanese men are concerned. . . . You know. . . ." Hearing Mariyan's reply and realizing that she has given some thought to the issue of remarriage, the narrator bursts out laughing. "And continuing to laugh, I asked, 'So how about a Japanese man? What do you think?'"

Mariyan's situation in this scene is shown to be radically different from that of Loti's heroine, the fourteen-year-old Rarahu. Unlike Rarahu, she enjoys a considerable degree of autonomy and a greater sphere of power. Rather than being simply a woman-object who is married off, she is portrayed as the agent of action. The two Japanese men plainly solicit Mariyan's views on marriage with a *naichijin*. Mariyan appears to have considered the possibility of remarriage to a Japanese, but her deferred and broken answer to their questions leaves the reader wondering what she really thinks.⁷⁵

While Mariyan is represented as possessing agency, this representation is set in a larger narrative framework that undercuts her agency. H may solicit Mariyan's opinion, but he is drunk; the narrator responds to Mariyan's words with laughter. Framed between H's drunkenness and the narrator's mockery, Mariyan's voice is effectively reduced to silence. Just as the narrator's perspective on Mariyan is constituted in a triangular relationship with Loti and Mariyan, Mariyan's agency is inscribed in a similar triangle with the two male characters. Despite the appearance of agency, Mariyan is treated as an object of exchange between the two men, who use her to establish their own relationship. The subtext of this scene is that H is proposing Mariyan as a possible "wife" for the narrator, who rejects the proposal. In this respect, the scene illustrates the function of marriage in patriarchal societies as it has been described by the anthropologist Levi-Strauss: "The total relationship of exchange which constitutes marriage is not established between a man and a woman but between two groups of men, and the woman figures only as one of the objects in the exchange, not as one of the partners."⁷⁶

In the scene when the narrator discovers Loti's book, he allows the fluent Mariyan to speak back to Loti, the Western imperialist, in well-formulated and thoughtful terms. In this scene, by contrast, she is deprived of her fluency in Japanese and censored. Mariyan's halting and broken utterance—"But you know. . . . As far as Japanese men are concerned. . . . You know. . . ."—could be construed to mean anything at all: rejection, resigned acceptance, or indecision. When Mariyan reminds the two men twice that they "know" about Japanese men, she may be referring to the well-known facts that many Japanese settlers took "island wives" during their stay in Micronesia and that the Micronesian women they married hardly ever acquired Japanese citizenship.⁷⁷ Mariyan differs from Rarahu in that she possesses much more agency than Loti's heroine; yet she resembles her in being an object of exchange between two men in the patriarchal structures of Japanese colonial power.⁷⁸

Since the narrator never “consummates” his relationship with Mariyan, his departure at the end of the story is not a tragic occasion, unlike many South Seas narratives, in which the abandoned woman falls into despair or even dies, as did Rarahu.⁷⁹ Rather his departure is treated as a highly ironic episode.

As chance would have it, H and I both ended up leaving for Japan that spring for what we imagined was a temporary trip; Mariyan killed a chicken and treated us to our last feast of Palau cooking. Since neither of us had had so much as a bite of meat since the first of the year, we were eating with gusto and promising Mariyan, “At any rate, we will probably be coming back around autumn (in fact, both of us were expecting to return at that time).” Mariyan said with a smile on her face, “Since Uncle is already more than half Palauan anyway, I bet you will probably be back before long, but as for Tonchan. . . .” To my annoyance she had taken to calling me by this name, copying the way H used to refer to me. At first I was a little irritated with her but in the end I was silenced and could do nothing but give a strained laugh. I said, “So you mean to say that I am not to be relied on, then?” “No matter how close you become to Japanese from the home islands, when they return to their home, they never come back here a second time,” she retorted in an unusually wistful tone of voice.⁸⁰

Though Mariyan speaks in an “unusually” wistful tone of voice, she actually celebrates the departure of the narrator and H and offers them their final feast in Palau. Clearheaded, she “smiles” at their promises to come back in the midst of the Pacific War (although not mentioned, the war is the cause of growing food shortages on the island). Mariyan also makes a realistic evaluation of the likelihood of their eventual return.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the narrator ends the story by leaving the final word to Mariyan. In contrast to the Loti novel, it is not the abandoned South Sea islander, but the “superior” narrator who falls ill after his return to Japan. Ultimately, he has “little hope” of ever returning to his government job, and for his part, H unexpectedly gets married and settles down for good in Tokyo. The narrator concludes by saying, “What will Mariyan say when she hears this news?”⁸¹ Naturally, he does not answer his question, nor can he know what Mariyan’s reaction will be. In concluding his story with an open-ended question of what Mariyan would say, he is suggesting that Mariyan might have a right of reply. Writing from Japan, the narrator continues to be haunted by the absent Mariyan and by her mute voice. The story may come to an end but it reaches no conclusion.

To what end does the narrator rework these motifs of Loti’s South Seas narrative? In my view, the narrator of “Mariyan” adopts a strategy to absolve himself of any colonial guilt, particularly with respect to sexual relations based on colonial power, a staple of most South Seas novels. In his first encounter with Mariyan, the narrator hints that there might be an inter-racial romantic plot involving Mariyan and H the ethnographer.⁸² In the scene I just examined, H proposes that Mariyan marry a Japanese, implying that the narrator might make a suitable mate. While Nakajima sprinkles his story with these suggestions, in the end the

romantic plot fails to materialize. In fact, the author seems to deliberately tantalize readers with the possibility of sexual relationships based on colonial power in order then to frustrate their expectation; by the same token he portrays the narrator as an emasculated man (for example, in the passage on civilization and castration) as if to foreclose this very possibility.⁸³ The narrator depicts Mariyan in masculine terms (she is seen as strong, independent, and fully autonomous) but describes himself as a “feminized” man (he is not only physically weak, but also dependent and immature). Nakajima has him voice an introspective observation that penetrates the psychology of the corporeally disadvantaged: “I tried my best to thrust aside the bias with which a person of weak physique regards someone who is physically superior.” By deliberately foregrounding his weakness and inferiority, the narrator seeks to exculpate himself from his complicity in a colonial power relationship, if only by reason of incapacity.

Nakajima’s emasculated narrator goes to great lengths to establish his own innocence, for example, by behaving like a child and even allowing Mariyan to treat him as one. When he bursts into laughter in response to Mariyan’s reply to H’s question about remarrying a Japanese man, it is clear that by his mocking but childish inappropriateness he is disqualifying himself as a possible marriage partner. Further, when Mariyan imitates the patriarchal H in calling the narrator by the diminutive Ton-chan 敦ちゃん (*ton* being the Sino-Japanese reading of the character for Atsushi, *chan* a suffix attached to the name of a child or someone not regarded as fully adult), she switches positions with him and challenges his authority. Here, Mariyan’s copying (of H) has all the subversive and parodic potential that Bhabha discovers in colonial mimicry. Up till this moment, the narrator has occupied the subject position, describing the impression that Mariyan makes on him but neglecting to take account of the effect he produces on her. Suddenly the viewpoint is reversed. Mariyan appropriates the position of subject, and the narrator becomes object, to his consternation. While he is bothered (“To my annoyance she had taken to calling me by ‘Ton-chan,’ copying the way H used to refer to me.”),⁸⁴ he implicitly accepts this reversal, perhaps because it allows him to disavow his authority.

What Nakajima has created here parallels the “anti-conquest narratives” that Mary Louise Pratt finds in nineteenth-century European travel writings. The nineteenth-century writers employ “strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony.”⁸⁵ Pratt focuses on two new anti-heroes that appear in travel writings from this period: the detached naturalist traveler who asserts his authority by cataloguing, naming, and collecting all the fauna and flora of the natural world and the vulnerable narrator of sentimental novels who depicts himself as the lonely suffering victim of his demanding journey. The emasculated narrator of “Mariyan” is just such an anti-hero who is attempting to establish his innocence in this colonial narrative.⁸⁶

Decolonizing Nakajima Atsushi

It is hard to argue that the author of “Mariyan” was “blinded” by his Western eyeglasses

or “unconscious” of his own self-colonization. Indeed, Nakajima appears to anticipate and respond to the post-colonial theories of Masaki Tsuneo and Komori Yōichi precisely by his very conscious endeavor to situate his narrator within the Japanese empire. As we have seen, the narrator of “Mariyan” responds to Mariyan’s criticism of Loti’s misrepresentations by differentiating himself from Loti and by reworking Loti’s narrative to depict his interaction with her as one free of the need of conquest. He feels an affinity with Mariyan because both share a sense of cultural colonization by the West.

By contrast, the narrator of “High Noon,” a work appearing in the same collection as “Mariyan,” takes himself to task for his stereotyped images of the South Seas and tries to recover his “colonial unconscious.” To read “High Noon” in this fashion is to go against the grain of earlier interpreters of Nakajima, who have tended to view it as a largely autobiographical, unvarnished confessional piece.⁸⁷ Here I will base my political interpretation on an analysis of the work’s narrative polyphony (that is, the division of the narrator into a multiplicity of voices) and the optical images by which the narrator seeks to account for his predicament. Although critics have tended to characterize the work as a monologue, I will stress the work’s dramatic quality: waking up from a nap, the narrator is unexpectedly questioned by a second self, then by a third self who reminds him of things he would prefer to forget but can hardly overlook.

Suitably, the story begins with the narrator “opening his eyes” onto a scene resembling some of the postcards Nakajima sent regularly to his family back in Japan.

When I went to look out at the offing, a bright scarlet triangular sail slicing the mackerel blue waters made my eyes open wide. The sailboat was just about to reach the border where the reef turns into the open sea. Judging by the sunlight, it was almost noon.⁸⁸

Reflecting on the reasons that drove him to come to the South Seas, the narrator recalls the cold frigid mists of the north⁸⁹ and the thoughts that had tormented him the year before:

I could no longer deliberately summon up the vivid sensation of the winter cold penetrating my flesh from my memory. At the same time, the many cares that had tormented me in the north were now nothing but memories of indifferent matters, which remained as vague shadows hovering on the other side of a *membrane* (my italics) of happy oblivion.⁹⁰

The narrator finds himself enveloped by a ‘membrane of happy oblivion’ although it is not clear whether this “membrane” is a product of his own consciousness or of his external environment.⁹¹ This membrane filters out what he would prefer to not to see, particularly the memories that “hover like vague shadows” on its other side. This translucent “membrane” of “happy oblivion” serves as an apt metaphor for the “colonial unconscious” that Komori discovers in the Japanese colonial project, which “conceals” and “consigns to oblivion.”

As soon as the narrator refers to this “membrane” of forgetfulness that covers his consciousness in the south, a second “person within him” interrupts his monologue to ask

him some embarrassing questions about his true motives for traveling to the South Seas. Did he not travel to the south “to throw himself into this new and unknown environment and take a chance on discovering powers within himself of which he was not even aware.” This second, “nasty” self then rips apart the membrane of “happy oblivion” which protected him.

Then this nasty fellow inside me addressed me again. I wouldn't mind if you sought only idleness and inaction. Provided, that is, that you are truly without regrets—but are you truly freed from the ghost of modernity, of Europe, of the artificial world? The fact remains that wherever you happen to be, you are always yourself. You are always the same whether you are walking in the slightly chilly Jingū Park where the gingko leaves are falling or whether you are stuffing yourself with the breadfruit roasted on hot stones with the islanders. You are not the slightest bit different. The bright light and the hot wind only cover your consciousness for a short time with a thick veil. Perhaps you think that you are gazing out at the glittering sea and sky at this moment. Or maybe you flatter yourself that you are looking at them with the same gaze as the islanders. What an absurd idea! In reality you are not even trying to look at the sea and sky. You have your eyes turned toward the space that lies beyond them but in your heart you keep reciting over and over again, like a kind of magic formula, the words “*Elle est retrouvée!----Quoi ?----L'éternité. C'est la mer mêlée au soleil.*” [Rimbaud: It is found again. What? Eternity. It is the sea mixed with the sun.] You're not even trying to look at the islanders. All you can see are reproductions of Gauguin paintings. And you are not looking at Micronesia either. All that you see are pale copies of the Polynesia depicted by Loti and Melville. How can you discover eternity with those pale shells you wear on your eyes. You pathetic creature!⁹²

How does this nasty second self-diagnose the narrator's optical problem? First, when he claims that the narrator is haunted by ghosts wherever he goes, he implies that the narrator's distorted view of the South is like a hallucination, an image that is really a creation of his own mind though it seems to exist in the external world. Next, he traces this distorted vision to a thick veil covering the narrator's consciousness, caused by the “bright light and hot wind.” In this case, the problem is an external obstacle that might easily be removed. Finally, he challenges the narrator—now addressed as “you pathetic creature”—with the diagnosis that he cannot see the reality before his eyes because he wears “shells” on them, which filter any external stimulus before it reaches his consciousness. This final image synthesizes the two earlier ones: these shells distort his vision in such a way that he literally sees only things that are not there (ghosts and phantoms) but he experiences this hallucination as though it were a veil before his eyes blocking his view.

But how did the narrator allow his own powers of vision to atrophy and allow these shells to usurp the place of his living eyes? Here this second voice tells him that he is not even trying to look at the sky and seas with “the same gaze as the islanders” because he has his eyes “turned toward the space that lies beyond them.” And this “space that lies beyond” is nothing other than the position of Europe from which the narrator turns his gaze on the

people of the South Seas. At that point, a third voice (*mō hitotsu betsu na koe* もう一つ別な声) enters what had hitherto been a dialogue: “But you had better take care. Primitive (*mikai* 未開) is not the same thing as health, nor is idleness. There is nothing more dangerous than a mistaken flight from civilization.”⁹³ Here Nakajima has penetrated to the crux of the matter for the narrator, who can only see “pale copies of Gauguin” and “reproductions of Loti” uncovers his own mimicry of a European tradition of “flight from civilization.” The Japanese colonizer can neither view the islands from the islanders’ point of view nor can he truly share the vision of the European artists; he can neither be European nor Micronesian. Instead he sees copies that are twice removed from the realities of the South Seas. These copies are not so much representations of places and peoples but rather reproductions of these representations circulating in the form of clichés or stereotypes.

In a study of Western representations of Tahiti, Robert Nicole has argued that the stereotype of the South Seas as primitive paradise was invented by Western artists and writers seeking to escape from their own urban, industrial civilization. It was imagined as the “other” of Europe, unspoiled nature as opposed to civilized artifice, primitive physicality as opposed to the ghost of modernity. Much like the orientalist studied by Edward Said, these writers produced texts that “created the very reality they appear to describe.” As a result of constant repetition and outright plagiarism, their texts formed “a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse, whose material presence and weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it.”⁹⁴

The narrator of “High Noon” tries to intoxicate himself with this textual South Seas when he repeats the words of Rimbaud’s poem “like a magic formula” but the formula has clearly lost its magic. All that remains are stereotypes and pale copies.⁹⁵ By disclosing that the European blinders only let him see stereotypes, this third self completes the work of retrieving the hidden “self-colonization” from the unconsciousness in which it has lain hidden and repressed. Becoming aware of his cultural self-colonization is the first step in a process of the decolonization of the narrator. In the end, the narrator realizes that these “eyeglasses” can never really belong to him; that they do not really fit. “People who do not fear to look at the world with their own eyes, rather than with borrowed eyes, are always healthy no matter what their surroundings.”

Whereas the narrator of “Mariyan” takes a patronizing view of Mariyan’s mimicry of “foreign” cultural standards, the narrator of “High Noon” addresses himself as “you pathetic creature.” In “Mariyan,” the narrator makes a Micronesian woman the object of an imperial gaze precisely because he is separate from her by his position as colonial official even as he is haunted by secret affinities to her. By contrast, the narrator in “High Noon” cannot view himself as an object precisely because he is not separate from his colonized self. He cannot see his own eyes from without. Instead, he addresses himself and divides into different selves each endowed with a separate voice. These different voices then question him and remind him of the colonization of his vision of the South Seas. In this text the reader can detect an echo of “Mariyan” though it is expressed in the form of self-critique. If the character Mariyan criticizes Loti’s distorted representations of the South Seas, the narrator of “High

Noon” castigates himself for his own warped views and adds the reproach that his views are hackneyed and derivative.

If this narrator is only able to see a pale, stereotypical copy of the South Seas as represented in Western art, then perhaps he, like Mariyan, is also a hybrid and a copy. Just as he becomes a polyphony of voices, he discovers that his self is actually a plurality, a multiplicity of fragmentary and partial selves, none of which is pure: “In any case, it seemed that there were many strange creatures dwelling together within me in total disorder, including miserable and revolting creatures.”⁹⁶ These fragmentary selves are the product of imitation. Just as the narrator in Nakajima’s early *Kamereon nikki* カメレオン日記 (Chameleon Diary) depicts himself as a bird of many feathers,⁹⁷ the narrator of “High Noon” describes himself as “a clown who craftily wears the mask of Voltaire or a fake gentleman-scholar decked out in the trappings of ancient China.”⁹⁸ The copy is treated as parody (clown wearing a mask) and counterfeit (the fake gentleman-scholar).⁹⁹

In “High Noon,” the narrator realizes that the concepts of identity that he had taken for granted—that he had a unitary self and belonged to a pure culture—are perhaps only fantasies with which he was deluding himself. Unlike Bhabha who celebrates hybridity and diaspora, the narrator does not experience his condition as a form of liberation, but rather as a hangover or painful awakening after a bout of intoxication.

One could imagine that after having discovered his own self-colonization, the narrator would react by embracing the “authentic” Japanese identity that preexisted the nation’s self-colonization. Like many writers of this period, he both yearns nostalgically for this cultural wholeness and realizes that there is no turning back to Japan’s pre-modern past.¹⁰⁰ Near the end of the story, he recounts a dream from the night before in which he found himself at a kabuki theater. Curiously, he was not there to watch a play, but was rather looking at the goods on display in a souvenir shop: sweets, portraits of kabuki actors, etc. “I don’t particularly care for the kabuki theatre,” he observes. “Naturally I have even less interest in souvenir shops. Why did I suddenly recall this superficial fragment of my life in Tokyo—so totally without meaning and content—when I was listening to the sound of coconuts falling from the trees near the native’s house thatched with palm leaves on this tiny island surrounded by the vast Pacific Ocean?”¹⁰¹ This meaningless fragment of his life has occurred unbidden to another part of his divided self, another one of the “strange creatures” that live within him, alongside “a clown who craftily wears the mask of Voltaire or the fake gentlemen decked out in the trappings of ancient China.” By stressing that he does not even enjoy kabuki, Nakajima’s protagonist refuses to privilege his sense of belonging to a Japanese culture above all his “Western” or “Chinese” identities: the wardrobe of masks, costumes, and other trappings that make up his composite self. In addition, he encounters not the kabuki stage but the kabuki souvenir shop in which the dramatic art has already been reduced to commercialized cliché. To the extent that he attempts to return to an essentialized cultural identity as a Japanese, he is likely to do nothing more than embrace commodified stereotypes as in his dream. “High Noon” offers no easy solutions to the problem of identity: homelessness and cosmopolitanism are the inescapable conditions of the post-colonial self.

Conclusion

What then is the relation between “High Noon,” in which a Japanese reproaches himself for looking at the South Seas with borrowed eyes, and an ethnographic work like “Mariyan”? James Clifford writes that ethnographic writings—and “Mariyan” is ethnographic in the broadest sense of the term—are allegories that not only tell a story about the other culture portrayed but also tell the story of the person doing the narrating.¹⁰² Using Clifford’s idea of allegory, I would argue that the narrator of “Mariyan” who went to Micronesia in search of his primitive “other” also found a way to tell his own story as a Japanese colonial official sent to carry out policies of assimilating the indigenous people of Micronesia. He portrays the native who fascinates him as a cultural hybrid but also as a colonial mimic. At the same time, he unwittingly reveals his own identification with Mariyan when he writes of the pained ambivalence she arouses in him. But he has trouble recognizing this resemblance in the mirror that Mariyan so graciously holds up to him. Instead, like the author Nakajima himself, he prefers to identify with the person of Stevenson and to view the South Seas vicariously through Stevenson’s eyeglasses. For this reason, his encounter with Mariyan—much like the romantic entanglement that is hinted at—is never consummated. It is perhaps for this reason that the absent presence of Mariyan haunts the narrator at the end of the story. The narrator of “Mariyan” could not help but misinterpret the significance of their meeting so long as he applied the categories of colonial discourse to her and conveniently ignored the context that structured their encounter.

For decades, Japan had been the model pupil of the West, even going so far as to copy the “tropical” imperialism of France and England. Yet Japan continued to harbor an inferiority complex and a sense of cultural colonization with respect to the West even after it became a colonial power in its own right. The pain the narrator feels toward Mariyan is a displaced nostalgia about his own loss of self, of cultural authenticity and wholeness, which—like the beautiful islands of the South Seas—becomes an imaginary space of longing threatened by destruction.

Note: All translations of passages from other languages are my own.

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NOTES

¹ For a detailed discussion of the condition of Japan's archive of colonial literature, see Kawamura 1994, pp. 5-20. Recent studies of colonial literature include studies of the writings by the colonized, such as Nin 1994 and Tarumi 1995. Other studies have focused on the writings of Japanese during the period of colonial expansion, such as Ikeda 1997 (Kawamura 1994 fits this description also). Kurokawa Sō's three-volume set *Gaichi no Nihongo bungaku sen* (Kurokawa 1996) includes writings by both colonizer and colonized, divided according to geographical area: Taiwan and the South Seas, Korea, and Manchuria. In the last few years, the Yumani Press has published over 24 volumes of reprints of major works of Japanese and other writers from the colonial period.

² Bhabha 1994, p. 86.

³ In his essay "Of Mimicry and Man," Bhabha stresses the deconstructive potential of mimicry when he writes that mimicry "destroys narcissistic authority through the repetitious slippage of difference and desire" or that it "is a part-object that radically revalues the normative knowledges of the priority

of race, writing, writing, history.” Colonial mimicry can only deconstruct the narcissistic authority of colonial power because the latter posits itself as original and whole in the first place. Ibid., pp. 90-91.

⁴ Duus 1995, p. 424.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Mimetic imperialism is not limited to the case of Japan. The imperialism of other late modernizers such as Germany and the United States was also an act of mimicry, although both countries differ from Japan in being constituent parts of the West. Perhaps the example closest to Japan is the expansionist Russian empire, which began to Westernize in the eighteenth century. Whereas Japan was unequivocally non-Western, Russia occupied a liminal position between West and Non-West. Like Japan, Russia was often viewed as the antithetical other of the West. For example, the narrator of Joseph Conrad's *Under Western Eyes*, a novel about Russian terrorism, constructs Russia as an exotic, baffling object placed under the scrutiny of a purported West.

⁷ Bhabha 1994, p. 98.

⁸ Ibid., p. 89.

⁹ Oguma 1998, p. 661.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 664.

¹¹ Oguma Eiji writes, “Colored Imperialism refers to the situation of a nation that exercises domination over a weaker people while it wavers between feelings of admiration and of resistance toward the major powers. The (people of) such a nation feel a sense of inferiority mingled with a feeling of superiority, their confidence in being at the forefront of progress is undercut by a fear of backwardness, and their “ruler” psychology is combined with a sense of victimization. Such a nation will use the people it subjugates to stabilize its sense of identity to its own advantage.” Oguma notes that the Japanese army was brutally repressing the March Third independence movement in Korea at the same time Japanese diplomats at the Paris Peace Conference were tabling a racial equality proposal. Yukiko Koshiro makes a similar point when she argues about the dual racial identity of the Japanese in the modern period. Koshiro claims that pre-war Japanese were split between their physical identity as Asians and their psychological identity as whites. Japanese ideologues used this dualistic racial identity to legitimize Japan's status as a colonial power in the eyes of Asia and of Westerners. Oguma 1998, p. 662; Koshiro 1999.

¹² A central figure of the Japanese enlightenment, Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉, first expounded a theory of the stages of civilization in his *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* 文明論の概略 (An Outline of the Theory of Civilization), which appeared in 1875. Adopting a Social Darwinist framework, Fukuzawa placed Japan (and China) in the category of semi-civilized nations (*hankai* 半開), inferior to the West but superior to Africa, Oceania and the rest of Asia. Fukuzawa stressed that civilization was a relative thing. The Japanese “can be called civilized” when compared with the Ainu. See Fukuzawa 1973, pp. 28, 14.

¹³ Masaki was an adherent of the Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere in his youth, according to Yukari Yoshihara of Tsukuba University. He is best known in Japan as the translator into Japanese of Peter Hulme's seminal *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean 1492-1797*.

¹⁴ Masaki 1995, pp. 242, 246, 247.

¹⁵ Masaki's metaphor of “Western tinted eyeglasses” may prove more appropriate in a study of colonial representations of the South Seas than of Korea or China. The Japanese “discovered” the South Seas in the 1880s and adopted a Western frame of reference toward the region. By contrast, the Japanese had a long history of cultural and political interaction with the Asian mainland. During the colonial period, images of its neighbors formed during the pre-modern period competed with and complicated modern

representations borrowed from the West.

¹⁶ Motoori's claims as to the superiority of the Japanese were expressed in esthetic terms, but they "provided a framework onto which notions of racial superiority could easily be grafted." Morris-Suzuki 1998, p. 49.

¹⁷ Komori's short book both introduces Japanese readers to major Western post-colonial thinkers and selectively applies their theories to explain the particular case of Japanese colonialism.

¹⁸ Komori 2001, p. 15. Italics are Komori's.

¹⁹ Sōseki witnessed the transformation of Japan from a semi-colonized vassal of the West to a major power with an empire on the Asian mainland—presumably the period when the "colonial unconscious" came into being. Though I have singled out Sōseki, I could make the same argument for later writers such as Kafu, Tanizaki, and Yokomitsu. All of these writers were intensely aware of Japan's self-colonization; their awareness of self-colonization was the spur that drove them to search for Japan's past and reestablish connections to pre-modern traditions that were jettisoned in the race to modernize. Nakajima clearly belongs to the same generation. Natsume 1995, p. 436.

²⁰ Kawamura 1993a, pp. 19-20.

²¹ *Junsa no iru fūkei* 巡査の居る風景 (Landscape with a Policeman), *Pūru no soba de* ブールの傍で (Alongside the Pool), and *Toragari* 虎狩 (Tiger Hunt) are all set in Korea, while *D-shi shichigatsu jokei* D市七月叙景 (Sketches of D. City in July) takes place in the Manchurian city of Dalian.

²² Almost every graduate of high school in postwar Japan has read his *Sangetsuki* 山月記 (Record of the Mountain and the Moon) or his novella *Riryō* 李陵 (Li Ling) in *kokugo* 国語 textbooks. These works are based respectively on a legend from the T'ang period and on Han historical narratives.

²³ Japan ruled Micronesia under a League of Nations mandate from 1921 until 1933, when it withdrew from the League; indeed Japan continued to insist on the legality of its status as a mandatory power in Micronesia and to make annual reports to the Permanent Mandatory Commission even after it ceased being a member of the League. When Japan was defeated in the Second World War, Micronesia fell under the control of the United States and was governed as trust territory under a new mandate of the United Nations. Peattie 1988, p. 244.

²⁴ Prior to Nakajima's arrival in 1941, there had been four previous editions of the language textbooks used in the archipelago, the most recent one dating back to the period from 1933 to 1937. Starting with this fifth revision (that is, with Nakajima's term), the Nan'yōchō altered its previous policy of assigning administrative staff on a temporary basis to carry out textbook revision and established a permanent staff position for an editor responsible for investigating text materials as well as carrying out all necessary revisions. Nakajima was offered this position through the good offices of an old friend from his school days, Kugimoto Hisaharu, then a senior official at the Ministry of Education in charge of Japanese language education in overseas colonies. As a postwar bureaucrat with the same ministry, this same Kugimoto later played a major role in promoting the post-war reputation of his friend and the canonization of Nakajima in Japanese school textbooks. For more on educational policies in Micronesia, see Matsushita 1997, pp. 55-59.

²⁵ NAZ, vol. 3, pp. 631, 626-7. We might weigh these comments from Nakajima's correspondence against the analysis of the historian Mark Peattie "The confiscations, conscription of labor, and preemptions of Micronesian land and property were common to all the islands where there were substantial Japanese garrisons and worked to corrode whatever sympathies the Islanders may have had toward the Japanese." Peattie 1988, p. 301.

²⁶ Ishikawa Tatsuzō 石川達三 is another writer who paid a visit to a school for indigenous children in

Palau in 1941 and wrote of his experience in a travel diary, *Akamushijima nisshi* 赤虫島日誌 (Journal of Red Insect Island). In it he describes a scene where the school principal, a man who spoke the dialect of Akita Prefecture, tries to teach young girls in the school patriotic Japanese songs. “I felt a little betrayed when I heard them singing in perfect Japanese. The girls were singing patriotic marching songs, a song for the war god (*gunshin* 軍神) Captain Hirose and another for Kojima Kōtoku. These native girls, incapable of understanding the Japanese tradition, had no possibility of understanding ‘the spirit of eight corners under one heaven’ and the concept of ‘dying to serve one’s country.’ It was a beautiful chorus of parrots.” While Ishikawa notes the absurdities of colonial education, unlike Nakajima, he does not criticize the Japanese colonial authorities for imposing an authoritarian and militarized system. Rather he treats the Micronesians as “parrots” who can only mimic the external gestures of the colonizer but who are “incapable of understanding” the ideals that underlie these gestures. Ishikawa 1957, p. 234.

²⁷ *Okuninushinomikoto*, according to the *Kojiki*, is the descendant of the deity Susanoo and the main god of Izumo province, still an object of worship at the Izumo Shrine today. A central part of educational policies during the *kōminka* period involved inculcating young Japanese (and their colonized subjects) in the nationalist myth of the origins of Japan. The length of this god’s name presumably made it a difficult word for young Micronesians to pronounce.

²⁸ NAZ, vol. 3, pp. 483-4.

²⁹ Both of these collections were published for the first time in November 1942 in a book titled “Tales of the Southern Islands” (*Nantōtan*), one of two volumes the author published during his lifetime. In addition to these South Seas stories, *Nantōtan* also included a series of works set in ancient China and two semi-autobiographical works. “Mariyan” is the fifth story in *Kanshō* (Atolls), a collection of travel sketches based on the author’s experiences in Micronesia; “High Noon” is the fourth. The editors of the latest complete edition of Nakajima’s works speculate that these works were written in August or September of 1942. NAZ, vol. 1, p. 588.

³⁰ In an entry to his diary dated 29 September 1941, Nakajima writes: “After daylong preparations for the banquet were completed, the young girls came to the banquet hall in the evening, singing and carrying garlands of flowers in their hands which they placed on the head and shoulders of each of the guests. The bonfire, the oven of hot stones, the many tasty dishes, etc., etc. It was exactly like the world of Stevenson and Loti.” NAZ, vol. 3, p. 607.

³¹ Two other writers associated with colonial exoticism also appear in *Henreki*: Andre Gide (“At times I would wander with the young Gide in the fields brimming with the force of life”) and Arthur Rimbaud also cited in “High Noon” (“At times, like Rimbaud, my heart stretches endlessly like the torrid deserts of Arabia”). *Ibid.*, p. 263.

³² *Henreki* was first published after the author’s death and included in a collection of all of his *waka* entitled *Uta de nai uta* 和歌でない歌 (Poems that are not Poems). *Henreki* is an account of the apprenticeship of a writer who seeks to master his craft by learning to see the world through the eyes of his predecessors. While I would argue that some of these poems are meaningful in the context of Nakajima’s apprenticeship to a colonial view of the world, the sequence can also be interpreted in terms of traditional Japanese aesthetics where the poet masters his craft by aligning himself with former masters. As the final *tanka* in the sequence indicates, the poet creates his own “soul” or identity through this imaginary pilgrimage and transmigration through the souls of those writers he chooses to identify with. “How my soul has traveled afar now that I approach the age of thirty.” NAZ, vol. 2, pp. 263-66

³³ Nakajima left a manuscript entitled *Tsushitara no shi* (The Death of Tsusitala) with Fukuda Kyūya shortly before he left for Palau. (Tsusitala is a Samoan word for storyteller.) Fukuda later arranged for the

work to be published in the May 1942 issue of the literary periodical *Bungakukai* 文学界. Significantly shortened, this first edition was renamed *Light, Wind and Dreams*, because the word “death” in the original manuscript was thought inauspicious at a time of war. A few months later, members of the Japanese literary establishment selected this novel as a candidate for the fifteenth Akutagawa Prize, Japan’s most prestigious literary award. It did not win, but neither did any of the other five nominees; for the second time, the jury chose not to make an award. Yasuoka Shotarō 安岡正太郎, who read *Light, Wind and Dreams* when it was nominated, remembers: “It did not appear to be a rebellious work that was out of line with national policy of the time. However, I felt there was something in the work that journalism of the time might shy away from, from fear of what the military authorities might say. At the same time, I am not sure where in the work this concern came from.” Saitō Hajime offers a detailed discussion of the relationship between Nakajima’s novel and contemporary discourse on the national emergency in a recent article. He notes that two aspects of Nakajima’s novel might have caused editors to hesitate to honor this work at the time of national emergency. First, the protagonist Stevenson is especially critical of Germany’s role in Samoa, and Germany was an ally of Japan at the time Nakajima was writing. Secondly, Stevenson’s denunciation of colonialism in Samoa could be read as a thinly veiled allegory for the author’s views about Japanese colonization of the South Seas. Yasuoka 1976, p. 3; Saitō 2002, pp. 71-73.

³⁴ Stevenson’s letters to Sidney Colvin from 1890 to 1894 (the Vailima letters) are the major source for the novel, but Nakajima also drew on many other works of the writer: *Footnote to History, In the South Seas, Essays, Memoirs and Portraits, Poems*. For a complete listing, see Ochner 1984, pp. 243-44.

³⁵ NAZ, vol. 1, p. 106.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

³⁷ Wada 1989, p. 154.

³⁸ Critical commentary on this novel has revolved around two issues, namely, the relationship between Nakajima and Stevenson and the genre to which the work ought to be assigned. Some critics have claimed that Nakajima was faithful to his sources on Stevenson while others contend that he used Stevenson as a spokesman for his own views. Another concern of scholars has been to determine the genre to which *Light, Wind and Dreams* belongs. Is it an historical work, a biography for instance (as its diary form suggests), or simply a fictional work loosely based on the life of a historical figure? Some claim that the work is too faithful to its sources to be considered pure fiction, while others find it too full of “distortions” of the facts to be considered a biography. For more information on these controversies see Ochner 1984, pp. 230-337.

³⁹ Unlike Robert Louis Stevenson, an author of international notoriety when he moved to Samoa, Nakajima was a totally unknown writer who was working as a teacher of English and Japanese in the Yokohama Girl’s School at the time he wrote *Light, Wind and Dreams*.

⁴⁰ In this regard, it is instructive to consider the case of another Japanese writer closely associated with the romanticism of the South Seas. In an essay entitled “Waga seishun no toki” 我が青春の時 (The Days of My Youth), Hijikata Hisakatsu 土方久功, a sculptor and ethnologist who lived in Micronesia from 1929 to 1942, offers a retrospective account of his reasons for going to the South Seas rather than to Europe after graduating from Tokyo University of the Fine Arts. Hijikata notes that after the First World War, major European artists (for example, Picasso and Matisse) had been inspired by the artworks and means of expression of primitive (*genshiteki* 原始的) and undeveloped people (*mikaijin* 未開人) of Africa. Rather than going to Europe to study “primitive” art, Hijikata reasoned that he had better follow the example of the European artists and go directly to the sources of “primitive” art itself.

Fortunately, he thought, the Japanese empire included one territory inhabited by *bona fide* “primitives”: “If it was just a matter of going to Paris to bring back France +Africa primitivism, would it not be more splendid to create a Japan+Primitive in the South Seas.” Hijikata wrote this essay in 1968, and adds with some sarcasm, “Such were the distorted (views) of those like me who did not go to Europe.” Like Nakajima in *Light Wind and Dreams*, Hijikata saw his own artistic project in geopolitical terms, in which Japan is identified with France and the South Seas with Africa. Hijikata 1991, p. 194.

⁴¹ Shiga, 1887, pp.69-82. *Nan'yō jiji* marked the start of Shiga's career as a journalist and a political activist. The work was a great success and was reprinted in 1889 and 1891. As Miwa Kimitada argues, it “might best be described as commentary on Japan's 1887 domestic and foreign policies and a warning about Japan's future.” Miwa 1970, p.7. Warning his readers that the battle for the “survival of the fittest” was taking place in the South Seas, Shiga argued that Japan must modernize if it were not to be colonized by a more advanced or “superior” country. Drawing on Darwin's theories, Shiga believed that “the white race was superior to the yellow, the black and the brown,” and that these inferior races were “threatened with extinction when they begin commerce with the whites.” Shiga, 1887, p. 7. Masako Gavin, in a recent study of Shiga, speculates that he couched his warning in the form of a dream story (*yume monogatari*), “in order to protect himself from the government, which could with the *hoan jōrei* 保安条令 (Security Act) expel opponents of its Westernization schemes from Tokyo.” The encounter with Tagaloa, the national god of Samoa, one of the most dramatic moments of the work, is also a thinly disguised allegory in which Shiga conveys his fears for Japan's future. Gavin 2001, p. 86.

⁴² Such a political reading also offers some insight into problems that have baffled critics of *Light, Wind and Dreams*. If one reads the novel as a text in which Nakajima experiments with Stevenson's point of view, then it will be impossible to draw a clear textual boundary between Stevenson and Nakajima: the two are blended into an amalgam. The same may be said of the problem of the work's genre.

⁴³ Nakamura Kazue 中村和恵 makes a cogent argument for viewing Nakajima's “Mariyan” from a post-colonial viewpoint. See Nakamura 1997, pp. 87-91.

⁴⁴ NAZ, vol. 1, p. 285.

⁴⁵ Nakajima probably had a real model in mind when he composed “Mariyan.” In diary entries dating from his stay in the South Seas, he refers to two encounters with a young Palauan woman named Maria; both entries bear a striking resemblance to corresponding episodes of “Mariyan.” In the first entry, dated 21 December 1941, he describes an evening spent at the home of Hijikata Hisakatsu (see note 40; Hijikata befriended Nakajima in Palau and is presumed to have been the model for H in “Mariyan”), where he samples a variety of local foods for the first time, including such delicacies as *Binllumm*, a dumpling made of tapioca wrapped in bamboo leaves and *Titinl*, a dessert made of tapioca. He adds, “Maria treated us to a feast today.” In the second, dated 31 December, he mentions going out for a stroll late at night with Hijikata and a few other men. Maria “is invited” to join them on a walk to the Koror pier where they relax by the side of a pool. NAZ 3, pp. 488-489. The corresponding passages from the story “Mariyan” are as follows: “Sometimes, Mariyan would bring some Palauan dishes that she cooked to H's place and entertain us. Whenever that happened, I would always partake of the feast. It is thanks to Mariyan that I had my first taste of such delicacies as *Binllumm*, a dumpling made of tapioca wrapped in bamboo leaves and a sweet dessert called *Titinl*.” And “There was a bright moon on the evening of 31 December last year; we—that is H, Mariyan, and myself—were taking a stroll and enjoying the cool evening breeze that brushed against our skin.” In this article I am not concerned with determining the identity of the real Mariyan. Rather than explore whether his depiction of Mariyan bears any resemblance to the real model on which he based his portrait, I will simply examine the

discursive creation of Mariyan in his story. The best source of information on the model for Nakajima's Mariyan is an article by Uemae 1974.

⁴⁶ NAZ, vol. 1, p. 284.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 288.

⁴⁸ The narrator not only enjoys a seigneurial right of oversight over Mariyan; he also has the privilege of entering her room whenever he wishes. There are several passages in the stories of "Atolls" where he writes of walking without the slightest hesitation into the homes of islanders as though it were his prerogative as a colonial master to enter their homes whenever he chooses. For example, there is the following passage from "Woman in the House of Oleanders:" "Since it was the house of an islander, I saw no reason to be diffident, and took the liberty to go into the house and take a rest." NAZ, vol. 1, p. 261.

⁴⁹ The term "kanakan" here is used in a double sense. On the one hand it refers to the residents of the Carolinian and Marshall islands in contradistinction to the Chamorros of the Marianas. On the other hand, it is a general, derogatory term used to describe all South Sea islanders and not specifically Micronesians. "Kanakan" is derived from a Polynesian term meaning "human being." NAZ, vol. 1, p. 549.

⁵⁰ The population of Nan'yō was made up of mainland Japanese, Koreans, Taiwanese, and Okinawans, as well as the indigenous population. Social rank depended on one's racial/ethnic identity. Naturally, mainland Japanese occupied the highest stratum. Mark Peattie places the Koreans and Okinawans immediately after the Japanese and notes that the Micronesians were treated as a "third class people." Within this category of "third class people," he notes that colonial administrators distinguished between Chamorros of the Marianas, a group considered advanced and adaptable, and the Kanakans, viewed as incorrigibly backward. Peattie 1988, pp. 111-12. Other writers have noted that while the Japanese occupied the top tier, the boundary between the second tier (Koreans and Okinawans) and the third (indigenous islanders) was fluid and unsettled. Tomiyama Ichirō cites a comic ditty that reversed the respective positions of the Koreans and the natives:

Ittō kokumin Nihonjin	First class citizens, the Japanese;
Nitō kokumin Okinawajin	Second class citizens, the Okinawans;
Santō kokumin buta:	Third class citizens, the national pigs:
Kanakas, Chamorro	Kanakas and Chamorros;
Yontō Kokumin Chōsenjin	Fourth class citizens, the Koreans

Tomiyama also cites a report by Umesao Tadao (Umesao took part in Imanishi Kinji's 1941 Nan'yō Research Team to the island of Ponape) to the effect that the islanders perceived their own social status as higher than that of the Okinawans. Tomiyama adds: "The Okinawans and Koreans were manual laborers, an occupation that highborn Micronesians regarded with contempt. Upper-class and educated Micronesians who spoke Japanese reasonably well were shocked by the poor Japanese of the Koreans. . . and were aware that Okinawan speech and behavior were incomprehensible to the Japanese." Tomiyama 2002, pp. 60-62. From the perspective of the Japanese empire as a whole, the Micronesians and aboriginal Taiwanese clearly constituted the lowest tier of a four-tiered hierarchy, of which the three higher levels were comprised of the Japanese, the Okinawans, and Koreans or Chinese. For a discussion of the ethnic hierarchy of colonial society, Yui 2002.

⁵¹ In addition to *manga* and popular songs, I would mention as well the powerful influence of film on popular images of the tropics. Interestingly, Nakajima begins *Roshituski* 狼疾記 (Record of a Strange

Illness), an early work, with a scene in which the protagonist, Sanzō, is watching a film of the natives of the South Seas. Only at the end of this long passage does he inform us that the film is a documentary made by “whites” about an exploration of “savage lands.” As spectator of the film, he adopts the exotic point of view of the Western cameraman toward the savage people being filmed. “On the screen you could see images of the lifestyle of the natives (*dojin* 土人) of the South Seas.” The first scene of the film depicts a group of native women with “thick lips” and “snub noses” who wear only straw skirts around their waists and eat with their fingers. The next scene shows a group of natives dancing to the loud beat of a drum during a village festival. “A man who looked like the tribal chief was sitting cross-legged among a group of elders off to the side of the dance stage. Thin and with prominent cheekbones, the old man wore several strings of beads around his neck. Conscious that he was being photographed, he seemed strangely agitated and looked on at the performance with a gaze that showed that he had completely lost his self-confidence as a savage.” The film in question is never named. At the time that Nakajima wrote this story, Japanese film-makers were producing films about Nan’yō, notably the famous 1933 *Umi no Seimeisen* 海の生命線 (The Lifeline of the Sea), a propaganda film made with backing from the Japanese navy which exoticizes the natives of the South Seas but also stresses the importance of southern expansion to the Japanese nation as a whole.

As he watches the movie, Sanzō sets off on a series of metaphysical reflections on the “uncertainties of existence.” “Whenever he read accounts of the primitive lives of savages or saw pictures of them, he could hardly help thinking how it might have been if he had been born among them... Under the dazzling light of the tropical sun, would he not have passed his entire life ignorant of the structure of the solar system, the history of the human species, of materialism, Vimalakirti and the categorical imperative?” Sanzō thus experiences the South Seas as constituting the contrary of a civilized modernity defined in terms of Western science and culture. NAZ, vol. 1, pp. 405-408.

⁵² Yano Tōru 矢野暢 coins the term “the Bōken Dankichi syndrome” to characterize popular images of the South Seas in the Taishō and early Shōwa period. Yano 1979, pp. 152-156. See also Kawamura 1993b, pp. 107-11.

⁵³ In Japanese pre-war discourse, South Sea islanders are routinely referred to as blacks and conversely the term *kuronbō* generally designates South Sea islanders. The narrator of “Mariyan” also associates Mariyan with the black people in North America in the scene at the Koror wharf. In this scene, H begins to sing his favorite opera arias while Mariyan whistles tunes of Stephen Foster. “When she whistled, her thick full lips projected roundly from her face. Her entire repertoire consisted of the sentimental songs of Stephen Foster and not a single one of the difficult opera passages. Listening to her, I remembered all of a sudden that these were originally the sad songs of black people in North America.” NAZ, vol. 1, p. 289. While the narrator draws a sharp contrast between Hijikata’s high culture and Mariyan’s sentimental songs, he evokes the plight of the black people in North America with sympathy. While one can point to negative popular imagery of blacks in this period in the popular media, one should not overlook the fact that many Japanese intellectuals and writers from this time had close contacts with leading African-American writers and thinkers at this time. For more on this forgotten history, see Koshiro 2003.

⁵⁴ It should be noted that the narrator of “Mariyan” deliberately takes his distance from this rhetoric of denigration. While he cites those who argue that good-looking Micronesian must have Western or Japanese blood, he goes on to say that Mariyan’s pure Micronesian face is “splendid.”

⁵⁵ In this passage, Nakajima freely mixes enlightenment rhetoric with racism in a manner that a modern reader might find disconcerting. We should recall that racism and progress, while they are separate concepts, were introduced into Japan about the same time as two aspects of Western civilization. In fact, Fukuzawa Yukichi, the exemplary figure of the Japanese enlightenment, also did much to popularize the ideas of racial hierarchy and social Darwinism in Japan. See Suzuki 1983, pp. 27-32; Morris-Suzuki 1998, p. 85.

⁵⁶ In this regard, I will add that the South became an important location for research into hybrid identities around 1940 and especially after the expansion of the war that began 8 December 1941, when the Japanese empire came to embrace most of the lands that the Japanese designated by the term “Nan’yō.” Sakano Tōru, who has studied anthropological research in the South during the pre-war period, suggests that anthropologists active in Nan’yō had two major research concerns circa 1940. On the one hand, they began to concern themselves with the consequences of intermarriage between Japanese and non-Japanese in the South and to study the “mixed blood” offspring of these marriages. On the other, they authored a variety of studies on the capacity of Japanese soldiers and settlers to adapt to tropical environments in the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity. Sakano 1997.

⁵⁷ Consider the following description of a woman in the story “Woman in the House with Oleanders,” also in the collection *Atolls*: “In fact, I can say that the young wife was a real beauty. Since she had unusually well-defined features for a Palauan woman, I figured she was probably a half-breed with Japanese (*naichi*) blood in her. Her facial color was not the usual bright black, but was a swarthy hue without luster.” NAZ, vol. 1, p. 57.

⁵⁸ Mariyan’s face is described as 100% Micronesian and Kanakan, yet her brain has nothing Kanakan about it. The narrator refers to race or blood to account for Mariyan’s cultural assimilation and education. If Mariyan is the best reader in Koror, this is, the narrator implies, because she was already partly Japanese to start with. One finds a similar insinuation in “Toragari” (Tiger Hunt) another of the author’s colonial works. Written in 1934, this work is set in Japanese-ruled Korea, where Nakajima resided during his middle school years. Just as “Mariyan” is depicted as partly Japanese, the narrator describes a Korean classmate who attends a school established primarily for Japanese as a half breed. “My friend’s name was Chō Taikan. He was a resident of the peninsula (*hantōjin* 半島人). Everyone said that his mother was a Japanese (*naichijin* 内地人). I seem to recall hearing this story from him, or perhaps I simply made it up myself and convinced myself of its reality. Even though we were such close friends, I never actually saw his mother.” Unlike the narrator of Mariyan, this narrator treats the claim that Chō is a child of mixed blood as an uncertain hypothesis that he is unable to verify. NAZ, vol. 1, p. 74.

⁵⁹ Geographical terms here are used in a figurative way to refer to mutually exclusive value systems and esthetic standards. In *Fūdo* 風土, Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 develops a theory about the importance of place and climate in the determination of culture and shaping of character. Watsuji was influenced by Motoori’s philosophy of Japanese culture, but also drew inspiration from early twentieth century German philosophy, notably that of Martin Heidegger. Watsuji defines three types of environment: monsoon (India), desert (Middle East), and the grassland (Mediterranean). According to his theory, Japan belonged in a unique category that was distinct from both the monsoon climate of Asia and the grassland climate of Europe. On the one hand, it resembled monsoon Asia since it had the moist and hot summers. On the other hand, it resembled Europe because its winters were dry and cold. Due to its unique climate, Japan combined the advantages of Asian and European civilizations. Watsuji 1979.

⁶⁰ NAZ, vol. 1, p. 283.

⁶¹ Renato Rosaldo refers to this contradictory attitude as imperial nostalgia. “Curiously enough, agents of colonialism often display nostalgia for the colonized culture as it was ‘traditionally’ (that is, when they first encountered it). The peculiarity of their longing, of course, is that agents of colonialism long for the very forms of life they intentionally altered and destroyed.” Rosaldo 1989, pp. 69-70.

⁶² Both these passages are cited from NAZ, vol. 2, p. 529.

⁶³ Kuriyagawa Hakuson 厨川白村 (1880-1923) was a professor of English literature at Kyoto University who did much to popularize modern Western literature in Japan. He is best known for the work *Kindai no ren'aikan* 近代の恋愛観. Pierre Loti (1850-1923) is the pen name of Jacques Viaud, a French novelist. *The Marriage of Loti* (1882) is a semi-autobiographical account of the romance between a young naval officer and Rarahu, a fourteen-year old Tahitian girl.

⁶⁴ NAZ, vol. 1, pp. 285-86.

⁶⁵ Komori 2001, p. 12.

⁶⁶ NAZ, vol. 1, pp. 287-88.

⁶⁷ Bhabha 1994, p. 86.

⁶⁸ The mandated territories would come to be divided into three classifications, A, B, and C, determined by the level of their cultural and political development. Territories classified as “A” were the ones considered closest to independence, and as in the case of Iraq (a British mandate which became independent in 1932), could receive sovereignty after the required period of “tutelage.” Mandates given a “C” designation—such as Japan’s Pacific allotment—were furthest from sovereignty; they “were regarded as being on such a low level of political development as to be suitable for treatment as integral parts of the mandatory Power’s territory, almost, that is, as annexed domains.” “Covenant of the League of Nations,” Peattie 1988, pp. 54-60.

⁶⁹ Ironically, Nakajima’s literary reputation is in large part that of a translator and adapter. In his early fiction, such as “Kameron Nikki,” the author bemoans his own lack of originality. Nakajima is best known today for his retellings of ancient Chinese stories (which are read by every high school student) and the aforementioned novel about Robert Louis Stevenson. In both cases, he first encountered a text which interested him, then reworked and rewrote it, transforming it in ways that the original author could never have predicted.

⁷⁰ Nakajima refers to earlier colonial literature in his other works, and not only in “Mariyan.” As a writer who based his literature on earlier sources, Nakajima was fully cognizant of issues of intertextuality and probably sought to echo, amplify or comment on the works he mentioned in his own stories. For example in “Toragari” 虎狩り (Tiger Hunt), he mentions Daudet’s *Tartarin*. *Tartarin* tells about a tiger hunt, but it also contains a scene in which the Germans occupy part of France and announce that henceforth the official language will be German (echoing the Japanese policies toward Korea). In “Pūru no soba de” (By the Pool), a work about the narrator’s sexual awakening as a young Japanese man growing up in Korea, he alludes to the colonial love story *Paul et Virginie*. Kawamura Minato suggested this idea to me in a conversation in 2003.

⁷¹ Robert Nicole shows that the colonial novel of the South Seas and other nineteenth century writers, seeking to escape from the ills of urban, industrial civilization, created the literary myth of the South Seas as a colonial male fantasy that was constructed as the negation of Europe. The myth of the South Seas was repackaged and popularized by the tourist industry of the twentieth century. Now it has become the land of sun, sea, sand, and sex. Nicole 2001, p. 106.

⁷² Mme. Chrysanthème is portrayed as a doll, “a darling little fairy.” She is nothing more than a

secondary character in this novel bearing her name. Like most of Loti's novels, this travel narrative exalts the exotic décor at the expense of the people that live there. As Loti writes in his dedication to *Mme Chrysanthème*: "Even though the principal role is apparently played by Madame Chrysanthème, it is certain that the three principal characters are myself, Japan and the effect that this country has made on me." Loti, *Mme Chrysanthème*, p. 43. That is, Japan is envisioned as a source of exotic and sexual "effects" for the Western witness whose primary role is to observe and represent the foreign locale. Of course, Loti is not content to simply observe the exotic: he also wishes to acquire a local wife (in *Mme Chrysanthème*, a French sailor who arrives in Japan decides to purchase a wife for the duration of his stay to ward off boredom) and to experiment with an exotic identity (that is, a fictional identity epitomized by the pseudonym Loti, originally a Tahitian term). In all these respects, *The Marriage of Loti* can be considered the Tahitian version of *Madame Chrysanthème* (cf Nakamura 2002, p.77). That said, as Colleen Lye points out, *Mme Chrysanthème* differs in one important respect from *The Marriage of Loti*: It undermines the exotic and romantic conventions that Loti is associated with by calling attention to the conscious economic relationship upon which the narrator's cross-cultural marriage with Mme. Chrysanthème was based. While the narrator may imagine that Mme Chrysanthème is passionately attached to him and will grieve at his departure, he discovers that, far from being plunged in sorrow, she is cheerfully counting the wages earned from the "marriage" when he visits her at the end of the novel. As Lye notes, Loti's textual reaction to Japan is complex: on the one hand, he represents Japan as diminutive and backward (his representation is said to have informed the imagination of the Russian Court, which disastrously underestimated Japan's military strength) but he also registers a discomfort with Japanese modernity. For more on Loti, see Lye 1995, pp. 260-289.

⁷³ Ultimately, by introducing Pierre Loti into the narrative, the narrator sets up an implicit equation in which Loti stands in the same relation to Mme Chrysanthème (or Rarahu) as the narrator does to Mariyan. Just as the narrator speaks of Mariyan as being a member of the deficient Kanakan race, Loti had earlier written of the Japanese as "a race of slit eyed people without a brain" and goes on to say: "More than ever I feel that their souls belong to a different species than mine. I feel that my thoughts are as far from theirs as the changing conceptions of birds or the dreams of apes." Pierre Loti 1991, pp. 199 and 209. Just as the narrator mocks Mariyan's mimicking of the ways of civilization, Loti had written the Japanese as perfect imitators who make themselves ridiculous by copying European ways. Ono 1972, p. 59. In *Vers Ispahan* (Calmann-Levy 1904), Loti later wrote: "I could understand this kind of imitation if we were among Hottentots or Kaffirs. But when you have the honor of being. . . Japanese—in other words of having been ahead of us by several centuries in all kinds of refinements, people who, well before us, had their own exquisite art and architecture, elegant, graceful customs, furniture and costume—it really is coming down in the world to copy us." Hargreaves 1981, p. 37.

⁷⁴ In an article on Japanese colonial discourse, Leo Ching writes the following about Japan's "strategy of positional superiority." "Japan's domineering gaze toward its colonial subjects in the East must always invariably redirect itself, somewhat ambivalently, to the imperialist glare of the West. What characterizes Japanese colonial discourse, then, is this uneasy oscillation between being the seeing subject and the object being seen." Ching 1998, p. 66.

⁷⁵ As two men ostensibly discussing Mariyan's remarriage, H and the narrator are acting out their authority as Japanese men in this colonial context. As Eve Sedgwick writes in *Between Men*, this type of homosocial bond is fundamental to the social and political power in any patriarchal society; as she shows, this homosociality exists on a continuum with homoeroticism. In fact, there is also an unexplored erotic dimension to the relationship between the narrator and H, but it is transposed onto

Mariyan. H is present in many of the encounters between the narrator and Mariyan and even seems to be encouraging the narrator to take Mariyan as his “island wife” but the narrator, who has anxiety about his own colonial authority, clearly rejects this option. Later when Mariyan imitates H in referring to the narrator as Ton-chan, the narrator accepts this reversal in his role with Mariyan—perhaps because he is performing a feminine role to seduce H. Though Nakajima sent copies of his other South Seas stories to his friend Hijikata Hisakatsu, he did not send him a copy of “Mariyan.” Sedgwick 1986, pp. 1-20.

⁷⁶ Levi-Strauss 1969, p. 115 cited in Sedgwick 1986, p. 26.

⁷⁷ Peattie notes that Micronesians could only acquire the status of “imperial subjects” by naturalization or marriage, but that only a tiny percentage of the Micronesians women married to Japanese men acquired Japanese citizenship. Peattie 1988, p. 112.

⁷⁸ Since the narrator suppresses Mariyan’s voice here, we can only read between the lines to restore her agency. It is, for example, entirely possible, that Mariyan might well have regarded marriage with a Japanese as a passport to Japan and a way to escape from her condition as colonized. Nakamura 1997, p. 90.

⁷⁹ Paul Gauguin’s *Noa Noa* contains a tragic departure scene that might have served as a model that Nakajima reworks in “Mariyan.” Gauguin 1994, pp. 60-62.

⁸⁰ NAZ, vol. 1, pp. 289-90.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

⁸² The narrator is at first shocked by Mariyan’s visit to H’s apartment and alludes to a romantic plot between the two: “I could hear a young woman’s voice from a narrow opening in the window saying, “Is it all right to come in?” ... I was a bit shocked and thought to myself, “Boy, I had better keep my eye on this ethnographer friend of mine,” but was again shocked when the person who opened the door and walked into the room turned out to be not a Japanese, but rather an island girl with an imposing physique.” NAZ, vol. 1, pp. 283-84.

⁸³ The same motif appears in a different form in “The Woman in the House of Oleanders,” another story from “Atolls” which deals specifically with the theme of sexual desire. The narrator recovering from dengue fever believes that he is the object of the sexual desire of the woman of the title (however, he wonders whether he may not be deluding himself under the influence of fever) and is shocked that that his convalescent body could possibly merit this sort of attention from the woman. NAZ, vol. 1, pp. 260-65.

⁸⁴ This is an interesting example of a subversive use of mimicry in “Mariyan.” As Bhabha writes, “the menace of mimicry is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority.” Bhabha 1994, p. 88.

⁸⁵ Pratt 1992, p. 7, 38-85.

⁸⁶ “Mariyan” was written in the early 1940s, a time of intensified Japanese imperialism. In some respects, the narrator’s anti-conquest narrative resembles the ideological constructions of late Japanese colonialism. The narrator seeks to differentiate his narrative from that of Loti in the same way that ideologues of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere sought to distinguish Japanese colonialism from that of “white” colonial powers. He achieves this aim by stressing his own affinities with Mariyan just as these ideologues stressed the racial and cultural interconnectedness between Japan and its Asian neighbors to justify its own colonial endeavors.

⁸⁷ Past critics of Nakajima’s works have generally treated “High Noon” either in autobiographical or strictly stylistic terms. For example, Okuno Masamoto views the work primarily as a personal statement in which Nakajima sets forth “almost without any embellishment (*sono nikusei no mama ni* その肉声

のままに) his raw reactions to and impressions of the South Seas. Okuno 1985, p. 186. In contrast, Sudō Naoto interprets the work as a stylistic “regression to the self-centered prose without rhythm or tempo of Nakajima’s earlier writings in the collection *Kakochō* 過去帳 (Notebook of the Past).” Sudo 1998, p. 87. Here I will propose a different interpretation of the significance of this text which is neither strictly personal nor stylistic, but rather political.

⁸⁸ NAZ, vol. 1, p. 277.

⁸⁹ The narrator describes himself as coming not from a specific place/nation (Japan) but from a particular direction (*hoppō*) or vector. If Japan is treated as a part of the temperate world in “Mariyan,” in this story it is characterized as a nation lying to the north defined by its “cold mists” and the “vivid sensation of the winter cold penetrating my flesh.” The north is defined in opposition to the tropical south, represented by Mariyan and other “dark-skinned, sturdy young girls” to whom the narrator evinces no attraction; these geographical/climactic terms underwrite the series of binary oppositions that the narrator then proceeds to construct. Far from being only “cold mists” and “sensations of cold,” the north is also the world of time (deadlines, seasons), of painful memories, of self-tormenting thought and anxiety and worries from which the narrator seeks a cure.

Sun	Fog
Heat	Cold
Oblivion	Memory
Idleness	Work/Deadlines
Timelessness	Time/Seasons
Felicity/nirvana	Self torment/self-consciousness
Rest/Cure	Sickness/Anxiety

In this system of binary oppositions, the south offers not only the contrary but, most importantly, the remedy or the antidote to the corresponding “northern” condition.

⁹⁰ NAZ, vol. 1, p. 278.

⁹¹ Nakajima uses the same metaphor of the “membrane” in the unfinished novel *Hoppōkō* (Heading North) in a passage where the protagonist Kuroki Sanzō sets off on a voyage to Beijing in search of “something wild, strong, violent, tempestuous.” Kuroki claims that this membrane “distorts his vision like a kind of jelly” but also views it as a kind of badge of “civilization.” “When did it first occur to him? He discovered that there was a thin membrane drawn between reality and himself. This membrane gradually thickened till it became difficult to break through. He reached the point where he could only see reality through this translucent membrane, which distorted his vision like a kind of jelly. He could not come into direct contact with things as they really are. . . . Strangely enough, he was pleased with this discovery at the beginning. He even reflected that this is perhaps the final qualification of the intellectual, of the civilized man (*bunmeijin* 文明人).” NAZ, vol. 2 pp. 108-109.

⁹² NAZ, vol. 1, pp. 278-79.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

⁹⁴ Said 1978, p. 94.

⁹⁵ Nakajima not only felt a deep love for this literature but he also possessed a sure understanding of its sources within Western tradition. Consider the following passage from “High Noon”: “Now out in the sea, Triton, his body lifted over the warm waters, is blowing a sonorous tune on his pipes. Aphrodite is being born from a rose-colored bubble somewhere under this broad and transparent sky. The sirens are trying to tempt the wise old king of Ithaca with their seductive song.” Historically, many Western

writers looked at the South Seas as a living model for their idealized vision of ancient Greece. Nicole 2001, p. 43.

⁹⁶ NAZ, vol. 1, p. 280.

⁹⁷ The first person narrator of the short story “Kamereon Nikki” (The Chameleon Diary) has much in common with the protagonist of “Mahiru.” Like the latter, he is fascinated with exotic settings. A teacher of natural history, he finds that his craving for the tropical exoticism is satisfied when he is asked to look after a chameleon presented to his school: “The exoticism that had lain dormant for so long came alive again with the unexpected appearance of this rare, little animal.” At the end of the story, the narrator finds an image of himself in the mirror offered by this animal, famous for its ability to change its body color at will. Like the chameleon, the narrator’s identity is multiple and mixed: “In the final analysis, to what extent is my way of looking at things really my own? Like the jackdaw in Aesop’s tales, I have a few feathers of Leopardi, a few more of Schopenhauer, a few more of Lucretius, some from Zhuangzi and Lie-zi, and a few from Montaigne: What an ugly bird!” “Kamereon Nikki” (Chameleon Diary), NAZ, vol. 1, pp. 379, 392-93.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 279.

⁹⁹ In these examples, the narrator expresses the self-contempt and strong sense of cultural inferiority he feels toward ancient China and the modern West, the two ancestors from which so much of Japanese culture is the hybrid descendant. Japanese literature, in particular, descends from the Kanji-culture of East Asia and Western cultures introduced after the Meiji Restoration. Nakajima Atsushi is here expressing a sense of cultural colonization from which no Japanese writer could have been totally free. See Nakamura 2000, p. 27.

¹⁰⁰ Like other writers of the same period, Nakajima both yearns for a return to an “authentic Japan” and rejects this temptation as a lure. Like Nakajima, Tanizaki was also intensely aware of his self-colonization. In his essay *In Praise of Shadows*, he writes of the impossibility of returning to a pre-modern esthetic despite his longing to do so. Like Kawabata Yasunari and Yokomitsu Riichi, both writers associated with the *shinkankaku* 新感覚 (new perceptionalist) movement, he evinces a concern for the fragmentation of self and disintegration of identity that results from modernity.

¹⁰¹ NAZ, vol. 1, p. 280.

¹⁰² In this sensitive essay, Clifford defines allegory as a practice in which “one fiction refers to another pattern of ideas or events” (p. 99). He goes on to argue that any ethnography is inescapably allegorical and only to the extent that it is allegorical can it be meaningful to its reader. See Clifford 1986, pp. 98-121.

要旨

中島敦の「植民地眼鏡」—日本は植民地をどう見たか—

ロバート・ティアニー

日本は近代史において非西洋国家でありながら植民地を統治した帝国である。本稿では1941年に日本語教科書の編集者として南洋群島に赴任した中島敦の南洋文学を通して、当時の日本の「植民地主義的視点」すなわち、いかなる「眼鏡」を持って日本は植民地を見たかを検証する。

中島は帰国後南洋群島での体験を基にして、『南島譚』『環礁』という二つの作品群を書いた。六編から成る『環礁』の五番目の「マリヤン」では、マリヤンという名のミクロネシア人のインテリを描いている。小説「マリヤン」の語り手は当時の南洋言説やステレオタイプを述べることにより、マリヤンという人物についての説明を試みる。しかしながら語り手はマリヤンと自分の間の類似点を見つけることにより、痛ましさを感じざるを得ない。マリヤンも語り手も所詮は西洋的なまなざしの蔑視の対象であり、文化的に植民地化された混成物、つまり混合的なアイデンティティーの持ち主であるからである。そこで『環礁』の「真昼」という作品では、日本人の語り手は自分の南洋イメージの起源を追求し、自らの視点の「脱植民地化」を試みる。小熊英二は日本帝国主義を「有色帝国主義」の近代史の唯一の例として分析し、西洋の帝国主義との差異を強調している。本論文では中島の南洋文学を通して日本人の複雑でありながら同時に矛盾に満ちた帝国のまなざしを明らかにする。